

A Perceptual Study of Labour Welfare Measures Among the Employees at Atlas Export Enterprises Karur District, Tamilnadu

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ABSTRACT:

Labour welfare measures can be divided into two categories: statutory and non-statutory. Statutory welfare measures are required by law, and include things like drinking water and crèches for working women. Non-statutory welfare measures are left to the employer's discretion, and can include things like housing, medical assistance, recreation, and transportation. The labour welfare programmes are helps in keeping the morale and motivation of the employees high so as to retain the employees for longer duration. The welfare measures need not be in monetary terms only but in any kind/forms. Employee welfare includes monitoring of working conditions, creation of industrial harmony through infrastructure for health, industrial relations and insurance against disease, accident and unemployment for the workers and their families.

Keywords: Welfare, health, Women Workers, statutory welfare, non- Statutory welfare.

LABOUR WELFARE MEASURES

Labour welfare measures refer to initiatives taken by organizations, governments, and unions to ensure the physical, mental, and emotional well-being of workers. These measures aim to enhance workers' quality of life, improve workplace satisfaction, and boost productivity. Labour welfare extends beyond statutory requirements and includes both mandatory and voluntary initiatives.

1. Statutory Welfare Measures

These are mandatory provisions required by law to protect workers' rights and ensure their well-being.

- **Workplace Safety and Health:** Adherence to safety standards under the *Factories Act, 1948*, including proper ventilation, lighting, and the use of safety equipment.
- **Working Hours and Overtime:** Regulated working hours, rest intervals, and appropriate overtime wages.
- **Minimum Wages:** Ensuring compliance with the *Minimum Wages Act, 1948* to provide fair remuneration.
- **Provident Fund and Gratuity:** Providing long-term financial security through schemes like the Employees' Provident Fund and gratuity benefits.
- **ESI (Employee State Insurance):** Offering health insurance for medical needs, accidents, and maternity benefits.

2. Non-Statutory Welfare Measures

These are voluntary initiatives by employers to enhance workers' satisfaction and productivity.

- **Housing and Accommodation:** Provision of housing facilities or subsidies to ensure proper living conditions.
- **Canteen Services:** Affordable and hygienic food options within factory premises.
- **Transportation:** Shuttle services for workers commuting from distant areas.
- **Health and Wellness Programs:** Regular medical check-ups, health camps, and wellness programs to promote good health.
- **Educational Support:** Scholarships for workers' children or adult literacy programs for workers themselves.

3. Social Welfare Measures

Initiatives designed to improve the socio-economic status of workers and their families.

- **Skill Development Programs:** Training and workshops to enhance workers' skills and career growth.
- **Community Development:** Supporting local infrastructure development, schools, and healthcare facilities.
- **Cultural and Recreational Activities:** Organizing events like sports, cultural programs, and recreational outings to reduce work stress.
- **Counseling Services:** Providing emotional and psychological support for workers dealing with stress, harassment, or personal issues.

4. Special Welfare Measures for Women Workers

Given the significant presence of women in the textile workforce, specific measures are often adopted:

- **Maternity Benefits:** Paid maternity leave and nursing breaks as per the *Maternity Benefit Act, 1961*.
- **Crèche Facilities:** Establishment of childcare facilities within the factory premises.
- **Safety and Security:** Policies to prevent harassment and ensure a secure working environment.

5. Environmental and Ergonomic Measures

Steps to reduce environmental hazards and improve workplace ergonomics:

- **Noise and Dust Control:** Installing soundproofing and dust-extraction systems.
- **Proper Ergonomics:** Providing ergonomic chairs, workstations, and tools to prevent physical strain.
- **Sustainable Practices:** Promoting eco-friendly processes to reduce the industry's environmental impact.

Challenges in Implementation

While these measures contribute significantly to worker welfare, the textile industry faces challenges like:

- Lack of awareness among workers about their rights.
- Resistance from employers due to cost implications.
- Poor enforcement of statutory measures by regulatory bodies.
- Issues of informal and unorganized sector workers who may lack access to welfare provisions.

OBJECTIVES OF LABOUR WELFARE MEASURES

- **Improve Efficiency and Productivity:** A healthier and happier workforce is more productive.
- **Reduce Absenteeism:** Welfare initiatives reduce health-related absenteeism.
- **Enhance Employee Satisfaction:** Workers feel valued, leading to better morale and retention.

- **Promote Social Justice:** These measures help bridge economic and social gaps.
- **Strengthen Employer-Employee Relations:** Welfare measures foster trust and collaboration.

CHALLENGES IN IMPLEMENTING LABOUR WELFARE MEASURES

- **The Cost of the welfare** programs can be expensive to implement among the employees. Workers may not be aware of or fully utilize welfare schemes.
- **Compliance with Regulations:** To Ensure the statutory requirements can be complex.
- **Changing Workforce Needs:** Modern workforces demand more dynamic and flexible welfare measures.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

VijayaBanu and Ashifa (2011) throws light on welfare measures followed in public sector transport corporation. This study analyses the various dimensions of labour welfare measures that are perceived to the labours. It highlights the perception and levels of satisfaction of the labours regarding the various welfare measures and the methods to improve the welfare schemes in Public Sector Transport Corporation.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Labour welfare measures are crucial for enhancing the well-being of industrial workers. They aim to mitigate the adverse effects of industrialization and address workers' economic, social, and psychological needs by improving their working and living conditions. Effective administration and implementation of welfare facilities not only relieve workers of want and worry but also contribute to their overall satisfaction, enabling them and their families to lead better lives.

These measures play a pivotal role in:

- **Enhancing Worker Morale:** Welfare initiatives increase employee morale by ensuring their comfort and security.
- **Boosting Productivity:** Satisfied workers tend to be more productive, leading to greater organizational success.
- **Strengthening Employee Loyalty:** Welfare measures foster loyalty and commitment, reducing turnover rates.
- **Improving Industry Standards:** A content and healthy workforce raises the overall standard of the industry and contributes to the country's economic progress.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Universe of the Study

The universe of the study comprises all employees working at **Atlas Export Enterprises**, Karur. The organization employs a total of **1,200 employees** across various departments.

Sampling

For the purpose of this study, a focused sample was selected from the **stitching unit**, consisting of **30 employees**. The researcher adopted the **census method** to ensure that all employees in the chosen unit were included in the study.

Pilot Study

To establish the feasibility and gain necessary permissions, the researcher engaged with the **HR Manag-**

er of Atlas Export Enterprises. During this discussion, the purpose and scope of the study were explained, and approval was obtained to conduct research within the organization. This preparatory step ensured smooth execution of the research process.

Pre-Test

To evaluate the reliability and appropriateness of the interview schedule, a **pre-test** was conducted with **five respondents** from the stitching unit. Following the pre-test, no changes were deemed necessary in the interview schedule. Consequently, the responses from these five individuals were included in the main study.

FINDINGS, SUGGESTIONS, AND CONCLUSION

FINDINGS

- **Demographics:**

- 26.6% of the respondents are aged 30-50 years.
- 60% of the respondents are female.
- 50% of the respondents studied up to the primary level.
- 50% have work experience exceeding six years.

- **Economic and Facilities Assessment:**

- 66.65% earn between Rs.20,000– Rs.30,000.
- 46.6% find washing facilities moderately adequate, while 46.6% rate drinking water facilities as highly adequate.
- Opinions on medical facilities: 56.6% rate them as moderately adequate, while 33.3% find educational facilities for children inadequate.

- **Welfare and Housing:**

- 40% of respondents rate housing facilities as good and satisfactory.
- 30% feel moderately adequate about household item availability in the consumer co-operative store.

- **Training and Benefits:**

- 30% report an inadequate training for self-employment.
- 43.3% find pension benefits highly adequate, while 36.6% rate insurance benefits as moderately adequate.

- **Social Security and Satisfaction:**

- 46.6% feel the company settles terminal benefits within a timely framework.
- 23.8% are moderately satisfied, and 23.3% are highly dissatisfied with the social security measures.

- **Industrial Peace and Productivity:**

- 76.6% agree that welfare measures improve productivity.
- 46.6% believe social security measures help increase industrial peace.

SUGGESTIONS

- **Superior-Subordinate Relationship:**

- The Management should continue fostering good relationships between superiors and subordinates to maintain employee satisfaction.

- **Union Relations:**

- The management should maintain the strong, positive relationship with the workers' union to ensure harmonious operations.
- **Sanitation Facilities:**
 - To Keep up the satisfactory standard of latrines and urinals, as appreciated by employees within the industry.
- **Awareness of Welfare Schemes:**
 - The management should educate the employees about available welfare schemes to improve their satisfaction and usage of these facilities.
- **Sustaining Comfort:**
 - Continue providing the current welfare measures, as they meet employee expectations and contribute to their comfort.

Conclusion

This study to highlights the beneficial impact of labour welfare measures on employees' well-being, health, and productivity. The organizations recognize the positive effects of these measures, there are notable variations in the quality and range of welfare amenities provided across industries. In many cases, the provision of welfare facilities is determined more by financial capacity than by strategic planning. To maximize the benefits, deliberate planning and effective implementation of welfare measures are essential. Organizations must strive for consistency in offering high-quality welfare programs, as they contribute significantly to better industrial relations, higher productivity, and employee satisfaction.