

Industrial relations scenario

7.69 The number of strikes and lockouts taken together has declined by 4.7 per cent during 2003 as compared to the previous year. The reduction in strikes and lockouts has been more prominent in the central sphere during this period. However, while strikes alone declined from 295 to 255 in 2003, lockouts increased from 284 to 297 during the same period (Table 7.23). During 2004 (January to September), the States of West Bengal, Tamil

Nadu and Gujarat experienced maximum instances of strikes and lockouts and the industries facing highest incidence of strikes and lockouts were textiles, engineering and chemicals. Indiscipline and violence, wages and personnel issues were the primary causes of strikes and lockouts during this period.

7.70 The total mandays lost on account of strikes and lockouts have shown a relative fall in the first nine months of 2004 compared to the full year of 2003, though they had increased

Table 7.23 : Strikes and lockouts

Year	Strikes		Lockouts		Total	
	Number	Mandays lost (in million)	Number	Mandays lost (in million)	Number	Mandays lost (in million)
1999	540	10.62	387	16.16	927	26.79
2000	426	11.96	345	16.80	771	28.76
2001	372	5.56	302	18.20	674	23.77
2002	295	9.66	284	16.92	579	26.58
2003(P)	255	3.20	297	27.04	552	30.25
2004(Jan-Sep.) (P)	189	3.40	215	10.13	404	13.53

(P) = Provisional; Total may not necessarily tally due to rounding off of figures.
Source : Labour Bureau, Shimla.

Box 7.7 : Initiatives proposed by the State Governments to rationalise labour laws

- The State Governments of Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra have proposed to seek relaxation in some provisions of the Central Laws through State enactments so as to facilitate setting up of Special Economic Zones and Special Enclaves in their respective States. These proposals broadly relate to regulating the working hours, wages etc. of a contract worker, establishment of a dispute resolution machinery to hear and decide the industrial disputes and minimum wages claims, to empower the development commissioner to fix minimum wages, to make provision for allowing the women workers to work in night shift etc.
- The views of the Central Government on these bills are generally based on the following principles:
 - a) The provisions framed for ensuring safety and health aspects of the workmen need not be relaxed.
 - b) The provisions of the Central Acts, which are mostly implemented by the Central machinery, need not be relaxed by the State amendments.
 - c) The provisions in the State Bill should not be in contravention of the provisions in the Central Bill, presently under consideration, on the same subject, such as, provision for employment of women in night shift under the Factories Act.
 - d) The principles enshrined in the National Common Minimum Programme (NCMP) with regard to hire and fire and the amendment of labour laws through consensus should be scrupulously observed.
 - e) The powers and functions of the State Government, where there is no provision to further delegate such powers and functions, should not be allowed to be delegated further.

by 3.67 million in 2003 compared to 2002. The mandays lost due to strikes show a rise in 2004 (January-September) compared to 2003, though a decline was witnessed in 2003. The mandays lost due to lockouts show a relative fall in 2004(January-September) though they registered an increase in 2003. During the year 2003, the mandays lost in the central sphere and the public sector increased by 5.89 million

and 6.06 million respectively, over the previous year. In contrast, the state sphere and private sector recorded a decline of 2.22 million and 2.39 million respectively.

7.71 To keep pace with the ongoing process of economic reforms, some of the state governments have taken initiatives to rationalise labour laws (Box 7.7).

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