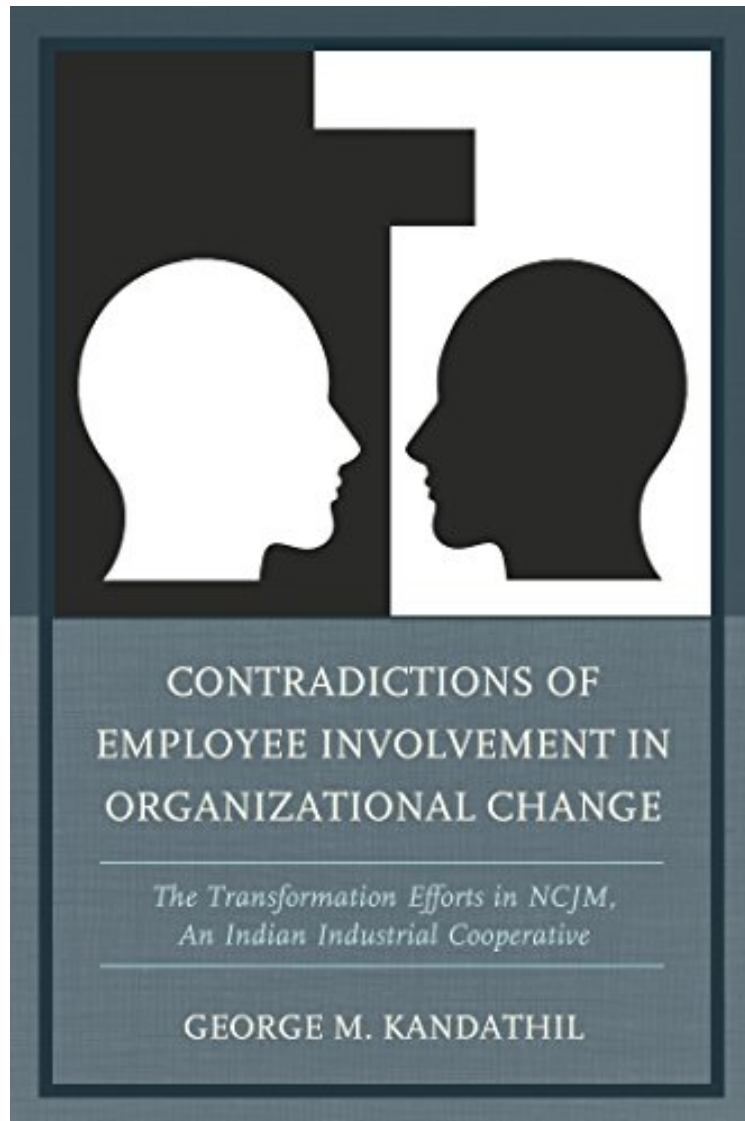


[Mobile book] Contradictions of Employee Involvement in Organizational Change: The Transformation Efforts in NCJM, An Indian Industrial Cooperative

Contradictions of Employee Involvement in Organizational Change: The Transformation Efforts in NCJM, An Indian Industrial Cooperative

George M. Kandathil

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George M. Kandathil : Contradictions of Employee Involvement in Organizational Change: The Transformation Efforts in NCJM, An Indian Industrial Cooperative before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Contradictions of Employee Involvement in Organizational

This monograph narrates the decade-long struggle of workers, unions, and management in transforming one of the largest ailing family-owned jute businesses in India, into a sustainable worker-owned and governed cooperative. It focuses on the variation in the three groups' involvement in the transformation. It begins with the employees' struggles in taking over the business, deserted by its owners, to save their jobs. The study analyzes the tensions between the three groups in creating and maintaining democratic governance that would sustain the initial leap in employee participation in the transformation. The analysis reveals contradictions at multiple levels, starting with the unexpected outcome of information sharing with workers: increased information sharing by management resulting in decreased employee involvement. The study explains this paradox by showing that for workers, information has a symbolic nature and information sharing is a signal of their trustworthiness in the assessment of those who are privy to the information. This means involvement is contingent upon the feeling that the information that workers consider crucial is being shared with them. However, what workers consider crucial, and thus a symbol of trust, changes over time as the nature and breadth of their involvement evolves. Thus, worker expectation as well as management and union expectation of information sharing evolves. However, the evolution has the potential to create a mismatch between the two expectations that might lead to contradictions in employee involvement. While for management, information sharing is an instrument in eliciting involvement, and thus management's expectation of information sharing goes through an instrumental loop, for employees, information sharing is a matter of trust, and thus their expectation of information sharing goes through an institutional trust-based loop. To sustain high employee involvement, the organization should ideally institutionalize the trust-based loop and avoid engaging with the instrumental loop. The author proposes a collaborative approach to organizational transformation that will help deal with the contradictions more effectively, sustaining employee involvement in the transformation. The author also discusses the implications of these propositions for academic scholarship and organizational practices and situates them in the ongoing attempts to reform Industrial Disputes Act in India.

This is a well narrated account by the author and shows his deep involvement with the research study. The book offers a close interaction with the research subjects and the study is deeply ingrained with the fabric of the NCJM itself creating almost a social and anthropological insight for the reader. This remains an admirable quality of the book. Particularly, the reader is able to identify and come to terms with the challenges that worker co-operatives face and is able to gain an insight of how employee involvement may enable large co-operatives such as NCJM and others to sustain themselves in the future. . . .The book is easy to read and knits together a diligent and inspiring research account. This is owed to the professional yet mellow writing style that accumulates interesting characters, incidents and anecdotes. Simply put, the reader remains engaged throughout since the book has a story to tell apart from presenting an empirical investigation. . . .This book will interest both students and academics alike who are interested in matters of industrial relations and modern day organizational change issues. It is also a useful text for researchers interested in designing and conducting case-based qualitative studies. The book showcases the shifting boundaries of labour collectivism and worker organization in a growing economy with implication for how employee involvement can influence organizational change. (British Journal of Industrial Relations)This excellently detailed case study unpacks the process of organizational transformation to highlight that information sharing and consultation is a necessary but insufficient condition for employee involvement. Kandathil convincingly argues that what is more important is the alignment of managers' and workers' expectations and enactment of information sharing. In so doing, he makes a critical contribution to the vast literature on employee involvement. (Sarosh Kuruvilla, Cornell University)This book convincingly problematizes the dominant understanding of the relationship between information sharing and employee involvement in the context of organizational transformation. It offers novel and compelling explanations about the role of inter-group trust in sustaining the employee involvement in the organizational transformation. Overall, it is an excellent and deeply engaging work that spans multiple levels of analysis and abstraction. This is a rare accomplishment for this kind of research. (An Anonymous er)About the AuthorGeorge M. Kandathil is professor of organizational behaviour at the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad, India.