

## **PREDICTING LABOUR UNREST THROUGH THE LENSES OF THEORY OF PLANNED BEHAVIOR: CASES FROM BEPZA**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Industrial dispute has been touted as a major constraint in the economy of Bangladesh. While poor management and inadequate institutional factors were widely blamed for the high propensity of industrial dispute, formation of workers' behavioural intention of industrial dispute has hardly been studied in the context of Bangladesh. Based on three cases from Bangladesh Export Processing Zone (BEPZ), we apply theory of planned behaviour to identify what are the factors that influence the propensity of workers to engage in violent behaviour when an industrial dispute takes place. Our findings show that, behavioural beliefs and attitude towards formal industrial dispute resolution and perceived behavioural control strongly influence the behaviour of the workers, while subjective norms also have an influencing power, albeit is a lesser capacity. Some alternative dispute resolution techniques along with future directions for research were also provided towards the end of the paper.

**Key words:** Industrial Dispute, Theory of Planned Behaviour, Alternative dispute resolution, BEPZA.

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

Industrial relations are more than simply an area of organizational management as its development reflects changes in the nature of work within society ( in both economic and social terms) and differences of view about the regulation of employment. Liberalization, internationalization and globalization of business, coupled with the challenge from newly industrialized countries, have resulted in significant shifts in the economic context and a realignment of the world economy. A Sunday Times commentary suggested that , appropriate industrial relations along with strong trade union could spur economic growth. However, East Asian developing countries have significant differences when it comes to industrial relations compare to their western counterparts (Park, 1992). Unique cultural and socio-economic conditions of

have forced both the managers and workers of these countries to take quite the alternative routes for expressing the latent dissatisfaction, which in turn determines the nature of industrial dispute. Bangladesh, as identified one of the next eleven emerging economies by the Goldman Sach (2007), has a long history of labour unrest, especially in one of its main export sectors, garments. Perhaps it does not come as a surprise to us that since independence of Bangladesh, no major development took place in the history of labour legislation till the enactment of the Bangladesh Labour Act, 2006. Several Export Processing Zones (hereafter, EPZ) were established with extreme tight conditions attached to it to gain the confidence of foreign investors. Unfortunately, these tight regulations did little to minimize industrial dispute in EPZs as labour unrest has been a common theme in EPZs.

While poor and abusive management technique as well as inadequate institutionalization, coupled with very poor socio-economic conditions of the industrial workers have been widely blamed for labour unrest, formation of behavioral intention of the industrial workers towards a labour unrest has hardly been examined, i.e. while most of the focuses have been on the labour unrest, which has its origins in industrial dispute, little attention being given to why industrial workers in EPZs fail to express their dissatisfaction through formal dispute resolution process which is a more of a civic option. In this paper, we try to explore how the workers' behavioral intentions towards labour unrest are formed by examining several incidents of industrial disputes in BEPZA through the lenses of Theory of Planned Behavior.

The objectives of this study are therefore twofold; identify the factors that increase the propensity of transformation of industrial dispute into labour unrest, while at the same time testing the effectiveness of theory of planned behaviour in explaining the labour unrest in Bangladesh, especially in the context of BEPZ.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Perhaps it does not come as a surprise that businesses have been proven to be much vulnerable to dispute (Mose & Kleiner) as there still is a dispute over the definition of 'industrial dispute' going on. While some (Thomson & Murray, 1976) have argued that the difference between grievance and dispute lies 'in the way they are initiated and in the degree of proposed change in the status quo', others (Torrington & Hall, 1998) have pointed to the method of expression as the differentiating factor between dispute and grievance. Torrington & Chapman (1983) supports this by labelling grievance with the formal procedures. Singlton (1975) identifies that the term dispute can be applied to grievance if a fulltime official of the union is called in, thus also putting the emphasis on formal procedures.

However, according to the Labour Act 2006 of Bangladesh, no industrial dispute shall be deemed to exist unless it has been raised by an employer or a collective bargaining agent in accordance with the provisions of chapter 14 of the Act. Thus one could conclude that the distinction between worker grievance and industrial dispute on the basis of formality of procedure bears little value in

Bangladesh due to the existing labour law. We therefore, have not made any distinction between industrial dispute and grievance on that account for this paper.

Most of the industrial dispute would originate from some sort of conflict between the management and the workers. Primary categories of sources of conflict which could lead to industrial dispute have been pointed out by Salipante and Bouwen (1990). They believe that three variables namely, environmental, socio-substantive and socio-relational issues, determines whether the latent employee dissatisfaction would be transformed into some form of action. Environmental issues include nature of work, including the working conditions. Socio-sustentative issues include ideological differences of interests, goals and inequalities in treatment. Socio relational issues include relationship between individuals and groups and/or organization through various institutional factors.

When a dispute arises at a workplace due to any of these sources of conflict, workers would ponder what might their best response be. McDonald (2000) stated that the responses could be either to remain at job or it might as well impose some type of restriction on how their work can be carried out, including strike. While most of the literature have focused on strike, there are some who have shed light on nonstrike actions as well (Cubbin, 1986; Milner, 1994; Cramton and Tracy, 1994 etc.). Milner's (1994) work has been particularly influencing as it identifies three factors that affect workers' decision on choosing nonstrike actions over strikes: feasibility of the non-strike action, the capacity to organise one and intended effect of the action. Labour unrest is one of those non-strike actions. Here by labour unrest we refer to the violent actions that workers take in response to any and/or inadequate action by the management.

### Industrial relation at Bangladesh

As a former colony, after the independence Bangladesh adopted labour laws and policies that prevailed during colonial British era and the Pakistani period. However, the new government of Bangladesh declared a labour policy in 1972, which recommended reduction of trade union activities in welfare organizations. The right to strike and collective bargaining in the nationalized industries was prohibited for six months by a Presidential order in 1972. In 1973, the right to strike and lockout was also withdrawn by the

Government. While these activities sowed the seed of distrust between workers and managers, considerable progresses have been made in the 21<sup>st</sup> century with the introduction of new Labour Law in 2006. Before the adoption of Labour Act of 2006, there were about 46 laws in force in Bangladesh encompassing labour and industrial sectors. However, Committee of Experts have pointed out that, there are still several restrictions on the right to strike. According to the Labour Act 2006, it requires three-quarters of the members of a workers' organization to consent to a strike (sec. 211(1) and 227(c) of the Act). The Act also prohibits strikes for a period of three years from the date of commencement of production in a new establishment, or an establishment owned by foreigners (sec. 211(8) and 227 (c) of the Act). While it is quite understandable that, Government wanted to attract foreign investors by putting a protective clause, it certainly did not do enough to make sure that the foreigners are not exploiting this facility. The barriers that the Government had set up to in the frame of the Labour Act, 2006 might have also curtailed the option for workers of going for a strike as a reaction to industrial dispute.

#### **Industrial relation at BEPZA**

Bangladesh Export Processing Zones started operation in 1983. Since then a total of \$1726.94 million have been invested, while employing almost 250,000 employees. A total of \$ 20923.93 million has also been earned through export from EPZs. Whilst the primary aim of establishing Export Processing Zone (EPZ) was to attract foreign direct investment, EPZs are welcomed to any local investor as well. Several facilitates were given to the establishments in EPZ to lure them to investment. Tax holiday for 10 years, exemption from income tax on interest on borrowed capital, freedom from national import policy restrictions etc. were some of them.

However, probably the biggest incentive came in the form of promises over investment climate. Trade unions were not allowed for a long time to minimize labour unrest. In order to do that, the government of Bangladesh had to suspended the then two labour laws viz. Employment of Labour (Standing Order) Act 1965, Industrial Ordinance 1969 in 1986 and subsequently in 1989 the Factories Act 1965. Bangladesh Private Export Processing Zone Act, 1994 was passed to marshal the EPZs with no provision of trade union.

However, this special arrangement ultimately did backfire. As the pressure mounted from the United States government for introduction of trade unions, the Government of Bangladesh took the initiative to introduce workers association in EPZs through enactment of a new law, amid losing preferential access to the US market granted under the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP). Even this was not a smooth process, as foreign investors who had already invested in EPZs strongly opposed that, indicating little confidence of foreign investors in local industrial relations. The government also issued a Gazette Notification in 2001 stating that the prohibition on freedom of association would end at the start of 2004. Accordingly in 2004, the EPZ Workers Association and Industrial Relations Act 2004 was passed by the Parliament of Bangladesh.

The objective of the Act was to recognize the right of the workers to form association, regulation of relations and settlement of differences or dispute arising between employers and workers to the Export Processing Zones and for matters connected therewith and ancillary thereto. (Faruque, 2009)

Whilst the EPZ Workers Association and Industrial Relations Act are certainly a progressive initiatives, critics have been very quick to point out its limitations, many of which are related to high level of bureaucracy which in turn delays the whole process. The ILO Committee of Experts stated in its 2009 report that the EPZ Workers Associations and Industrial Relations Act 2004 contained numerous and significant restrictions and delays with regard to the right to organize in EPZs. Prohibiting the formation of workers' association within the first three months of commencement of business, limiting the number of workers' association to one per industrial unit, not allowing a second chance to form a trade union within one year of the first failed attempt to do so etc. have serious ramifications in the establishment of workers' right in EPZs. The current law does not even give any guarantees against interference with the right of workers to elect their representatives in full freedom (e.g. the procedure of election shall be determined by the BEPZA, etc.). Establishment of federation of trade unions among the trade unions of different EPZ is also not allowed. These policies are likely to decrease the level of confidence of the workers on the institutional framework and might tempt them to take alternative path which might result into violent action as well. The propensity of

going towards violent actions might also be increased under the severe restriction that exists under the law in force in EPZs.

### Theoretical Framework

#### Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) by Ajzen (1985)

Since the aim of this study is to deepen our understanding and knowledge of the factors that influence the propensity of labour unrest, behavioural theories that investigate the origin of behaviour would act as a perfect platform to develop the theoretical framework for this study. Theory of reasoned action (hereafter, TRA), developed by Martin Fishbein and Icek Ajzen (1975) which is derived from social-psychology, states that, intention to any given behaviour depends on two variables, namely, attitudes toward that behaviour and subjective norms. The theory suggests that, the higher the combination of attitude towards the behaviour and subjective norms, the greater the intention to perform that behaviour. However, despite the intention, many intentions do not convert into behaviour. Ajzen (1985), hence, has extended his TRA to the Theory of Planned Behaviour (hereafter, TPB), which includes another element in the form of 'Perceived Behavioural Control'. Both TBP and TRA have been used over the past two decades to examine various behavioural intentions and behaviours (Chang, 1998; Fukukawa, 2002; Millar and Shevlin, 2003) and have been found to be very useful in predicting a wide range of behaviour (Sheppard et al, Madden et. Al, 1992). Chang (1998) has found TPB to be very useful in predicting unethical behaviour as well. Since violent actions by the labour can be labelled as unethical behaviour, TPB has been used for this research. propensity of labour disputes are likely to be influenced by contextual factors as well, in addition to personal motivations, TPB rather than TRA is more suitable to for this research.

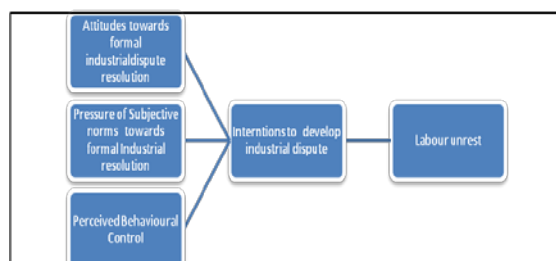


Figure: Theory of Planned Behaviour for Industrial Dispute; adopted from Ajzen (1991)

#### Attitudes towards formal dispute resolution

Attitudes towards formal industrial dispute resolution would refer to what extent an individual has a favourable or unfavourable evaluation of the perceived outcome of formal industrial dispute resolution. According to TPB propensity of behaviour causing dispute is likely to be higher where the attitude is favourably related to the evaluated outcome of industrial relation.

However, attitudes can be shaped up by various other organizational and personal variables. The most significant influence factor in the realm of industrial relations probably comes in the form of anticipated reciprocal relationship, which in turn may depend on prior experience of dispute resolution. So if the previous dispute was tried to be solved through a coercive power by the management, it is likely that workers would not try to follow the same path.

#### Subjective Norm

Subjective norms refer to "the person's perception that most people who are important to him or her think he should or should not perform the behaviour in question" (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1975). Subjective norms in this study could refer to what extent an employee feels social pressure (Ajzen, 1991) to engage actively in industrial dispute which would then result into labour unrest. Social pressure would come from 'reference group' of a worker which may include superior, peers or even the family members whose perception is important to that particular employee. Since most of the trade unions are somehow related to any political party, subjective norms are likely to be influenced by political affiliation.

Community of Practice (CoP) has been identified as another source of social pressure. CoP can be defined as an group, whose members are frequently engaged in interaction based on their common interests (Lesser and Storck,2001). A sense of belongingness to CoP would also encourage employees to participate in a disputed behaviour. Influence of trade unions, political affiliation with the leaders of the labour unrest might prompt the workers to engage in violent activity.

#### Perceived behaviour control

Based on Ajzen's (1991) work Lin and Lee (2004) defined Perceived behaviour control factors are individual dispositional factors and include the amount of information a person has, along with the

skills, emotions abilities and compulsions of that person concerning a specific behaviour. Research has found that perceived behavioural control has a significant influence on moral behaviour intention (Chang, 1998). Knowledge sharing behaviour, which is often influenced by social capital and lack of trust at the same time, could be another field where perceived control behaviour have major influence. In this research project, perceived behavioural control refers to what degree employees perceive to be able to achieve his objectives by following the formal dispute resolution process within the given context of an organization. Power balance, prior history of dispute settlement, institutional framework are likely to influence the perceived behavioural control.

### III. METHODOLOGY

Case studies are well used to understand a particular phenomenon (in this research, industrial dispute) within a particular context (in this paper, companies in BEPZA) (Walsham, 1995; Yin, 2003). Since the nature of the study is explorative, case study method was chosen to conduct this research. The method is appropriate for this kind of study as case study methodology lends itself well to an explorative effort. At the same time as the study aims to investigate in a way where, research questions are more of 'how' and 'why' rather than 'what' basis, case study represents an opposite method.

Yin (1994) states that case studies are fitting for theoretical generalization as well. Although case studies hold little external validity, due to its small sample size, Yin (1994) asserts that this limitation only pertains to statistical generalizability. While we seek to identify the causes of industrial dispute, we also implicitly test the theories, from which the research questions were drawn.

Multiple case studies were conducted not only to provide richness in variety, but also to yield opportunities for literal replication across the cases (Yin, 2003), which in turn acts as a validating tool of the proposed model. This paper centres on three qualitative case studies of industrial dispute in firm 'A', 'B' and 'C'.

Cases were chosen based on their uniqueness. While several cases from secondary data were initially chosen to develop a sampling frame, final

selection was also influenced by trying to accommodate firms under different categories under the BEPZA regulations. All the cases were drawn from DEPZ. While the uniqueness was a priority, investing cases from DEPZ had also allowed time convenience to conduct thorough interviews.

#### **Data collection**

In order to have triangulation, data were collected from various sources to gather a chain of evidence. Both primary and secondary data were collected. Primary data were collected by interviewing all the stakeholders, namely, BEPZA, management and workers of concerned firms. Secondary data were collected through various newspapers and journals.

Three BEPZA officials were interviewed to get an understating of industrial dispute from the perspectives of regulatory body. Two interviews were conducted at managerial level for each of the cases. While the individual employees in question were not possible to interview for all the cases, employees who were present on the day(s) of the incidents were interviewed. Overall, sixteen interviews were conducted on workers.

#### **Interview techniques**

The interviews were semi-structured. It started with some open ended questions, aiming to grasp the level of involvement and ability to contribute of the employee, while the later portion focused on some more specific questions, feeding way to the model. Interviews at the managerial level took around 20 minutes to conduct whereas, workers were taking around 30 minutes to cover the interview. Part of it was due to the lack of time of the management, while inability of the workers to understand the question also played its part.

Different questionnaires were used to interview the management from the workers. The reason of this was twofold; time constraints of the top management to avail themselves and the focus of the questionnaire. While both set of questionnaires had many of the questions in common and tend to composed of open ended questions (Patton, 2002); questionnaires for the management focused more on the legal and institutional aspects. For the workers, the questions tend to focus more on their personal motivation and experience of industrial right. All the interviews were conducted in Bengali for the convenience of the interviewees. Some follow up interviews were conducted after the

initial analysis mainly to fill up gaps that were found later. To enhance the reliability of the cases, respondent validation (Ven & Poole, 1990) was also applied during the follow up interviews. All the interviews were then transcribed and verified in some cases to check for transcription error (Miles and Huberman, 1994).

#### **Data analysis**

By using thematic analysis (Miles and Huberman, 1994) data were codified and clustered to generate conceptual themes. Yin's (2003) pattern-matching method of analysis was applied to integrate several pieces of information from a single case. For example, when it comes to degree of anticipated employer reaction to a certain demand, not only the question directly related to this was looked at, but other answers in the interview transcript were also analysed to find any relevant discussion.

The themes generated from the analysis of data were then integrated to create a set of stories to illustrate what are the factors that influence the propensity of labour dispute behaviour of employees of those participating companies. This implies that empirical data gathered from these case studies were presented in such a way that the research model demands. Hence, it would be unwise to claim that these cases could not be reconstructed in any other way. However, with the usage of respondent validation, the possibility of huge deviation from the findings presented was minimized.

Since the cases draw on a priory theory (e.g. Miles 1979, Yin, 1994) and thus take a starting point in the theories described above. This implies that the empirical findings are gathered and 'coloured' partly by the structure of the framework.

#### **IV. BACKGROUND OF THE COMPANIES AND INCIDENTS RELATED TO LABOUR UNREST:**

##### **Case 'A'**

The first of the cases is a 'C' category company under the BEPZA regulation, making it 100% owned by local investors. The dispute started with the quality of food being supplied by the company. The workers claimed that the beef provided for the lunch was too small of a size and for that reason they refused to eat the lunch. After getting this news several counsellors of that company with three assistant manager of that company went on

the spot. As the conversation started between the parties, without any reason, the workers threw stones on the factory building and broke the furniture's and created a havoc in the factory premise. At that point, they insulted the counsellor and the assistant managers. Many other people got injured in this incident as well. Subsequently the management stopped the production and the company was shut down.

##### **Case 'B'**

The second is a 'B' category company under the BEPZA regulation, making it a joint venture between local and foreign investors. The dispute started when the line manager asked a certain worker to move to his original line from the line where he was working. As the worker ignored the instruction to move back to his own production line, the production manager who was a foreigner threw a cone of thread to that worker. At that point, that particular worker got agitated and left the line. While the production manager left the floor, the news spread out among other workers and they started to gather together in front of the general manager's office. While the general manager was willing to listen to them, one of the aggrieved worker started to chant, ' Muslims (the worker) should not get beaten by the Jews (the production manager)'. This particular statement has certainly spurred anger among the workers. Office premise was attacked immediately. It is worth to note that the production manager who was in question was a Christian rather than a Jew.

##### **Case 'C'**

This company falls under the 'B' category as well. The dispute had its roots in giving a warning letter to an underperforming worker. However the worker misbehaved with the HR executive at the time of receiving the letter. Subsequently she was given a show-cause letter by the HR. The worker then started to shout in the production floor that the company will start a massive lay-offs programme. Gradually the momentum picked up among the workers and they started to take part in violent activities. While the regulatory body did send some law enforcement members to handle the situation, it got worse as protesting workers were driven out from the premise of the company.

Management and union leaders later had a meeting to resolve the issue. It was really surprising to see that, the list of demands that the trade union had submitted did not include anything about pardoning

the worker who was given a show-cause by the HR.

## V. FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

### Attitude towards formal dispute resolution

The attitudes towards formal dispute resolution have been found negative for all the cases from the perspectives of all the stakeholders. BEPZA officials while being very 'professional' in their responses, tended to consider the incidents of the three cases as mere isolated events. Whilst it is true that, there has been a better practices of industrial relations in BPEZA compare to any other places in Bangladesh, the indifference showed towards the perceived effectiveness of formal dispute resolution by the BEPZA officials have certainly not helped the cause. Most of the officials of regulatory bodies felt that, these 'isolated events' would always take place as one of them quoted 'you cannot satisfy everyone and there would be someone who would always try to exploit the situation.' The remarks are highly similar to those of managers of the concerned firms. This indeed shows the level of mistrust that exists among between the managers and the workers of those concerned firms.

Workers attitude towards formal dispute resolution have also turn out to be negative. Interviews of the workers of company 'A' revealed that, while it was probably bit too much to physically insult the officials, demonstrating their dissatisfactions over the management in a vocal way was the only method that in their opinion would have succeeded. One worker quoted as:

'While the company always loud the benefits that they provide, they hardly take account of the 'actual benefit' that the workers receive. Many times we have been in this type of 'conversation' with the officers, but little if anything is done.'

Workers from company 'C' have pointed out the perceived biasness of the trade union to deal with any kind of dispute settlement. It was found that, workers perceived the trade union officials as 'agents' of the management. Even though the management of company 'C' has denied that, interviews with regulatory bodies have confirmed that it is not uncommon that some establishments in BEPZA offers 'incentives' to trade union officials to nip any industrial dispute in the bud. Some have also asserted that, if the owner and the trade union leaders are of same political

philosophy, it is hard to see the trade union officials looking after the interests of the workers.

### Subjective norms towards formal industrial dispute resolution

For workers subjective norms were found to be negatively related to the formal dispute resolution as well. However, subjective norms are found to be positively related towards formal industrial dispute resolution for the managers and BEPZA. Officials from BEPZA have often claimed that any industrial dispute that had taken place with any EPZ has always been exaggerated by the media which sends a negative message to the prospective foreign investors. Perhaps it is not surprising as the permission of forming trade union was only allowed under a tremendous pressure from the foreign countries. Managers of the concerned firm have also stated that in order to maintain the production level, they would also prefer formal industrial dispute resolution as labour unrest inevitably results into company shut down.

For workers subjective norms formed in the shape of solidarity with other workers. Interesting enough, even though both company 'A' and 'C' had trade unions, solidarity with them turns out to be less of an importance compare to the concern for a colleague who may not been active member of the trade union. Lack of trust on the trade unions perhaps is the reason behind this.

### Perceived Behavioural Control

Workers from all the companies have stated their dissatisfactions over the way management handle any dispute. Workers of firm 'B' were extremely vocal about it. As this is the only firm, under this research, which did not have a trade union, workers were disgruntled with that. Most of them felt that, management plays a role in delaying the introduction of trade union in their company. While it was observed that, the knowledge about the process of starting a trade union was very poor among them, workers perceived that, the regulatory body has also been inactive to exercise their rights to create a trade union.

Workers of firm 'C' and 'A' have also expressed their perceived behavioural control. In these two firms, trade unions were perceived as another show-off by the management and BEPZA. Workers from firm 'C' which is joint venture between local and international investors, perceived that foreigners are being given too much

of a freedom to run the businesses and local partners would not listen to the workers in the fear of losing the foreign investors.

Workers of all the three firms were equivocal about the possible biasness that the arbitration committee might have, should anyone need to go to that far. Most of them felt that, formal arbitrations are designed to favour the managers and even if it brings positive results for them, it might be too little and too late.

## VI. DISCUSSION

Unsurprisingly previous researches were proven to be accurate in explicating the behaviour of workers. Our findings have found that workers were conscious about the ramifications of their actions. While differences exist in terms of variables that determine the actions, the process is similar to that of McDonald (2000) who found that workers would conduct a feasibility study of their actions.

In the case of firm 'C', we have seen that, latent dissatisfaction of the workers could come into reality with the backdoor of a minor dispute. Salamon (2000) supports that by stating that a series of minor grievances may be a reflection of a more general dissatisfaction with the work conditions and will remain unaltered even after specific grievance has been resolved.

Workers perception towards the power being held by the management due to either political influence and/or favourable regulatory bodies shows how the possession of industrial power may reduce their confidence in formal dispute resolution process. Our findings of perceived behavioural control being negatively associated with the formal dispute resolution process supports the notion of Salamon (2000) that, when workers feel that the formal procedures do not provide adequate facilities, if not hinder the representation and protection they may express their dissatisfaction in other ways, in our cases being through unruly behaviour.

Another reason why workers might not be interested to go for a formal strike (apart from the strict regulation) is that workers would lose money as long as the strike continues. McDonald (2000) posited that workers would have to consider both economic and institutional conditions prevailing at the time of dispute. If the workers perceive that, by

behaving in an unruly manner might solve the problem in their favour without much of a delay, it could act as an motivating factor to not to go with formal dispute resolution procedures.

## VII. FUTURE DIRECTION FOR RESEARCH

While theory of planned behaviour may have proved to be successful in order to explain the behaviour formation of workers, it might be time to extend this paper to find out whether it can also explain why the stakeholders are not being able to successfully implement any alternative dispute resolution. We believe further studies are required to investigate this phenomenon.

On the other hand, a comparative study might be carried out to explore whether there is any difference between the workers within EPZs and other companies operating outside of EPZs.

## VIII. CONCLUSION

While workers' behaviour formation is a complex process, which depends on many socio-economic, cultural and institutional factors, our research has shown that, primarily the attitude towards the formal dispute resolution and perceived behavioural control that would influence the propensity of labour unrest. Given the state of institutional variable in our country, perhaps it is not unforeseen that, reforms in legal side are a necessity to ensure a harmonious labour-management relationship in EPZs which could play a big role in boosting the confidence of workers on formal dispute resolution techniques. Alternative dispute resolution techniques, especially partnering which is more of a pre-dispute deterrent might also need to be practiced.

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