

Unpredictability of Employment

The threat of a natural disaster of any kind, is something that is not usually taken lightly by most. Predictions are generally made about the possible severity of the impact. Sometimes the warnings issued are ignored and those who are not prepared, suffer the devastating consequences. Those who prepare but are underprepared, can sometimes become victims, where they too pay the price for their failure to do what was necessary. The reasonable conclusion to be reached from this, is that people sometimes take things for granted. Those who have been appointed in their jobs, sometimes live with a false sense that they enjoy security of tenure. Those who commence a job and have the expectation that after a probationary period of service, or having been employed for a fixed number of years, that full employment of appointment would be forthcoming, are often lured into a sense of comfort.

In the existing turbulent employment times where the natural disaster of layoffs, retrenchments are common place, and which regularly come without warning, employees are found wanting and without time to prepare. In this day and age, given the regularity of the trend of displacing workers, the thought of being underprepared should basically be non-existent. The sad tale of this development is the lost to many organizations of their best workers, simply because management pursued the line of replacing those who are long servicing and older staff members with younger persons. It would seem that employers have a primary interest of reducing operational costs, and so disguises the decision to reduce the staff compliment by making reference to the introduction of digitalization in the workplace.

It seems somewhat weird that an employer would use the argument of cost reduction which is a significant aspect of operational expenditure, to justify their actions, while at the same time move to invest significant sums of monies in the purchase of new technologies. This justification becomes questionable when it is considered that payments have to be made to large companies for management and maintenance of these electronic systems. In a world where digitization is the new phenomenon, it simply means that the stage is set for the creation of a new category of worker. Inasmuch that businesses generally still require an interface

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that involves customers, clients and suppliers using whatever technology that is required, the manipulation of employment that sees an exodus of workers, seems as a case of following the trend. Those who believe that everything can be done remotely are merely living in a dream world. If this were to be the case, the world will virtually come to a standstill. Despite what happens, there are jobs that will not disappear. This applies to the sectors such as agriculture, manufacturing, food service, food distribution, hospitality, wholesale and retail distribution, social services of which health care stands out, and essential services, only to name a few.

The ongoing changes to securing forms of employment is what workers today have to contend with, as the trend moves from full time employment to focus on the flexibility of employment. Employers now have a demand for part time workers or contract workers rather than full time workers. The preference is for workers to be flexible in their work hours. For most this new phenomenon is just a part of the changing times. For those who are part of the business world, it is about the exploitation of labour in the most convenient way possible, so as to ensure that they maintain a competitive edge in the globalized environment, where the world functions on a 24-hour basis.

The unpredictability of employment has become a worrisome matter for workers, given that the employer now seemingly has greater leverage in the manipulation of labour. In the past, the individual skills, talents, academic qualifications, and expertise counted when it came to securing and maintaining employment. These may still matter, but in the current environment, there are no guarantees on which an individual can rest their hopes.