

CHAPTER II

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THEORETICAL BASE OF THE STUDY

The growing attention that is being paid to labour problems at the present time is an indication of the increasing importance of the working class in the economic and social structure of modern communities. In as much as the working class, in the widest sense of the term, constitute a substantial part of the national populations, they are the means, in terms, of their economic power, and the object of economic and social progress as well. 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.

The term 'welfare' is so comprehensive that it lends itself to various interpretations. According to the Royal Commission on Labour,

"Welfare is one which must necessarily be elastic, bearing a somewhat different interpretation in one country from another, according to different social customs, the degree of industrialisation and the educational development of the worker.*1

Thus, the term 'welfare' is very elastic. Hence, the precise definition of the term 'labour welfare' is difficult.

According to the Labour Investigation Commission (Rege Committee), 1946, labour welfare activities include anything done

*1 S.R.Saxena.

Labour problems and Social Welfare Prakashan Kendra, New Builders, Aminabad, Lucknow. Editor 1971, pp.215.

for the intellectual, physical, moral and economic betterment of the workers, whether by employers, by government or by other agencies, over and above what was laid down by law or what was normally expected as part of the contractual benefits for which the workers might have bargained.*2

The list of various measures given by the Committee includes housing, medical and educational facilities, nutrition (including provision of Canteens), facilities for rest and recreation, co-operative societies, day nurseries and creches, provision of sanitary accommodation, holidays with pay, social insurance measures undertaken voluntarily by employers alone or jointly with workers, provident fund, gratuity and pensions.

According to the Report of the Asian Regional Conference of the International Labour Organisation the term 'Labour Welfare' is understood to include such services, facilities and amenities which may be established in or in the vicinity of undertakings to enable the persons employed in them to perform their work in healthy, congenial surroundings and provided with amenities conducive to good health and high morale.*3.

*2. J.C.Sinha and V.N.Mugali "Business Management " Volume II
R.Chand and Co., New Delhi-2. Ed.1985 pp.9.175.

*3. J.C.Sinha and V.N.Mugali "Business Management" Volume II
R.Chand and Co., New Delhi-2. Ed.1985 pp.9.174.

According to Mr.N.M.Joshi the welfare work "covers all the efforts which employers make for the benefit of their employees over and above the minimum standard of working conditions fixed by the Factory Act and over and above the provisions of the social legislations providing against accident, oldage, unemployment and sickness.'*4.

As the National Commission on Labour observed, the concept of labour welfare is necessarily dynamic, bearing a different interpretation from country to country and from time to time, and even in the same country, according to the value system (values of life), social institutions, degree of industrialisation and general level of social and economic development. Even within the same country, its content may be different from region to region.*5.

*4. C.B.Mamoria and S.L.Doshi "Labour Problems and Social Welfare in India". Kitab Mahal 15, Thornhill Road, Allahabad. Sec.Edn. 1966. pp.311.

*5. J.C.Sinha and V.N. mugali "Business Management" R.Chand & Co., New Delhi. 6th Ed. 1985. pp.9.175.

Therefore, the term "Labour Welfare" is very comprehensive and flexible. It covers almost all fields of activities such as educational, social political, industrial etc. Services which help workers to increase their moral, improve standard of living, enjoy better working conditions and enhance general efficiency are included in labour welfare. Thus the facilities pertaining to sanitary conditions, rest pauses, canteen, medical aids, transport, accommodation etc. embrace the field of labour welfare activities. Thus, labour welfare promotes the well-being of workers in a variety of ways.

CONCEPT OF LABOUR WELFARE

Labour welfare is a broad concept referring to a state of living of an individual or a group in a desirable relationship with the total environment ecological, economic and social. Labour welfare is a part of social welfare, conceptually and operationally. It covers a broad field and suggests many ideas, meanings and connotations, such as the state of well-being health, happiness, satisfaction and the conservation and development of human resources.

Labour welfare may be viewed as a total concept, as a social concept and as a relative concept. The total concept is a desirable state of existence involving the physical, mental, moral and emotional well-being. These are the four pillars or fourfold foundation on which the structure of welfare is built.

Welfare is also a social concept which implies the welfare of man, his family and his community.

All these three aspects work together in society.

The relative concept of welfare implies that welfare is relative in time and place. It is a dynamic and flexible concept and hence its meaning and content differs from time to time, region to region, industry to industry and country to country.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF LABOUR WELFARE;

A happy and contented labour force plays an important role in the economic development of the country.

The aim or object of welfare work is threefold. It is partly humanitarian, partly economic and partly civic. It is partly humanitarian since it aims at providing certain facilities and amenities of life to enable the workers to enjoy a richer and fuller life which they themselves cannot avail of. Then it is partly economic as it improves the efficiency of the workers, keeps them contented, minimises the chances of industrial conflict and increases their availability at places where it is scarce. Lastly, it is partly civic since it promotes a sense of responsibility and dignity among the workers and thus helps to make them worthy citizens.

According to Kirkaldy labour welfare activities include all those measures which are undertaken to achieve the following objectives:

- i) To combat the sense of frustration of the industrial worker;
- ii) To relieve him of personal and family worries;
- iii) To improve his health;

- iv) To afford him means of self-expression;
- v) To offer him some sphere in which he can excel others;
- vi) To help him to a wider concept of life.

PRINCIPLES OF LABOUR WELFARE :

The following principles should be kept in mind for successful implementation of any welfare programme in an organisation.

- 1) Welfare facilities are not the substitutes for low wages and other allowances. The workers have a right to adequate wages in addition to welfare measures.
- 2) Well-thoughtout scheme of priorities should be the soul of labour welfare measures. For example, housing and sanitary facilities must get priority over the recreation facilities.
- 3) There should be no force or compulsion for workers to avail of these facilities.
- 4) Worker's representatives should be actively associated with the planning and administration of any scheme of labour welfare.
- 5) There should be periodical assessment or evaluation of welfare measures and necessary timely improvements on the basis of feedback.
- 6) Labour welfare activities should pervade the entire hierarchy of an organisation. Management should be welfare-oriented at every level.
- 7) There should be proper co-ordination, harmony and integration of all labour welfare services in an undertaking.

CLASSIFICATION OF LABOUR WELFARE FACILITIES

Labour Welfare activities may be divided into the following three categories:

1) STATUTORY WELFARE ACTIVITIES

Statutory welfare refers to those provisions which are derived from the coercive power of the Government. The Government enacts certain acts for their observance which have to be abided by the employers. Statutory provisions may be relating to living conditions, minimum wages, sanitary conditions, hours of work, lighting etc. statutory welfare activities are compulsory. Statutory provisions are gradually increasing along with industrial development.

2) VOLUNTARY WELFARE ACTIVITIES

All those activities which are undertaken by the employers for the betterment of workers by providing facilities to their employees without any pressure from the government are called voluntary activities. Voluntary activities are based on philanthropy and on the belief that it is a sound investment as it leads to the efficiency of the workers. It also reduces the chances of conflict between employers and workers. Some social organisations such as Y.M.C.A., Rotary and Lions Clubs also undertake such activities.

3) MUTUAL WELFARE ACTIVITIES:

Mutual welfare activities are those which are organised by the trade unions for the benefit of workers. Thus, these are the activities for ^{and} by the workers for their mutual help and benefit.

These are usually outside the scope of statutory activities. Workers try to improve their social and economic conditions on the basis of their mutual financial contribution for welfare work.

We may also classify the welfare facilities into the following two categories:

- a) Intra-mural activities
- b) Extra-Mural activities

a) INTRA-MURAL ACTIVITIES:

Intra-mural activities include amenities and services which are provided inside the factory. e.g. latrines and urinals, washing and bathing facilities, creches, rest shelters and canteens, arrangements for drinking water, arrangement for prevention of fatigue, health services including occupational safety, administrative arrangements within a plant to look after welfare, uniform and protective clothing and shift allowance.

b) EXTRA-MURAL ACTIVITIES:

Extra-mural activities include welfare facilities outside the establishment such as maternity benefit, social insurance measures like gratuity, pension, provident fund and rehabilitation, benevolent funds, medical facilities including programmes for physical fitness and efficiency, family planning and child welfare, education facilities including adult education, housing facilities, recreation facilities including sports, cultural activities, library and reading room, holiday homes and leave travel facilities, workers' co-operatives

including consumers co-operative stores, fair-price shops and co-operative thrift and credit societies, vocational training for dependents of workers, transport and from the place of work to workers' residence, and other programmes for the welfare of women, youth and children.

Thus labour welfare is one of the basic factors that provides a happier life to workers. It embraces all efforts which are oriented to the improvement of health, safety, general well-being and efficiency of the workers.

IMPORTANCE OF LABOUR WELFARE:

Provision of welfare facilities for workers has following advantages:

- 1) Labour turnover and absenteeism are reduced to the minimum.
- 2) These facilities help in minimising industrial disputes and maintaining industrial peace.
- 3) They help in creating permanent and settled labour force.
- 4) Incidence of social evils of industrialisation such as drinking, gambling, and prostitution is minimised. Therefore there is marked improvement in the mental and moral health of workers.
- 5) More willing co-operation extended by employees may bring change in the outlook of the employees.
- 6) The provision of labour welfare facilities leads feeling of oneness with the organisation.
- 7) All these lead to marked improvement in the efficiency of workers.

Apart from these advantages the society as a whole also derives certain benefits. These include: (a) improvement of physical health of workers (Canteen), (b) reduced vices (due to entertainment facilities), (c) general maternity and infant mortality rates are brought down.

However, for achieving the maximum results welfare activities have to be undertaken in the right spirit, i.e. mainly with a view to making the lives of the workers happier and healthier.

NECESSITY OF LABOUR WELFARE

Indian workers have regarded industrial employment as a 'necessary evil' and they have been keen to escape from it as early as possible. Most of the industrial workers are drawn from rural areas and they always keep contacts with their rural community.

The working conditions in Indian industries are not satisfactory. The Indian workers in our country face certain unique problems in their work-life, like long hours of work in unhealthy surroundings, drudgery of factory work, rural attachment, uncongenial factory environment etc. They fall an easy prey to various evils such as indebtedness, alcoholism, gambling and other vices which naturally demoralise them and sometimes completely ruin their family life. The high rate of labour absenteeism in Indian industries, is indicative of the lack of commitment on the part of the workers. A large percentage of our workers are illiterate, their income level is low. Lack of planned recreational facilities impose on the workers stress and strain, physical, mental and emotional.

Under these circumstances the possibility of a stable labour force is naught so long as improvement is not introduced in the working and living conditions of industrial centres. Thus the importance of labour welfare is greater in India than in any industrial advanced country of the West. Further, welfare activities also contribute in making the industrial employment more attractive. Provision of good housing, minimum wages and other benefits are bound to create a feeling of satisfaction and contentment amongst the workers. Such provisions are therefore greatly helpful in reducing the extent of labour turnover and absenteeism. Besides, the social advantages of labour welfare are also significant. Provision of good housing, good working conditions, recreational and educational facilities, medical facilities, etc. are bound to increase the mental efficiency and economic productivity of industrial workers.

This all shows that the necessity of providing measures in India because of our intensive programme of industrialization is all the more important.

Our prime need at this hour is to increase production and to fulfil the targets of our Five Year Plans. This can only be achieved if we keep our labour force happy and contented and the welfare activities can help us in this direction.

Thus labour welfare becomes an integral aspect of industrial organisation in almost all the countries.

LABOUR WELFARE MEASURES OF VARIOUS AGENCIES;

Labour welfare work can be divided into following four categories:

- a) Labour Welfare measures by the Central Government.
- b) Labour Welfare Measures by the State Government.
- c) Labour Welfare Measures of the employers.
- d) Welfare Measures organised by the Trade Unions and
- e) Welfare activities of other voluntary agencies.

a) WELFARE ACTIVITIES OF THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA:

The Government of India did not do much in the field of labour welfare till the Second World War. It was only during the Second World War that the Government of India started taking active interest in labour welfare. The main purpose of the Government to undertake welfare activities was to keep morale of the workers and to increase their production. The efforts in this direction have been doubled after the achievement of Independence and emergence of India as a Republic wedded to the idea of a Welfare State and socialist pattern of society, by passing the Factories Act, 1948, the Mines Act, 1952, and the Plantation Labour Act, 1951, the Government made provisions for Canteens, creches, rest shelters, washing facilities, medical aid and for the appointment of labour officers, if the industrial establishments covered by them employ the minimum number of workers prescribed. To cover the schemes of welfare of the workers engaged in mines Government have enacted Coal Mines Labour Welfare Fund Act, 1947, Mica Mines Welfare Fund Act, 1946

and Iron Ore Labour Welfare Cess Act, 1961.

LABOUR WELFARE FUNDS

To finance welfare activities in industrial undertakings owned and controlled by the Government of India initiated an experimental scheme in 1946. The Fund has been built up from the contributions of workers, Government's grants and receipts from various other sources, like fines, rebates from contractors, profits of the canteens and yield from other welfare enterprises such as Cinema shows, dramatic performances etc. The Government also contributes towards it. There are also proposals for setting up welfare trust funds in private undertakings also. Welfare activities covered by these funds include housing, medical, educational and recreational facilities for workers and their dependents.

LABOUR WELFARE ACTIVITIES OF THE STATE GOVERNMENTS

Most of the States run model welfare centres. In these centres facilities provided consist usually of medical aid, reading-room and other recreational and cultural facilities and women's and children's welfare. Vocational training is also given to men and women in some States. The Labour Welfare Centres of Maharashtra provides facilities like recreational, educational, special programme for women and children. In Andhra Pradesh, the main welfare activities organised in the welfare centres relate to indoor and outdoor games, conduct of tailoring, cutting, embroidery and cushion work classes for ladies, exhibition of film shows and participation of workers in radio

and light music programmes. Milk and biscuits are also distributed to workers' children at some labour welfare centres. In Mysore, the labour welfare centres function in the State and provide amenities like indoor and outdoor games, library and reading rooms, classes in sewing, embroidery, needle work for women section and film shows etc. In Madhya Pradesh the labour welfare centres provide recreational and educational facilities to the industrial workers.

The labour welfare centres have been functioning in Uttar Pradesh, Madras, Punjab, West Bengal, Delhi, Rajasthan, Bombay, Bihar, Assam, Haryana, Tamil Nadu, Tripura, Andaman, Goa, Daman, Div and Pandichery.

CRITICAL APPRAISAL

In recent years some interest is taken by both the State and Central Governments. But much more need to be done.

1. The number of welfare centres is relatively small in view of the size of the country.
2. Allocation of funds for welfare work is negligible.
3. Welfare measures provided at these welfare centres are only a few.
4. Workers have no voice in the management of the activities of these centres.
5. Trained personnel are not available in adequate number to organise these activities.

LABOUR WELFARE ACTIVITIES BY THE EMPLOYERS

Only recently some interest has been evident in the field of welfare activities initiated by the employers. Employers in several industries such as cotton textile, jute textile, woolen textile, engineering, cement, sugar, glass, chemicals, metals, paper etc. are providing welfare measures, over and above what is laid down by law. As a matter of fact, the pioneers of welfare work in India have been individual employers like the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills, Madras, the Delhi Cloth and General Mills, Delhi and the British India Corporation, Kanpur, Tata Iron and Steel Company at Jamshedpur.

CRITICAL APPRAISAL

Many employers in India regard welfare activities as unnecessary expenditure rather than "wise-investment". In many cases employers try to use welfare facilities to win over their workers away from the influence of their Trade Unions.

LABOUR WELFARE ACTIVITIES BY THE TRADE UNIONS;

The Textile Labour Association, Ahmedabad for example, has organised a number of social and welfare activities for the benefit of its members. It conducts a number of cultural and social centres scattered all over the working class areas of Ahmedabad. These Centres serve as meeting places for workers who desire to pursue cultural activities. A workers' co-operative Bank has been set up. The Association has opened schools for the benefit of working class children. It runs study homes and

girls' hostels. It publishes a weekly paper named "Mazdoor Sandesh". Some of the Railwaymen's Unions have organised co-operative societies and various kinds of funds for the provision of specific benefits such as legal defence, death and retirement benefits, unemployment and sickness benefits and life insurance schemes. The Mazdoor Sabha of Kanpur maintains a reading-room and library also a dispensary for workers. Apart from this there are a few other unions carrying on stray activities for promotion of the workers' well-being.

CRITICAL APPRAISAL

Trade Unions in India have not done much in the field of labour welfare activities. Lack of funds has been the major factor for this. For a long time Trade Unions in India had to remain mainly a fighting organisation due to migratory character of Indian working-class and instability of industrial labour.

LABOUR WELFARE ACTIVITIES BY VOLUNTARY SOCIAL SERVICE AGENCIES;

Several voluntary social service agencies such as the Bombay Social Service League started by the servants of India Society, the Seva Sadan society, the Maternity and Infant Welfare Association, the Y.M.C.A., the Depressed Classes Mission Society are performing useful service in the field of welfare work. They are helping the employers and labours by their independent efforts. The activities of these organisations include organisation of the night-schools, libraries and lectures, promotion of public health, recreation and sports for working class.

However, the role that voluntary social service can play in the better administration and utilisation of welfare services are ever-enduring and ever-valuable for the prosperity of society.

SOME SPECIAL ASPECTS OF WELFARE ACTIVITIES;

Labour welfare is an inevitable aspect of industrial organisation. Both the Government and the employers are taking active interest in promoting welfare schemes for industrial workers. The important aspects covered by these schemes may be mentioned as below:

1) CANTEEN

The Canteen has been recognised as an essential part of industrial establishment. The main object behind the provision of an industrial canteen is to introduce a nutritional balance in the dietary of workers, to provide cheap and clean food and to offer an opportunity to relax near the place of industrial establishment. The Indian Factories Act 1948, has made a provision of canteens for industrial workers according to the Act.

"The State Government may make rules requiring that in any specified factory wherein more than Two hundred fifty workers are ordinarily employed, a Canteen or Canteens shall be provided and maintained by the occupier for the use of the workers."

These Canteens should be run on the "Cafeteria" system, i.e. 'Self-services'. The Canteens should be well-ventilated and lighted and large enough to avoid over-crowding. The furnishings, walls and floors should at all times be kept clean.

It should be run on non-profit basis. Sufficient chairs, tables, stools, benches, utensils, crockery, cutlery and other necessary equipments must be provided for the efficient running of the canteen. The price list of food-stuff, beverages and any other item served in the canteen must be conspicuously displayed. As per the Rules the Canteen building is to be constructed in accordance with the plans approved by the Chief Inspector of Factories and must accommodate atleast a dining hall, kitchen, store-room, pantry and washing place, different sections for men and women. Eating together in the canteen affords an excellent opportunity for workers and management to come together. Food, drink and other items served in the canteen are to be sold at subsidised rates.

2) WASHING AND BATHING FACILITIES

Washing facilities with provision of sheds for washing places should be made available to the labourers. Running water should be provided. In India facilities for washing and bathing to industrial workers have been provided under the Indian Factories Act, 1948. The Act empowers the State Government to make rules for different classes of industries. Similar provision has also been made by the Central Government under the Coal Mines Pit-head Bath Rules, 1959.

Royal Commission of Labour recommended that suitable washing place and water should be made available for workers engaged in dirty processes. In India almost all factories provides water for washing but without soap and towels.

3) EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES

In India nearly the whole of industrial labour is illiterate. Though considerable improvement has been made since then, the overall position regarding removal of illiteracy amongst the working population still continues. Therefore, the provision of educational facilities for industrial workers is of great importance. Various industrial troubles are mainly due to widely prevalent illiteracy among industrial workers. At present the need of education is the most urgent as the country is under the process of industrialisation in which adjustment from agriculture to industry is inevitable without proper educational foundation, it is very difficult to cater the prevalent need of industrial expansion.

The employers should provide the labourers and their children with necessary facilities for education. This education should be varied and diversified, viz., technical, ethical and literary, to develop the qualities of 3H viz., the hand, the heart and the head. Several enlightened employers have provided good educational facilities. E.g. The Tata Iron and Steel Company. The Buckingham and Carnatic Mills, The Assam Oil Company. Some Trade Unions have been doing commendable work in this regard. For instance, The Ahmedabad Textile Labour Association and some other Trade Unions conduct night classes for adults.

It is also important that the children of the workers should be provided with educational facilities, libraries, reading-rooms, schools, financial assistance etc.

4) WORKERS' EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMME:

Nearly Ten years after Independence i.e. in 1957 the Government of India appointed an International Team of Experts (Four Foreign and Four Indians) to advise on the formulation of a programme of Workers' Education for India. Based on the team's recommendations a Central Board of Workers' Education was formed and registered in 1958. The Board consists of a Chairman, representatives of Central and State Governments, Organisations, employers and of labour and of Union etc. The programme of workers' education consist three stages. During the first stage, fairly well-qualified persons are trained as Education Officers. During the Second stage, the Education Officers train selected workers who will work as worker Teachers at the regional centres. During the third stage, the worker teachers who are trained, conduct teaching programmes for the rank and file of workers.

The Board for Workers' Education has produced various types of audio-visual aids for purposes of teaching. These include film-strips, stickers, posters, flash-cards, pictorial charts etc. On the whole, the teacher is the best personal audio-visual aid who promotes better education for the upliftment of workers or society.

5) RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

The value of recreational facilities cannot be over-estimated. The average industrial worker works in an atmosphere of dust, noise and heat. He lives in terribly overcrowded and



insanitary dwellings which are generally not better than dark dungeons. Consequently, many workers fall a prey to vice and disease. The process of industrialisation itself has accelerated the need for recreational amenities. Recreation has an important bearing on the individual's personality as well as his capacity to contribute to social development. The provision of recreations must effectively fulfil this object and go a long way in eradicating the evils of drink, gambling and prostitution.

The provision of recreational and cultural facilities which include music, drama, games, dance, sports, paintings, radio listening, excursions, lectures, concerts, cinema shows, libraries, holiday homes etc. afford the worker an opportunity to develop his sense of physical and mental discipline. In India a variety of recreational facilities have been provided in more than one way, statutorily, voluntarily and also by different social welfare agencies and to some extent by Trade Unions as well.

6) MEDICAL FACILITIES

Medical facilities are of cardinal importance and have great impact on industrial development and progress majority of the industrial workers had migrated from villages. It becomes difficult for them to adapt to the congested and dirty life of the city. The climate of the city is not suitable to his nature. Therefore, medical care and health facilities for industrial workers form an integral part of labour welfare programmes in all the countries of the world.

This not only provides protection against sickness but also ensures availability of a physically fit and stable manpower for economic development. Expenditure on medical facilities is a gilt-edged investment which yields immediate return, if not through increased productivity, atleast through reduction in absenteeism on grounds of sickness and ill-health.

Employers, whether in Private or Public sectors, have been providing medical facilities for their workers and their families, even before the introduction of E.S.I. Scheme. The Public sector undertakings have provided first-aid centres, ambulance room and even regular hospitals either under the factory premises or inside the township. Besides general medical treatment and health care, Separate arrangement for specialist treatment for diseases like T.B., Cancer, Leprosy, Mental diseases have also been made in many hospitals.

Many of the private sector undertakings have extended medical amenities to their employees. 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.

7) RATION FACILITIES

Ration facilities have also become an important part of labour welfare. In many places employers have provided ration facilities for their workers. These facilities help them to get goods of daily use at concessional prices. Therefore, the establishment of Consumers' Co-operative Stores should be encouraged.

Accordingly, Consumer Co-operative Societies are formed in the industries in order to provide to the members good quality foodgrains, cloth 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 forced 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. It leads to the development of higher values of life, i.e. honesty, unselfishness.

8) TRANSPORT FACILITIES

Transport facilities to workers residing at a long distance are essential to relieve them from strain and anxiety. Such facilities also provide greater opportunity for relaxation and recreation and help in reducing the rate of absenteeism.

The Committee on Labour Welfare recommended the provision of adequate transport facilities to workers to enable them to reach their work place without loss of much time and without fatigue.

In all places of industrial concentration the State Governments and Local authorities should increase and improve the functioning of the local transport services, so as to give maximum possible assistance to industrial workers to reach their place of work in time. In industrial undertakings where transport services are not provided some conveyance allowance should be paid by the employers. To encourage the workers to have their own conveyance, the employers should advance loans liberally to the workers for the purchase of bicycles etc.

9) HOUSING FACILITIES;

Housing is one of the basic human necessities. Some of the industrial employers both in public and private sectors have provided housing facilities to their employees. But it is not possible for the employer to provide the housing facilities to every employee because of increasing number of employees due to increasing industries. Those who are not getting quarters or housing facility are provided a fixed house rent allowance decided by the company. The public sector steel plants of Rourkela, Durgapur, Bhilai have provided good standard housing facilities to their employees.

10) CRECHES

In factories where women workers are employed the establishment of creches is very essential. According to the Factories Act 1948 "In every factory wherein more than Fifty women workers are ordinarily employed there shall be provided and maintained a suitable room or rooms for the free use of children

under the age of six years of such women." In these creches the children of women workers are taken care of when their mother remain at work. They are fitted with cradles. A trained nurse helped by a few assistants remains incharge of a creche. The children are given milk and nutritious food at regular intervals.

11) PROVISION FOR TOILET

An adequate number of urinals and latrines (separate for men and women) should be provided. The latrines should be well-lighted and be accessible in all weathers. Proper arrangement of screening should be made. A wash basin and soap should be made available near hand wash for use after going to the toilet.

12) SHELTERS, REST ROOMS AND LUNCH ROOMS

Every factory employing more than One hundred fifty workers must provide adequate and suitable shelters, rest-rooms and a lunch room with provision for drinking water where workers can have their meals brought by them. The rooms must be nicely lighted up and ventilated. These must be maintained well and cleanliness should be looked after properly.

13) FACILITIES FOR SITTING

Every factory has to provide necessary sitting arrangements particularly for workers who are obliged to work in a standing position.

14) FACILITIES FOR STORING AND DRYING CLOTHING

Under Section 49 of the Act, a State Government may make rules for the provision of suitable places for keeping clothing not worn during working hours and for the drying of wet clothing.

SCOPE OF LABOUR WELFARE

The scope of labour welfare work covers not only the work-life of the workers in the factory but also extends beyond it, into his life with his family and the community.

Welfare programmes should include the workers' total personality and development. Indeed, welfare work in the factory is but a part of the welfare programme for what the worker does in the community, how far away he lives from the factory, what companies he has, what reactions he takes to and where and how his family life is organised.

Labour welfare has two aspects, positive and negative. Positive aspect implies the setting up of minimum desirable standards and the provision of facilities like health, food, clothing, housing, medical assistance, education, insurance, job-security, recreation etc. Such facilities enable the worker and his family to lead a good work life, family life and social life. On the negative side, labour welfare operates to neutralise the harmful effects of large-scale industrialisation and urbanisation. The scope of labour welfare has been described by writers and institutions of different shades differently. Limits cannot be rigidly laid down regarding its scope for all

industries and for all times. It must be administratively viable and essentially development-oriented in outlook. Labour welfare services should include all extra-mural and intra-mural welfare work, statutory and non-statutory welfare facilities undertaken by the employers; government, trade unions or voluntary organisations and also social security measures which contribute to workers' welfare such as industrial health, insurance, provident fund, gratuity, maternity benefits, workmen's compensations, retirement benefits etc.

Thus, labour welfare to be effective, should include the worklife, family life and community life of the worker in a well-related, co-ordinated and purposeful pattern.

The scope has to be elastic and flexible enough to suit the existing conditions of the workers and to include all the essential pre-requisites of life and the minimum basic amenities. The scope of labour welfare activities may become, over a period of years, narrower and narrower, as more and more of them are covered by labour laws and collective arrangements. Therefore, welfare is a comprehensive and continuous programme, beginning with the factory and related to and culminating in the labour community development.

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF LABOUR WELFARE

Labour welfare activity in India was largely influenced by humanitarian principles and legislation. During the early period of industrial development efforts towards workers' welfare were made largely by social workers, philanthropists and other

religious leaders, mostly on humanitarian grounds. Before the introduction of welfare and other legislation in India, the conditions of labour were miserable. Exploitation of child labour, long hours of work, bad sanitation, absence of safety measures etc. were the regular features of factory life.

a) BEFORE INDEPENDENCE

"The Apprentices Act" of 1850 was enacted with the objective of helping the poor and orphaned children to learn various trades and crafts. The next Act was "The Fatal Accidents Act" of 1853 which aimed at providing compensation to the families of workmen who lost their life as a result of "actionable wrong". Then came "The Merchants Shipping Act" of 1859, which regulated the employment of Seamen and provided for their health, accommodation etc.

The movement to improve the working conditions of Indian labour started with the passing of "The First Indian Factories Act" in 1881. The deplorable conditions in which the labourer worked in the textile mills in Bombay during those days was the immediate cause for the passing of the Act. The Act applied to factories employing not less than One hundred persons and using power. Under this Act, the employment of children below the age of Seven years was prohibited, while those between Seven and Twelve years were not to work for more than nine hours a day. An hour's daily rest and four holidays in a month were prescribed for children. Adult labourer however was not protected in any manner. It was found inadequate in many respects. The Mulock

Commission was appointed by the government of Bombay in 1884 to review the working of the Factories Act of 1881. Mr.N.M.Lokhande, founder of the Bombay Mill Hands' Association brought the workmen together on two different occasions in 1884 and presented on their behalf a charter of demands to the commission. Under pressure from labourers the Bombay Mill Owners Association conceded the demand for a weekly holiday.

The Factories (Amendment) Act 1891 was passed as a result of the recommendations of "The Bombay Factory Commission" of 1884 and "The Factory Labour Commission" of 1890. It applied to all factories employing fifty persons or more. The lower and upper age limits for children were raised to nine and fourteen respectively and their hours of work were limited to seven and between five a.m. and eight p.m. Employment of women between seven p.m. and five a.m. was prohibited. Women were allowed to work for eleven hours in a day with 1 1/2 hours rest. Provisions relating to better ventilation, cleanliness and for preventing overcrowding in factories were also made.

The Government of India appointed a Commission in 1907 to study the working conditions of labour in industry and make recommendations. On the basis of the recommendations of this Commission, a more comprehensive Act was introduced in 1911. It was made applicable also to seasonal factories working for less than four months in a year. The hours of work for children were reduced to six per day. Certain provisions were also made for the health and safety of the industrial workers.

In the meanwhile, voluntary action in the field of labour welfare also made considerable progress. The Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants of India and Burma (1897) started a number of friendly benefit schemes. The Printers Union, Calcutta (1905) and the Bombay Postal Union (1907), introduced mutual insurance schemes, night schools, educational stipends, funeral allowances etc.

In 1910, the Kamgar Hitvardhak Sabha was established which helped the workers in various ways.

The outbreak of the First World War in 1914 led to a number of new developments. The Russian Revolution had a tremendous impact on the attitude of Governments and societies towards the labour. During the war years (1914-1918) the number of factories and the number of persons employed therein increased. Wages did not keep pace with the rising prices and profits. The working class became more conscious as a result of the general unrest following the war.

The International Labour Organisation was set up in 1919. It was important landmark in the history of labour welfare movement in our country.

The formation of AITUC (1920), the First Central Trade Union Organisation in our country also helped in furthering the cause of welfare movement. As a result of all these developments, the importance of labour and in economic and social reconstruction of the World was recognised. The Government of India passed the Indian Factories Act of 1922, which was made applicable to all

the factories using power and employing not less than 20 persons. Children below 12 years of age were not to work in factories and those between the years of 12 and 14 were not to work for more than 6 hours a day. Children and women were not to be employed between 7.00 p.m. and 5.30 a.m. The hours of work for adults were limited to 60 in a week and 11 in a day.

The Royal Commission on Labour under the Chairmanship of J.H. Whitley was appointed in 1929 to enquire into and report on the existing conditions of labour in industrial undertakings, plantations etc. It recommended the enactment of a number of legislations relating to payment of wages in time, minimum wages, need for health insurance for industrial workers, improvement of working conditions of plantation workers etc.

The Factories Act of 1934 introduced a number of important changes. It drew a distinction between perennial and seasonal factories. The hours of work for children between 12 and 15 were reduced from 6 to 5 per day, while those for women from 11 to 10 in all kinds of factories. For the first time in Factories Legislation, welfare measures were also thought of and provision was made to provide rest sheds and creches by big factories.

A number of Committees also were set up by the provincial Government to enquire into the working conditions of labour including the provision of housing facilities. Some of these Committees were:-

- a) Bombay Textile Labour Enquiry Committee (1937)
- b) The Kanpur Labour Enquiry Committee (1937)

- c) The Central Provinces Textile Labour Enquiry Committee (1938)
- d) The Bihar Labour Enquiry Committee (1938).

These Committees conducted detailed investigations regarding housing facilities available in various industries and drew pointed attention of the Government towards inadequate and unsatisfactory housing conditions of industrial workers.

The Labour Investigation Committee (Rege Committee) was appointed in 1944. The Committee was asked to investigate the problems relating to wages and earnings, employment, housing and social conditions of workers. For the first time in India this Committee highlighted the importance of welfare measures for workers in improving their social and economic life.

The Second World War brought about far reaching consequences in all fields of activities. The need for sustained and increased production gave a filip to Indian industry. The number of factories and factory employees increased enormously. The Government took the initiative and actively promoted various welfare activities among the industrial employees. A number of legislations for the welfare of the working classes were also enacted.

b) AFTER INDEPENDENCE

The labour welfare movement acquired new dimensions. It was realised that labour welfare had a positive role to play in increasing productivity and reducing industrial tensions. The State began to realise its social responsibilities towards weaker sections of the society. The emergence of different Central

Trade Union Organisations- INTUC (1947), HMS (1948), UTUC (1949), BMS (1955), CITU (1970), NLO etc. gave a further filip to the growth of labour welfare movement.

Mainly on the basis of the recommendations of the Rege Committee, the Government of India enacted the Factories Act, 1948. The Act applies to all establishments employing 10 or more workers where power is used and where there are 20 or more workers; where power is not used, and where a manufacturing process is being carried on.

Various Labour Welfare activities were incorporated in different Five Year Plans. The First Five Year Plan (1951-1956) period considerable attention to the welfare of the working classes. It laid emphasis on the development of welfare facilities for avoidance of industrial disputes and for creating mutual good-will and understanding. During this period, the Plantations Labour Act, 1951, the Mines Act, 1952, The Employees' Provident Fund Act, 1952 were enacted. The State Governments passed various laws regarding housing for industrial labour e.g. the Bombay Housing Board Act, 1948.

During the Second Five Year Plan (1956-1961) the importance of better working conditions had been progressively recognised. New enactments were made to cover Seamen and Motor transport workers. A comprehensive scheme known as Dock workers (safety, health and welfare) scheme was drawn up in 1961. In 1959, the State Government of Assam passed an Act called 'The Assam Tea Plantations Employees' Welfare Fund Act. Various States enacted

legislation to regulate the working conditions in shops and establishments.

The Third Five Year Plan (1961-1966) also stressed the need for more effective implementation of various statutory welfare provisions. It called upon the State Governments to strengthen the Factory Inspectorates for effective implementation of various legislations. The plan also recommended setting up of co-operative credit societies and Consumers' Stores for industrial workers. During this plan period, Maternity Benefit Act 1961, Apprentices Act 1961, Iron-Ore Mines Labour Welfare Cess Act 1961 and the Payment of Bonus Act 1965 were enacted. Some of the State Governments have also passed Labour Welfare Fund Acts.

The Fourth Five Year Plan (1969-1974) provided for the expansion of the Employees' State Insurance Scheme to cover medical facilities to the families of insured persons, and to cover shops and commercial establishments in selected centres. During the Fourth Plan Period, the Contract Labour (Regulation and Abolition) Act, 1970, the Payment of gratuity Act 1972, Employees' Family Pension Scheme were passed. For labour welfare programmes, a provision of Rs.37.11 Crores was made in the Plan.

In the Fifth Five Year Plan (1974-1979) an amount of Rs.42.37 crores was provided for labour welfare and craftsmen training.