

# The agony of a private sector officer

They may be fired anywhere, anytime — with no specific forum for relief. The 'step-motherly' treatment often breeds acute resentment and insecurity



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While we debate whether the policy of 'hire and fire' should be implemented, we ignore that it

is already applicable to one particular group — private sector employees not covered under the Industrial Disputes Act 1947. While all other employees have some forum to fall back on, this section can be hired or fired anywhere, anytime, any moment with no specific relief from any section/body. I remember a general manager of a shoe manufacturing unit who once found his company car missing from the parking lot. On enquiring, he was told that the company had sent a muscle man to tow away the car the previous night. The same

morning, when he attempted to enter the factory gates, he was served a termination letter by the security guard! No notice, no legal dues paid. Quite disturbed, he called me and I had to suggest civil suit.

### The different segments

Employees can be categorised under three main segments: pure government employees; those working for corporations/autonomous bodies under control of various ministries; and employees in private sector.

A. Government employees can approach the administrative

tribunal regarding any matter in connection with their service conditions. The jurisdiction of a writ petition is also available to them.

B. Officers of corporations not covered by the I.D. Act, 1947 can also invoke writ jurisdiction. Class III and IV employees covered under I.D. Act can approach the labour court/tribunal through appropriate procedure. These semi-judicial courts deliver quick justice in the form of award, which is not appealable.

C. Class III and IV employees of private sector, too, are covered by I.D. Act and can

approach a labour court for relief by way of award.

That just leaves the officer-grade employees in the private sector. The only recourse available is to approach a civil court for breach of contract for damages, but the procedure is lengthy and time consuming. Small doubt that this sort of a 'step-motherly' treatment often breeds feelings of acute resentment and insecurity in this section of employees. This is in the interest of neither the employees nor the employers for that matter. ■