

A Study on Labour Welfare Practices in Karnataka Soaps and Detergents Ltd, Bengaluru

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Abstract

The importance of Labour Welfare in Industrialisation and Economic Development has been recognized globally. It is an important dimension in Industrial Relations, which includes overall welfare facilities designed to take care of well being of Employees and Workers. During the 1990s, the measures of economic reforms introduced in the country have given rise to a wave of rapid and radical changes in the structure and working of our economy. Globalization, Liberalisation, Privatisation, etc. have completely changed the functioning of the Indian Economy and forced the employees, workers, and their organizations to adapt and adjust by reorienting their ways to survive and thrive amidst the forces of change and competition. The aspect of Labour Welfare and Social Security has tremendous significance in the Public Sector, Private Sector and Multinational Organisations. It is firmly believed that money and environment given to employees is a long term investment and will never go waste. Against this backdrop, a detailed study has been conducted at Karnataka Soaps and Detergents Ltd, Bengaluru, a Public Sector Organisation. Primary data collected through a Structured Questionnaire from 100 respondents covering all levels and departments has revealed that most of the Labour Welfare and Social Security provisions are being satisfactorily provided by the company to its employees and workers. It is suggested that the company carefully look into those areas where employees/workers have expressed dissatisfaction. The article concludes by stating that if an organisation provides good welfare and social security benefits, then it will be able to procure and develop a unique pool of people who can continuously take the organization to new levels of growth and sustainability.

Keywords: Employee, Industrial relations, Industrialisation, Labour welfare, Organisation, Social security

Introduction

Labour Welfare includes anything that is done for the comfort and improvement of employees and workers over and above the wages. Welfare helps in keeping the morale and motivation of the employees/workers high to retain them for a longer duration. The welfare measures need not be in monetary terms only but also kinds/forms. Employee Welfare includes monitoring of working conditions and creation of industrial harmony through infrastructure for health, industrial relations and insurance against disease, accident and unemployment of workers and their families. Labour Welfare includes all those activities of the employer directed towards providing the employees with certain facilities and services and salaries and wages.

The Oxford Dictionary defines Labour Welfare as "Efforts to make life worth living for Workers."

Arthur James Todd defines Labour/Employee Welfare as "Anything did for the comfort and improvement of employees/workers over and above the wages paid, which is not a necessity of the industry."

Labour Welfare has the following Objectives

- To provide a better life and health for workers.
- To relieve the workers from industrial fatigue and to improve intellectual, cultural and material conditions of living of the workers.
- To make the workers happy and contented.

The Government has passed various Welfare Legislations like Factories Act, 1948, Mines Act, 1951, Plantation Act, 1951, Dock Workers Act, 1948, Motor Transport Workers Act, 1961, etc has to be strictly followed by all organizations.

Social Security

Social Security, according to Lord Beveridge, is an attack on five giants, i.e. Want, Disease, Ignorance, Squalor and Idleness. The concept of Social Security is essentially related to the high ideals of human dignity and social justice.

Friedlander states that Social Security is a program of protection provided by society against the contingencies of modern life like sickness, unemployment, old age, industrial accidents against an individual can not be expected to protect himself & his family by his ability and foresightedness.

In India, Social Security is provided through various legislations like Employees State Insurance Act, 1948, Employees Provident Fund and Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1952, Employees/Workmens Compensation Act 1923, Payment of Gratuity Act, 1972 and Maternity Benefit Act, 1961.

Statement of the Problem

Employee / Labour Turnover is very common in Indian Industries and the lack of good welfare and social security benefits is cited as one of the prime reasons for this problem. Absenteeism is quite high across organizations, especially small and medium-size establishments and this problem can be reduced considerably if all organizations, specially small and medium-size units provide good welfare and social security benefits to all employees and workers

Nearly 85 percent of the work force in India are employed in the Informal Sector and small establishments employing less than 20 persons. These small establishments and Informal Sector are outside the purview of various Labour Welfare and Social Security legislations.

Even in the Organised Sector, which constitutes hardly around 10 to 15 percent of the labor force, evasion of labor laws is quite common and lack of sufficient and good quality Factory Inspectorates has added to this problem. In the Organised Sector, there is also a growing trend to appoint employees/workers on a contractual basis to evade labour laws.

Objectives of the Study

- To make a detailed study of the various Labour Welfare and Social Security benefits provided by Karnataka Soaps & Detergents Ltd to its Employees and Workers.
- To assess the awareness, needs and satisfaction level of Employees and Workers regarding various welfare and social security benefits being provided by the company.
- Based on the study, to offer constructive suggestions to enhance the quality of various welfare and social security benefits offered by the company to its employees and workers.

Research Methodology

The study has been conducted by using both Primary Data and Secondary Data.

Primary Data has been collected from 100 Employees/Workers covering all departments and levels by using simple random sampling and by administering a Structured Questionnaire.

Secondary Data has been collected through various Journals, Magazines, Company Reports, Websites, etc.

Review of Literature

D. Sathyanarayana (2015), in the research article "Management of Employee's Welfare - A case study in Andhra Paper Mills Ltd," has predominantly aimed to study the extent of employee welfare measures and the awareness level in this regard in APML. Primary data has been collected from 60 employees using simple random sampling, and the data has been analyzed with the help of a satisfactory scoring model.

The author has observed that nearly 1/3rd of the employees have expressed dissatisfaction regarding safety; around 40 percent of the employees have expressed dissatisfaction regarding

drinking water facilities and accident prevention measures. Half of the respondents have expressed dissatisfaction regarding first aid appliances and nearly 60 percent of the respondents have expressed dissatisfaction regarding the crèches facility. The other important areas where many respondents expressed dissatisfaction were about holidays, educational facilities, housing facilities and accident compensation. The author has stressed that it is very important for the company management to take immediate steps in those areas where employees/workers have expressed dissatisfaction. Regarding housing, the author has suggested that slums should be cleaned, and in their place, planned cement or tar lanes with proper drainage should be laid. Pucca wells with tanks should be provided and housing boards should aid the workers to raise low-cost houses and financial and other aid should be given at concessional rates. The author has finally pointed out that there is no proper involvement of workers in a co-operative society and unless co-operative departments take initiatives and extra interest in making the co-operatives adhere to laws and by-laws, the hope of survival of these co-operatives especially in industrial areas is bleak.

Sakriya Dharavath and Swetha Kanyadhari (2017) in the research article “A study on Labour Welfare Measures concerning selected Cement Industry in Telangana,” have analyzed the Labour Welfare Measures adopted at Kakatiya Cement and Sugar Industries Ltd, Nalgonda District, Telangana. The main objective of the study was to assess the satisfaction level of employees/workers regarding the various welfare measures offered by the company. The study also covered the effectiveness of HR practices and benefits related to health and safety standards available at the selected cement factory. Three hundred ninety-five respondents is the sample size selected by adopting Convenient Random sampling. Primary data has been collected by administering a Questionnaire to the selected employees/workers. Classification, Tabulation, Percentages, Simple Statistical Averages etc are the main tools used to analyze the data. Based on the findings, the authors have given the following suggestions:

- a) Improvement is needed in the areas of Rest Rooms and supply of Uniforms and Shoes.
- b) Productivity linked annual bonus and Retirement benefits need to be implemented effectively to motivate the employees further.
- c) The company should take an interest in providing educational facilities for employee’s children and compensation on death provided by the organization should be improved
- d) Factory management should give utmost importance to cleanliness, disposal of waste and effluents and maintenance of an effective drainage system.
- e) It is also suggested that the management should conduct yearly medical checkup of all employees/workers to ensure a healthy work force.

Major Findings of the Study

Personal Details

1. 85 percent of the respondents are male and 15 percent are female. Since the company is a manufacturing organization, majority of the respondents are male.
2. 9 percent of the respondents are in the age group of 18-24, 34 percent in the age group of 25-35, 28 percent are in the age group of 36-45 and 29 percent are more than 46 years old.
3. 18 percent of the respondents have passed SSLC, 12 percent have passed PUC, 22 Percent hold a Diploma, 24 percent have a degree and 24 percent hold a Post Graduate/Professional Degree
4. 9 percent of the respondents have a work experience of fewer than 5 years, 17 percent have a work experience of 5-10 years, 17 percent have a work experience of 11-15 years, 14 percent have a work experience of 16-20 years and 43 percent of the respondents have a work experience of more than 20 years.

Canteen Facility

1. All respondents have stated that there is a Canteen in the Factory
2. 52 percent of the respondents have stated that the quality of food needs to be improved so that employees and workers can get more nutritious and healthy food
3. Many of the respondents also felt that the

Management should consider replacing the steam boiled food items in the Canteen. The respondents have also stated that more professional and experienced Cooks are needed in the Canteen.

4. 82 percent of the respondents have expressed satisfaction regarding the quantity of food served in the Canteen
5. 84 percent of the respondents have expressed satisfaction regarding the price charged by the Canteen Management
6. 74 percent of the respondents have expressed satisfaction regarding Service and Seating arrangements in the Canteen
7. 46 percent of the respondents have stated that improvement is needed concerning Hygiene in the Canteen
8. 44 percent of the respondents have stated that Ventilation arrangements in the Canteen need improvement
9. 68 percent of the respondents have stated that food served in the Canteen has only an average effect on their Health and Productivity
10. 64 percent of the respondents have stated that the Menu is monotonous and more variety of items should be introduced along with side dishes. The respondents also stated that at least once a week, Ice Cream and Fruit Salad should be provided
11. 88 percent of the respondents have stated that there have been no incidents where the food served in the Canteen had resulted in health disorder for Employees/Workers
12. 65 percent of the respondents have stated that most of the people running the Canteen are outside Contractors and only a few employees are involved in Canteen management. The respondents felt that dependence on outside Contractors has to be reduced and employees/workers should be given more prominence in managing the Canteen

Medical Facilities

1. All respondents have stated that there is a Doctor in the Factory but only on a part-time basis and all respondents have stated that there is a need for at least two full-time Doctors in the Factory
2. All respondents have stated that there is an Ambulance in the Factory premises

3. All respondents have stated that for lower-level employees there is an ESI facility and for higher-level employees there is a Medclaim Insurance facility
4. 54 percent of the respondents have stated that the Sum Assured under Medclaim Insurance Policy should be suitably enhanced keeping in mind the present rate of medical expenses. The policy should also cover medical expenses for big diseases. Respondents have also stated that Hitech hospitals are not included in the Medclaim Policy.
5. 56 percent of the respondents have stated that in the Medclaim Insurance Policy, apart from employees, wife, children and parents of employees should also be included
6. 94 percent of the respondents felt that providing good medical facilities will improve Employees/Workers productivity

Safety Facilities

1. 44 percent of the respondents have stated that they are only moderately aware of the company's safety measures/policies as required by the Factories Act
2. All respondents have stated that they are being provided with safety/protective equipment, although many respondents stated that improvement is needed in the quality as well as the number of safety equipment provided to them
3. 56 percent of the respondents have stated that more safety training programs have to be initiated by the management
4. All respondents have stated that accidents are being properly investigated and preventive measures taken by the company
5. Most of the respondents have stated that there is no Safety Suggestion Scheme in the factory
6. 58 percent of the respondents have stated that improvements are needed in the areas of Hoists & Lifts, Pits, Sumps & Opening in Floors, Precautions against dangerous Fumes and Noise Control
7. 84 percent of the respondents have expressed satisfaction concerning Fencing of Machinery, Revolving Machinery, Excessive Weights and Protection of Eyes

8. 82 percent of the respondents have stated that there is no disparity in safety facilities between higher level, middle level and lower level management
9. 94 percent of the respondents have stated that providing good safety facilities will help to improve the health and productivity of employees/workers
13. The company is not providing Housing facilities to its employees/workers
14. Employees are getting House Rent Allowance instead of Housing facilities
15. The company is not providing Transportation Facilities to its employees/workers
16. 62 percent of the respondents have stated that Training & Development programs have to be conducted more often

Other Welfare Facilities

1. 82 percent of the respondents have expressed satisfaction regarding Sitting facilities and Toilets
2. 76 percent of the respondents have expressed dissatisfaction regarding Washing facilities and Storing and Drying Facilities for Clothes
3. 68 percent of the respondents have expressed satisfaction regarding Cleanliness, Hygiene, Sanitation and Disposal of Wastes and Effluents
4. 68 percent of the respondents have expressed dissatisfaction regarding Rest Rooms
5. 66 percent of the respondents have expressed satisfaction regarding Ventilation, Temperature and Lighting
6. 56 percent of the respondents have expressed dissatisfaction regarding Prevention of Dust and Fumes
7. 72 percent of the respondents have expressed dissatisfaction regarding Spittoons and Creches
8. 68 percent of the respondents have expressed satisfaction regarding Maintenance of Factory & Office Building, Leave Facilities, Working Conditions & Environment, Prevention of Overcrowding and Accident Compensation
9. 56 percent of the respondents have expressed dissatisfaction regarding Overtime, Sports & Recreation, Libraries and Officers/Workers Clubs
10. 78 percent of the respondents have expressed satisfaction regarding Grievance Handling Procedure and Harassment Handling Procedure
11. 72 percent of the respondents have expressed satisfaction regarding Work Timings and Work Load
12. All the Contract/Temporary employees/workers (Around 40 percent of the total employees/workers) have expressed concern about Job Security
17. 69 percent of the respondents have stated that they are only moderately aware of the provisions of various Welfare and Social Security benefits as per law as well as voluntary
18. 68 percent of the respondents have stated that the Labour Welfare Officer does not regularly visit the work place to communicate with employees and workers to enquire about their problems
19. All employees and workers have stated that there are too many Trade Unions in the factory resulting in infighting. The factory has five Trade Unions
20. 62 percent of the respondents have stated that Inspectors from the Factory Inspectorates are not meeting them during their visits to enquire about their problems relating to welfare and social security amenities
21. 78 percent of the respondents have stated that there is no structured feed back mechanism to assess the satisfaction level of employees/workers regarding various welfare and social security benefits provided by the company
22. All employees and workers have agreed that providing good welfare facilities will result in improved motivation/morale among employees/workers, help to achieve greater productivity, bring about Industrial Peace and eliminate absenteeism and Employee/Labour turnover apart from enhancing the public image of the company

Suggestions

Canteen Facilities

1. As 52 percent of the respondents have stated that the food quality is not satisfactory, the company should take steps to provide food that is high in nutritional content, preferably tested by a nutritional expert. This will have a positive

- effect on the employees/workers health and productivity
2. The management should consider replacing steam boiled food items in the canteen and also appoint more professional and experienced cooks
 3. 46 percent of the respondents have stated that improvement is needed in respect of Hygiene in the Canteen. The company should take steps to procure automated Dish Washing machines and Floor cleaning machines and maintain a clean environment in the Canteen. It should be made compulsory for people serving food to wear caps and gloves
 4. 44 percent of the respondents have stated that Ventilation arrangements in the Canteen need improvement. The Management should take necessary steps in this regard by installing Fans, Exhaust Fans and other equipment which will improve Ventilation in the Canteen premises
 5. 64 percent of the respondents have stated that the Menu is very repetitive and monotonous. Management should take steps to introduce more variety in the Menu with side dishes. Ice Cream & Fruit Salad provided at least once a week
 6. 65 percent of the respondents have stated that most of the people managing the Canteen are outside Contractors and only a few employees are involved in running the Canteen. Management should take steps to reduce outside Contractors and give more prominence to Employees/Workers in managing the Canteen.

Medical Facilities

1. All respondents have stated that there is only a Part-Time Doctor in the Factory. The Management should appoint least two Full-Time Doctors to take care of any health problems and medical emergencies of Employees/Workers in the Factory premises.
2. Nearly 54 percent of the respondents have expressed dissatisfaction regarding the amount of Sum Assured under the Mediclaim Policy. Management should take steps to suitably enhance the Sum Assured keeping in mind the present rate of medical expenses. The policy should cover big diseases and Hitech Hospitals should also be included in the Mediclaim Policy

3. 56 percent of the respondents have stated that in the Mediclaim Policy, apart from Employee, the wife, children and parents of the Employee should also be included. The Management can take steps to include wife, children and parents of the employee in the Mediclaim Policy.

Safety Facilities

1. 44 percent of the respondents have stated that they are only moderately aware of the Company's Safety Policies/Measures. Management should take steps to conduct Safety policy awareness programs to ensure that all employees and workers are fully aware of the Company's Safety Measures and Policies
2. The Management should take steps to enhance the quality and quantity of Safety/Protective Equipment provided to Employees/Workers
3. The Company should take steps to conduct more number of Safety programs to educate the Employees/Workers and help to create a safe working environment in the Factory
4. There is no Safety Suggestion Scheme in the Factory. Management should take steps to introduce a Safety Suggestion Scheme and announce a reward for very useful suggestions. This step will go a long way in creating a very safe working environment in the Factory
5. 58 percent of the respondents have expressed dissatisfaction in Hoists & Lifts, Pits, Sumps & Opening in Floors, Precautions against dangerous Fumes and Noise Control. Management should take immediate steps to set right the defects in these areas.

Other Welfare Facilities

1. 76 percent of the respondents have expressed dissatisfaction regarding Washing facilities and Storing & Drying facilities for Clothes. Management should take immediate steps to provide these facilities to employees/workers
2. 68 percent of the respondents have expressed dissatisfaction regarding Rest Rooms. Management should take steps to construct suitable Rest Rooms so that employees/workers can utilize them for much needed short breaks after long periods of work

3. 56 percent of the respondents have expressed dissatisfaction regarding Dust & Fumes. Management should take suitable steps to provide adequate protection to employees/workers against the hazards of Dust & Fumes.
4. 72 percent of the respondents have expressed dissatisfaction regarding Spittoons and Creches. Immediate steps should be taken to install Spittoons to enhance cleanliness and hygiene in the factory premises. Creches should be made available to take care of the young children under the age of six of women employees
5. 56 percent of the respondents have expressed dissatisfaction regarding Overtime, Sports & Recreation, Libraries and Officers/Workers Clubs. Necessary steps should be taken by the Management in these areas
6. The company employs a large number of temporary/contract employees/workers. These respondents have expressed concern regarding Job Security and lack of Statutory and other welfare amenities. The Company should look into the problems of contract workers and take steps to improve their working conditions
7. The company is not providing Housing facilities to its employees/workers. The Company should take steps to provide Housing facilities at least on a moderate scale to its employees/workers
8. The Company is not providing Transportation facilities to its employees/workers. The Company should take steps to procure Buses/Vans to help transport employees and workers to and from the work place. Alternatively, the Company can agree with a Government or Private Transport Agency to provide Transportation to employees/workers. This will greatly help to reduce travel fatigue and increase the productivity of employees/workers.
9. 62 percent of the respondents have stated that Training & Development programs should be conducted more often. Management should take steps to conduct these programs more often to help employees and workers to update their knowledge and skills
10. Nearly 70 percent of the respondents have stated that they are only moderately aware of the various Welfare and Social Security provisions. Steps may be taken to conduct awareness programs so that all employees and workers become familiar with the various Welfare and Social Security provisions
11. The response to the functioning of the Labour Welfare Officer has been very poor. The Labour Welfare Officer should regularly visit the work place and enquire about the problems of employees and workers
12. There are five Trade Unions in the Factory. This results in infighting, groups etc. Steps may be taken to amalgamate all unions into a single union which can then work sincerely for the upliftment of employees and workers
13. 62 percent of the respondents have stated that Inspectors from Factory Inspectorates are not meeting them during their visits to the Factory. It is suggested that the Inspectors meet with employees and workers and enquire about their problems
14. Nearly 80 percent of the respondents have stated that there is no proper and structured Feed Back system to assess the satisfaction level of employees and workers. A Structured and periodical Feedback Mechanism should be introduced by the Company to assess the satisfaction level of employees/workers regarding various Welfare and Social Security benefits provided by the Company.

Conclusion

The concept of Labour Welfare originated in the desire for a humanitarian approach to the sufferings of the Working Class. Later it became a utilization philosophy which worked as a motivating force for Labour to give their best to the Organisations. Labour Welfare has become essential because of the very nature of the Industrial System and the need for Labour Welfare is realized all over the world because of the socio-economic conditions and problems which the Industrial Society has thrown up. A detailed study has been conducted at Karnataka Soaps & Detergents Ltd, Bengaluru a Government of Karnataka undertaking which manufactures the highly popular world-famous Mysore Sandal Soap and other products like Talcum Powder, Room Fresheners, Agarbhaties, Sandalwood Oil, Sandalwood Billets, Sandalwood

Powder etc. Primary Data has been collected from 100 respondents covering all departments and levels by administering a Structured Questionnaire. The study has revealed that most of the basic and Statutory Welfare and Social Security amenities are being satisfactorily provided by the Company to its Employees and Workers. However, there are certain areas where the respondents have expressed partial satisfaction and dissatisfaction.

It is in the interest of the Company to look into these areas and initiate necessary remedial measures. If the suggestions offered in this study are properly complied with, it will most certainly improve the quality of Welfare and Social Security benefits resulting in an enhanced Quality of Work Life (QWL), Motivation, Morale and Productivity among all Employees and Workers.

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