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## INTRODUCTION

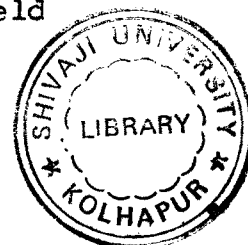
## INTRODUCTION

Labour Welfare is a subject which has received universal acceptance and is given utmost premium because of its key importance in the whole programme of industrialisation. A contented labour force is the backbone of a country's economic prosperity. Labour Welfare includes several schemes adopted by the employers and also by the trade union organisations for the health, safety, education and general uplifting of employees which create real motivation to work.

Labour Welfare is one major aspect of national programmes towards bettering the lot of labour and creating a life and work environment of decent comfort for this class of population. Labour Welfare has tremendous potentialities for fostering good industrial relations.

The Royal Commission on Labour in India (1931) rightly pointed : "The term Welfare as applied to the industrial workers is one which must necessarily be elastic, bearing a some what different interpretation in one country from another, according to the different social customs, the degree of industrialisation and the educational development of the worker ".

Labour Welfare is a part of Social Welfare, conceptually and operationally. It covers a broad field



and connotes a state of well being, happiness, satisfaction, conservation and development of human resources.

Labour Welfare schemes contribute to the maintenance of industrial peace and promote a feeling among the workers that they have a stake in industry as much as any one else and they have to stabilise an economically efficient working force.

Labour Welfare being a dynamic subject, no rigid limits can be laid down for its scope for all industries and for all times. It is elastic enough to include all the essential pre-requisites of life that a worker, as a human being, reasonably stands in need of basic minimum amenities without which a worker can not work.

Labour investigation committee also surveyed the scope of labour welfare in the context of Indian conditions. Summing up its observations, the committee said (1946) " For our part, we prefer to include under welfare activities anything done for the intellectual, physical, moral and economic betterment of the workers, whether by employers, by Government or by other agencies, over and above what is laid down by law or what is normally expected as part of the contractual benefits for which the workers may have bargained".

Indian workers have regarded industrial employment as 'necessary evil' and they have been keen to escape from it as early as possible. For building up a stable and efficient labour force, it is essential to bring about a marked improvement in the conditions of workers' life and work. The Indian Industrial worker has often been condemned as lazy and inefficient, but as pointed out by Bombay Textile Labour Enquiry Committee (1940), "It is axiomatic that, in all pursuits a high standard of efficiency can be expected only from persons who are physically fit and free from mental worries, that, is only from persons who are properly trained, properly housed, properly fed and properly clothed. "The need and importance of welfare measures in India, which are designed to bring about an alround improvement in the workers' standards of life, can not be over emphasized."

There can be no doubt with regard to the beneficial effects of welfare activities.

1. Welfare measures influence the sentiment of the workers. Welfare activities such as educational facilities, sports, entertainments and the like influence the sentimental atmosphere in the factory. It helps to develop the feeling of friendly relationship.

2. Provision of canteens where cheap, clean and balanced food is available to workers improve their physique; entertainments and reduce the incidence of vices; medical aid and maternity and child welfare improve the health of workers and their families and bring down the rates of general maternal and infant mortality; and educational facilities increase their mental efficiency, and economic productivity.
3. The provisions of various welfare measures make the workers to feel and realize that, they also have some stake in the undertaking in which they are engaged. An alround increase in production is possible.
4. Adequate provision of welfare facilities can reduce the high rate of absenteeism and labour turnover in Indian Industries.
5. Welfare measures have a content and reality in the context of the poor standard of living of the worker. With a high level of income workers may even resent or not show an enthusiastic response to welfare measures. But in Indian conditions, welfare measures provide some of the elementary needs like good housing, education and nutritional food, which the worker might not be able to afford otherwise.

The planning commission also realized the necessity of labour welfare when it observed in first five years plan (1951), that, "in order to get the best out of a worker in the matter of production, working conditions required to be improved to a large extent". It means that, the worker should atleast get the means and facilities to keep himself in a stage of health and efficiency. The working conditions should be such as to safeguard his health and protect him against occupational hazards. The work place should provide reasonable amenities for his essential needs.

Sarma (1981) stated that "labour Welfare is a part of social welfare, conceptually and operationally. It covers a broad field and connotes a state of well being, happiness, satisfaction, conservation and development of human resources.

Labour Welfare is one of the basic factors that provides a happier life to workers. It embraces all effects which are oriented to the improvement of health, safety, general well being and efficiency of the workers.

The term Labour Welfare, includes various activities relating to the different aspects of working classes. These activities have classified by different authors in different categories like -

- 1) Statutory,
- 2) Non-Statutory or Voluntary and
- 3) Mutual

1. STATUTORY FACILITIES :

Statutory welfare refers to those provisions which are derived from the coercive power of the Government. Every welfare state promotes the welfare of the people by securing and protecting a social order in which justice, social, economical and political conforms with all the institutions of national life. Therefore, the Government enacts certain legislations regarding working and living conditions, minimum wages, safety and sanitation. The statutory provisions regarding welfare under the Factories Act, 1943, Plantation of Labour Act, 1951, Mines Act, 1952, Motor Transport Act, 1961, and Contract Labour (Regulation and Abolition) Act, 1970 are binding on the concerned employers.

2) NON STATUTORY FACILITIES OR VOLUNTARY :

It includes those activities which are undertaken by employers for their workers. They are primarily oriented to democratic value system. It helps to increase the efficiency of workers and reduce the chances of conflict between employers and workers.

3) MUTUAL:

Mutual Welfare refers to those activities which

are initiated by workers for their betterment; in a suitable manner. For instance, trade unions undertake certain welfare activities for the social and economic betterment of their members.

Besides the above classifications, welfare activities may further be divided under two heads:-

- 1) Intra-mural activities
- 2) Extra mural activities

1. INTRA-MURAL ACTIVITIES:

Intra-mural activities means those amenities and services which have been provided by the employers inside the factories e.g. sanitary conditions, medical facilities, shelter, canteens and provisions relating to safety, sufficient lighting, air etc.,

2. EXTRA-MURAL ACTIVITIES:

Extra-mural activities means those activities, which are available to the workers outside the factory e.g. provision of good housing, medical facilities, recreation and education etc.,

Section 42 to Sec. 48 of Factories Act 1948,



deal with welfare facilities like washing facilities for storing and drying clothing, facilities for sitting, first-aid appliances, canteens, shelters rest rooms and lunch rooms and creches, section 49 deals with the employment of welfare officer. Some of the above provisions are given below:-

WASHING FACILITIES:

In every factory adequate and suitable facilities for washing shall be provided and maintained for use of male and female workers separately.

FACILITIES FOR SITTING:

Every factory to be provided and maintained so as to be readily accessible during all working hours first aid boxes or cupboards equipped with the prescribed contents, and the number of such boxes or cupboards to be provided and maintained shall not be less than one for every 150 workers ordinarily employed in the factory.

Wherein more than 500 workers are employed an ambulance room of prescribed size and containing the prescribed equipment must be provided.

CANTEENS:

Wherein 250 workers are ordinarily employed, a canteen shall be provided and maintained by the occupier for the use of workers.

The canteen building shall be constructed in accordance with the plans approved by the Chief Inspector and shall accommodate at least a dining hall, kitchen, store room pantry and washing places separately for workers and utensils. The price list of food stuff or other items must be displayed on board.

SHELTERS REST ROOMS AND LUNCH ROOMS:

In every factory wherein more than 150 workers are ordinarily employed, adequate and suitable shelters or rest rooms and a suitable lunch room, with provision for drinking water, where workers can eat meals brought by them, shall be provided.

The prescribed standard in respect of construction, accommodation, furniture and other equipment of shelters, rest rooms and lunch rooms to be provided.

CRECHES:

Every factory wherein more than 30 women workers

are ordinarily employed, Crech must be provided. Such room should provide adequate accommodation, adequately lighted and ventilated and shall be maintained in a clean and sanitary condition and shall be under the charge of women trained in the care of children and infants.

Section 49 deals with the employment of welfare Officer i.e., wherein more than 500 workers are ordinarily employed the occupier shall employ a number of welfare officers shall be appointed as may be prescribed.

NON-STATUTORY OR VOLUNTARY:

Educational facilities, Medical facilities, Transport facilities Recreational facilities, Sports facilities are non statutory or voluntary which are undertaken by the employer.

EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES:

Generally it is observed that the industrial labour in India is illiterate. Though much more efforts were taken by Central and State Governments in this connection, it is not up to the mark yet, still with the help of workers' Education Classes the illiteracy problem is coming down. More attention

is given to the welfare of the family of worker. The children of workers should be provided with educational facilities, libraries, reading rooms, so also some of the factories are paying the fees of their employee's children and the finance have been provided for purchasing the books.

#### RECREATIONAL FACILITIES:

Recreational facilities afford the worker an opportunity to develop his sense of physical and mental discipline, it helps to create a healthy climate for industrial peace. Music, dance, drama, games and sports, paintings, carvings etc., are different forms of recreation. The process of industrialisation itself has accelerated the need for recreational amenities.

#### MEDICAL FACILITIES:

Many of the large plantations have extended hospital and dispensary facilities for the treatment of workers and their families. They have also made arrangements for the treatment of their workers at Government hospitals at their own cost. The problem is in the case of small sized units. The Committee on labour welfare has recommended that in the case of smaller units, medical facilities should be

provided on joint basis by a group of employers in scattered areas. The institutions like industrial co-operatives industrial estates, can play an important role in providing medical facilities to the workers by a joint drive.

#### TRANSPORT FACILITIES:

In cities like Bombay, Pune, Calcutta, it was very trouble-some to a worker to attend the duties as the work place was at a long distance from residence. Transport facilities have made it easy task. In some of the big cities the industrial workers make use of the local trains, buses, so also the management are arranging their own buses to make it convenient for workers to attend the duties in time, by which the absenteeism is also reduced upto some extent. The workers can get the relief from the travelling strains.

#### HOUSING FACILITIES:

Some of the industrial employers both in public and private sectors have provided housing facilities to their employees. As the number of employees are increasing so also industries are increasing it is not possible for the employer to provide the housing facilities to every employee.

Thus those who are not getting quarters or housing facility are provided a fixed house rent allowance decided by the company.

CONSUMER CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETIES:

Consumer's co-operative Societies are formed in the industries to provide the food grains, cloths and all necessary articles of daily consumption and to keep the prices at a fair and reasonable level lower than the market rate.

No one is compelled to join a co-operative society. The management of a co-operative society is democratic, 'Self help through mutual help' is the guiding principle and co-operative spirit is maintained, which leads to the development of higher values of life.

THE NEED FOR COMPARATIVE STUDY OF WELFARE FACILITIES:

With the growing realisation that the conditions under which the industrial workers work and live have to be materially improved in order to promote their welfare, the State has become an active agent in initiating measures in this direction. The term 'Labour Welfare' is gaining importance all over the world.

It is generally observed that the standard of

welfare amenities provided differ from centre to centre. While some cotton mills been content with providing the facilities required by law, other have undertaken welfare activities on an extensive scale and much in advance of what the law requires. Generally speaking, nearly all the cotton mills in the country have provided dispensaries and have placed them under the qualified doctors. Some mills have well equipped hospitals as well. Several Mills have provided separately maternity homes or wards. Creches for workers' children exist in most of the mills, although the standard vary considerably. Facilities for indoor and out door games, co-operative societies, schools for the education of workers and their children, and gratuity, and provident fund schemes existed in several mills.

In Solapur the Mills taken for our study have provided dispensaries, grainshops, creches, canteens etc., so also some of mills have provided Gymnasiums or sports clubs.

As a matter of fact very little has been done to improve the efficiency of the workers. It will be in the interest of the employers to recognize the value of such measures and the gains accruing from them and to realize that the amount spent by them on these

activities will be a valuable investment which ultimately increase their profits. The state, the workers organisations, the employers, as well as other social agencies should also take full cognizance of their responsibilities in the matter.

It is hoped that a research work of this kind will not only help the researcher, but also to the employers, to learn the right spirit in which Welfare facilities are to be provided to workers. It should be borne in mind that, "Welfare provided in such an impious spirit is not Welfare but illfare".

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