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Employees Welfare Measures: Importance, Statutory Provisions and Various Agencies Protecting the Welfare of Employees

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Abstract

Employees welfare includes various facilities, services and amenities provided for improving their health, efficiency, economic betterment and social status of the workers. The Welfare measures will improve the physique intelligence, morality and standard of living of the workers, which in turn will improve their efficiency and productivity. Employees welfare schemes are flexible and ever-changing. New welfare measures are added to the existing ones from time to time. Welfare measures may be introduced by the employers, government, employees or by any social or charitable agency. The purpose of employee's welfare is to develop personality of the workers to make a better workforce. Welfare schemes create efficient, healthy, loyal and satisfied labor force for the organization. Providing such facilities make their work life better and leads to good standard of living. The present study focus on employees welfare measures and what are the various statutory provisions and agencies protecting the welfare of employees.

Keywords: Welfare, Statutory provisions, Agencies for welfare, Labor office

Introduction

Welfare including various services, benefits and facilities offered to employees by the employer. Through such generous fringe benefits, the employer makes life worth living for employees. The welfare facilities in addition extended normal wages and other economic rewards available to employees as per the legal provisions. According to Dr Parandikar, "Labour welfare work is work for improving the health, safety and general well-being and the industrial efficiency of the workers beyond the minimum standard laid down by labour legislation". The government, trade unions and non-government agencies provide welfare measures to the employer. The basic purpose of labor welfare is to enrich the life of employees and keep them happy. Welfare measures may be both statutory and non statutory. Labour laws extend certain benefits to employees in addition to wages, Voluntary benefits are the results of employer's generosity, enlightenment, and philanthropic feelings.

Literature Review

Satyanarayana, D. (2015), study aimed to understand the extent of employee welfare measures and its awareness level in APPM, Rajahmundry, Andhra Pradesh. It was found from the study that the Andhra Pradesh Paper Mill Ltd (APPM), Rajahmundry was a global company which considers the employee welfare as one of the determinants of industrial relations.

The study suggested that APPM has been improving civic amenities as the employees' perceptions. The perceptions of worker regarding welfare measures are positively recorded.

Rajkuar, B. (2014), attempted to identify the prevailing labour welfare measures and social security in IT industries in Chennai. The study reveals that the welfare facilities help to motivate and retain employees. Most of the welfare facilities helped to motivate the employees which ensures employee satisfaction and resulted in increased productivity.

Manzini and Gwandure (2011), studied that the concept of employee welfare has been used by many organizations as strategy of improving productivity of employees; especially in the mobile industry since work related problems can lead to poor quality of life for employees and a decline in performance. It is argued that, welfare services can be used to secure the labour force by providing proper human conditions of work and living through minimizing the hazardous effect on the life of the workers and their family members.

Importance

The Significance of welfare measure was accepted in 1931, when the Royal Commission on Labour stated: The benefits are of great importance to the worker. The schemes of labour welfare would bring a profitable return in the form of greater efficiency.

The working environment in a factory affects the health of employees because of excessive heat or cold, noise, fumes, dust and lack of sanitation and pure air. Such oppressive conditions create health problems for workers. Preventive steps aimed at improving a lot of workers.

A second reason in favour of welfare work is called the "Social invasion of the factory". Workers face lots of problems when they take up factory work. The congested environs, noisy machines, slum areas, monotonous jobs impact the psyche of ruralities who come to cities in search of jobs. To escape from such trying conditions, the worker absents himself, becomes irregular and shows signs of indiscipline.

Such changes- known as the social invasion of the factory – worker begins to enjoy a fuller and richer life when call for extra inducements in the

workplace in addition to normal wages.

Labor Investigation Committee point out thus." The provision of canteens improves the physique; entrainment reduces the incidence of vices; medical aid maternity and child welfare services improve the health of the workers, this brings down the rates of general, maternal and infantile mortality; and educational facilities increase their mental efficiency and economic productivity.

Statement of the Problem

Labor welfare work in India is somewhat distressing, Welfare amenities not been properly provided, except the units managed by progressive employers. In modern units where the latest technology demands maintenance of adequate standards. The letter of the law not been strictly observed in most units, owing to poor supervision. Employers, however, agree that welfare work would eat into the finances of the organization and where the facilities have been provided these have either remained unutilized or improperly used by the workers. The need of the hour, to sum up, is to extend the coverage of statutory welfare amenities to all units employing a minimum number of employees and create a proper administrative network to oversee the implementation strictly.

Objectives

- To know about employees welfare measures
- To know about Statutory provisions for employees welfare
- To know about different Agencies for welfare
- To know about labor office for development of welfare facilities

Labor Welfare Work, thus, Serves the Following Purposes

- Workers enable to have a richer and more satisfying life
- Increases the standard of living of the workers by indirectly reducing the burden on their pocket. Welfare measures will improve the physical and psychological health of employees. Welfare measures in turn will enhance their efficiency and productivity.
- Absorbs the shocks injected by industrialization and urbanization on workers.

- Labor welfare Promotes a sense of belonging among workers, preventing them from resorting to unhealthy practices like absenteeism, labour turnover, strike, etc. It improves the relations between employers and employees.
- Prevents social evils like drinking, gambling, prostitution, etc., by improving the material, social and cultural conditions of work. Congenial environment as a result of welfare measures will act as a deterrent against such social evils.

Statutory Provisions

Employers are offered welfare facilities to workers under different labour laws. These are discussed as follows:

The Factories ACT, 194

It provides the following services to workers:

- Adequate and suitable facilities for washing shall be provided and maintained for use of the workers therein.
- Facilities for occasional rest for workers
- First aid boxes or cupboards- One for every 150 workers and the ambulance facility if there are more than 500 workers.
- Canteens, where there are more than 250 workers.
- Shelters, rest-rooms and lunch rooms where over 150 workers are employed
- Creche, if 30 or more workers are employed
- Welfare officer, if 500 or more workers are employed.

The Plantation Labour Act 1951

The Act Provides for the following:

- Shelters for taking food and rest
- First aid boxes and first – aid rooms if 150 workers
- A Canteen facilities if employing 250 or more workers
- A creche provided if employing 50 or more females
- Pit- head baths equipped with showers sanitary latrines
- Welfare officer if 500 or more workers are employed.

The Motor Transport Workers Act, 1961

The Act contains the following provisions:

- First aid equipment in each transport vehicle
- Canteen if employing 100 or more workers
- Comfortable, clean, ventilated and well – lighted rest rooms at every place where motor transport workers are required to halt at night
- Uniforms, rain coats to conductors, drivers, and line checking staff for protection against cold and rain
- Prescribed amount of washing allowance to the above staff members.

The Contract Labor (Regulation and Abolition) Act, 1970

The Act requires the contractor to extend the following benefits to workers:

- Canteen, if employing 100 or more workers
- Rest rooms or other suitable alternative accommodation where contract labor is required to halt at night in connection with the work of an establishment.
- Washing facilities
- First aid boxes equipped with the prescribed contents.

Agencies for Welfare Work

Central and state governments, employers, unions and social organizations work as agencies for extending welfare facilities to the workers.

Central Government

The Central Government tries to extend its helping hand through various Acts covering the safety, health and welfare of workers. The Labour welfare officers try to ensure justice to workers. Housing, educational, recreational and medical facilities are provided to workers under Statutory welfare funds.

State Governments

Governments in different states and union territories offer welfare facilities to workers. statutory welfare fund is created for offering medical, Educational, recreational and other facilities to plantation workers.

Employers

Employees Associations have also joined hands with employers in doing some welfare work for their workers like Medical, educational, recreational facilities are also extended in paper, sugar, steel cement, engineering industries also, by the employees and employee's associations.

Trade Unions

Trade unions activities towards labour welfare is not significant. Poor finances, multiple unionism, often come in the way of undertaking labor welfare work enthusiastically. Though we cannot expect much from the trade unions in the field of welfare, they can at least identify the minimum facilities needed by workers and secure the implementation of statutory measures. In the interest of workers, they can carry our educational campaigns covering pressing issues such as family planning, prohibition, cleanliness, etc.

Types of Welfare Facilities

Welfare services may broadly be classified into two categories: (i) Intramural activities which are provided within the establishment such as latrines and urinals, crèches, rest centers, canteens uniforms, library medial aid subsidized food , shift, allowance etc; (ii) Extramural activities which are undertaken outside the establishment such as family planning, child welfare, cooperative stores, credit societies, vocational guidance, holiday homes, leave travel facilities, transport to and from the place of work etc.

Box shows Intramural and Extramural Welfare Activities: ILO

Intramural	Extramural
Drinking water	Housing
Toilets	Education facilities
Creches	Maternity benefits
Washing and bathing facilities	Transportation
Rest shelters	Sports facilities
Uniforms and protective clothing	Leave travel
Recreation facilities	Vocational training
Canteens	Holiday homes
Subsidised food	Cooperative stores
Medical aid	Fair price shops
	Social insurance

Labour welfare work may also be divided into two categories: (i) Statutory welfare work comprising the legal provisions in various pieces of labour legislation (ii) Voluntary welfare work includes those activities which are undertaken by employers for their workers voluntarily. May employers, nowadays, offer the following welfare amenities voluntarily:

i. Education: A scheme of workers' education was envisaged on an all India basis by the Government of India, way back in 1957.

The scheme had four main objectives:

- To develop strong unions through trained officials and more enlightened members
- To develop leadership from the rank and file.
- To Equip organized labor to discharge its social and economic functions
- To promote their workers to understanding the problems of their economic environment and their privileges and obligations as union members.

ii. Transportation: Transport facilities to workers so that they can reach the workplace punctually and comfortably. Most employers have, however, recognized the workers' need for transport service and therefore responded favorably by providing company owned/leased vehicles to workers in major industrial center especially in the private sector. They have also introduced innovative financing schemes in recent times enabling workers to buy their own bicycles, scooters, etc.

iii. Recreation: Though there is no statutory stipulation in this area, progressive employers both in the public and private sector (Like the Tatas, Hill, Air India, BHEL, Infosys technologies, Hughes software systems, NIIT, Cadbury, Ranbaxy, Railway and defense Services have) consciously offered facilities for recreation sports and cultural activities. For Example, companies like NIIT and TISCO have appointed a Chief Fun Officer to take care of parties and functions held on every Friday. (In Addition to holiday packages, dating allowances, anniversary/ birthday gifts, games and competitions on weekends and Club jamun, eating sessions) Sprawling food courts, Basketball courts: Tennis Golf, Billiards, swimming sauna; Jacuzzi, Jogging tracks, beauty centers, spacious gyms, ATMs. Gift shops are to be found in most software companies – such as Infosys, Wipro, Hughes Software systems in India.

iv. Other facilities: These are intended to improve the comfort level of workers while at work and include the following:

- Canteen restrooms and lunchroom: Canteens established inside factories generally offer food at subsidized rates. In modern organizations, food courts with variety of continental and inter-continental cuisine have become quite popular in recent times.
- Washing Facilities, medical aid leave travel concessions: Most factories have first-aid facilities to take care of minor injuries. Reimbursement of medical expenses incurred is also increasingly factored nowadays.
- Consumer cooperative stores: The Indian Labour Conference in 1963 recommended the setting up of consumer cooperative stores in all industrial establishments including plantations and mines employing 300 or more workers. The employers is expected to extend help in the form of share capital, working capital, loans at concessive rates etc. The Industrial Truce Resolutions, 1962 aimed at keeping prices of essential items low by opening a sufficient number of fair price shops for workers.

Labour Welfare Officer

Duties of Welfare Officer

- a) To establish the conduct and hold consultations with a view to maintain harmonious relation between the factory management and workers.
- b) To bring the notice of the factory management the grievances of workers, individuals as well as collective with a view to secure expeditions redress and to act as liaison officer between the management and employee.
- c) To study and understand point of view of employee in order to help the management to shape and formulate labor policies to the workers in a language they can understand.
- d) To advise the management and concern departments of the factory obligation, statutory or otherwise are concerning regulation of working hours, maternity benefit, medical care compensation for injuries and sickness and other welfare and social benefit measures.

- e) To watch industrial relation with a view to use his influence in the event of dispute between the factory management and workers to help and to bring about a settlement by persuasive effect.

Other Duties

- a) To encourage the formulation of workers and joint production committee, co-operative societies and welfare committees and to supervise their works.
- b) To encourage the provision of amenities such as canteens, crèches, adequate latrine facilities, drinking water, sickness and benefit schemes payment, guarantee of loans and legal advice to workers.
- c) To advise the provision of welfare facilities, such as housing facilities foodstuffs social and recreational facilities sanitation advice on individual, personal problem and education of children etc.

Conclusion

Labour Welfare Measures prove to be an important factor when compared to the other factors in the organization. When these measures are not provided to the fullest extent the worker's self-interest and motivation decreases and their dedication to the work may decline. So, the task of the Personnel Manager becomes challenging and it imposes him to introduce the various employee welfare measures in the organization.

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