Labour welfare and Industrial health:

Chapter – 1: Concept of Labour welfare

Introduction:

Sixty four years ago, India attained independence and stood on the threshold of progress and innovation. The vision for the country was industrialization through socialism. Thus evolved the massive public sector which, it was believed would create enormous employment opportunities.

The public sector, however, could not meet the demands and expectations of the people and soon, the private entrepreneurs entered the industrial arena, and the local indigenous industries faced competition from the international giants. Employment opportunities gradually declined as saturation levels were reached in industry. Then, the late 1980's an era of liberalization was ushered in, bringing in its wake, regeneration of employment opportunities albeit for a short span. The Indian industry fell short of achieving any substantial measure of success in the international market because of a dearth of skilled labour. The major global players, in this era are the communications and IT industry -both have created an enormous demand for skilled workforce. The Government and public sectors being ill equipped to provide the requisite training and development resorted to utilizing the experience and expertise of the private and non-governmental institutions to develop and equip the large human resource of the country with the requisite skills. Sadly, there has been negligible development of the vast human resources at the grass root level, the unskilled workers. This is due in large part to the extent of illiteracy in the country, which has increased the level of unemployment in the unskilled sector. This large sector has been most threatened with the advent of globalization and it is being perceived that their level of unemployment will further increase.

Labour welfare activities in an industrialized society has far reaching impact not only on the work force but also all the facets of human resources. Labour welfare includes all such activities, which not only secures existential necessities but also ensures improvement in spiritual and emotional quotient. It comprises of short term and long terms goal toward building a humane society.

As labour welfare is a dynamic concept, changes in its principles activities and the rationale supporting them have not been static. They closely follow the stages of advancement of the industrialized society – from police Theory to Functional Theory. Accordingly principles for successful implementation of labour welfare activities ranges from adequacy of wages to impact on efficiency as well as transformation of personality in nut shell, it is extension of democratic values.
in an industrialized society.

Theories of Labour welfare Activities have been formulated on the conviction that it is man behind the machine who is responsible for achieving mission of an organization. A person can deliver at his best only when he is satisfied and committed to the cause. To keep the employees motivated and committed various welfare facilities are provided by the organization not only to the employees but also to their family member too.

The term 'Welfare' expresses many ideas, meanings and connotations, such as the state of well being, health, happiness, prosperity and the development of human resources. It includes both the social and economic aspects of welfare. The social concept of welfare implies the welfare of man, his family and his community. All these three aspects are inter-related and work together. The economic aspect of welfare covers promotion of economic development by increasing production and productivity.

Welfare is also called a relative concept, for it is related to time and space. Changes in it have an impact on the system of welfare as well. As welfare is growing and dynamic, the welfare potential changes, as a result of which its content keeps on varying and has to keep pace with the changing times. Also the characteristics of welfare vary for it depends of a nation in all fields. Its meaning and components, therefore, differ from country to country and from place to place.

The economic welfare activities are such, which can be brought directly or indirectly into relation with money. Pigou[1] defined economic welfare as that part of social welfare that can be brought directly or indirectly into relation with the measuring need of money. According to him, "the economic welfare of a community of a given size is likely to be greater, the larger is the share that accrues to the poor." However, he admitted that economic welfare was not the index of total welfare.

The word labour means any productive activity. In a broader sense, therefore the phrase labour welfare means the adoption of measures to promote the physical, social, psychological and general well being of the working population. Welfare work in any industry aims or should aim at improving the working and living conditions of workers and their families.

The concept of labour welfare activities, however, is flexible, elastic and differs from time to time, region to region, industry to industry and country to country, depending upon the value system, level of education, social customs, degree of industrializations and the general standard of the socio-economic development of a people.

It is also related to the political situation in a country. Further it depends upon the
kinds of problems with which society is confronted as well as on the structure of the industry. It is molded according to the age group, sex, socio-cultural background, marital status, economic status and educational level of the employees in various industries.

DEFINITION OF LABOUR WELFARE

Labour welfare has been defined in various ways, though no single definition has found universal acceptance. The Oxford dictionary defines labour welfare as "Efforts to make life worth living for workmen." Chambers dictionary defines welfare as "A state of faring or doing well. Freedom from calamity, enjoyment of health and prosperity[2]".

The Encyclopedia of Social Science defines it as "the voluntary efforts of the employers to establish, within the existing industrial system, working and sometimes living and cultural conditions of employees beyond what is required by law, the customs of the industry and the condition of market"[3].

In the Report II of the ILO Asian Regional conference, it has been stated that worker's welfare may be understood to mean "such services, facilities and amenities, which may be established outside or in the vicinity of undertakings, to enable the persons employed therein to perform their work in healthy and congenial surroundings and to provide them with the amenities conducive to good health and high morale."[4]

The Labour Investigation committee (1944-46) includes under labour 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 per of the contractual benefits for which the workers may have bargained."[5]

The Report of the Committee on Labour welfare (1969) includes under it "such services, facilities and amenities as adequate canteens, rest and recreation facilities, sanitary and medical facilities, arrangements for travel to and from work and for the accommodation of workers employed at a distance from their homes and such other services, amenities and facilities including social security measures as contribute to improve the conditions under which worker are employer."[6]

Thus, the whole field of welfare is said to be one "in which much can be done to combat the sense of frustration of the industrial workers, to relieve them of personal and family worries, to improve their health, to afford them means of self expression, to offer them some sphere in which they can excel others and to help them to a wider conception of life". [7] It promotes the well-being of workers in variety of ways.
SCOPE OF LABOUR WELFARE ACTIVITIES

Labour welfare Activities is combinations of various steps, the cumulative effect of which is to grease the wheels of industry and society. Sound industrial relations can only be based on human relations and good human relations dictate that labour being, human being should be treated humanly which includes respect for labour dignity, fair dealing and concern for the human beings physical and social needs. In any industry good relations between the management and workers depend upon the degree of mutual confidence, which can be established. This, in turn, depends upon the recognition by the labour of the goodwill and integrity of the organization in the day to day handling of questions which are of mutual concern.

The basic needs of a labour are freedom from fear, security of employment and freedom from want. Adequate food, better health, clothing and housing are human requirements. The human heart harbors secret pride and invariably responds to courtesy and kindness just as it revolts to tyranny and fear. An environment where he is contended with his job, assured of a bright future and provided with his basic needs in life means an atmosphere of good working condition and satisfaction to labour.

Labour welfare activities are based on the plea that higher productivity requires more than modern machinery and hard work. It requires co-operative endeavor of both the parties, labour and management. This is possible only when labour is given due importance and human element is taken into account at every stage.

The worker has a fund of knowledge and experience at his job. If rightly directed and fully used, it would make a great contribution to the prosperity of the organization. This can only be achieved through satisfaction of the labour as the worker feels that he is an active participant in the production process, and he does at most for increasing the production and its productivity.

OBJECTIVES OF LABOUR WELFARE ACTIVITIES

The object of welfare activities is to promote economic development by increasing production and productivity. The underlying principle is to make the workers given their loyal services ungrudgingly in genuine spirit of co-operation, in return for obligations, voluntary and compulsory, accepted by the employee towards the general well-being of the employees.

Improving the efficiency of the labour is another objective of labour welfare activities. Efficiency gives double reward, one in the form of increased production and the other in the shape of higher wages due to achievement of higher productivity. Welfare activities add to their efficiency and efficiency in turn help the worker to earn more wages. Therefore, welfare activities in an organization
are twice blessed. It helps the employer and the employee both.

Another objective of welfare activities is to secure the labour proper human conditions of work and living. Working conditions of organization may be led by an artificial environment which features are dust, fumes, noise, unhealthy temperature, etc. It is generally found that these conditions impose strain on the body.

The welfare activities are done to minimize the hazardous effect on the life of the workers and their family members. It is the duty of the employer to see these human needs. If welfare activities are viewed in this light, it can be seen that they are guided by purposes of humanitarian and social justice.

The next objective of welfare activities is to add in a real way to the low earning of the labour. The facilities are provided to supplement the income of the workers by services such as housing, medical assistance, school, co-operative, canteens, stores, play grounds etc.

Thus, the objective of activities are to promote greater efficiency of the workers, assure proper human conditions to the workers and their family members, supplement their wages in monetary teams, give more real wages and foster better industrial relations.

**PHILOSOPHY OF LABOUR WELFARE ACTIVITIES**

The philosophy of labour welfare activities is based on the theory that success of industrial development depends upon harmonious relations and co-operation between labour and management (employer). The labour has a fund of knowledge and experience at his jobs. If rightly directed and fully used, it would make a good contribution to the prosperity of the organization this can be achieved only through the satisfaction of the labour.

Efficiency in the matter of running an organization and maintenance of productivity at rising rate and higher level, call for good labour relations throughout the process of production. It enables all those engaged in the organization to make their maximum personal contribution to its effective working.

M. V. Pylee and Simon George has pointed out that "Even one discontented employee or an employee nursing a grievance can eventually infect an entire organization with the germ of discontent which, in turn, will result in lower efficiency, poor morale and reduction in overall production".

The labour welfare activities in the form of health services centers are provided with the philosophy that a good medical service center will help in ensuring sturdy improvement of job satisfaction and productivity. A healthy worker is a
It is, therefore, incumbent on the part of the employer to look after the health of the workers and to provide such facilities which would ensure minimum health hazards. The concerning law prescribes the minimum standard but progressive employer must extend his activities to protect the health of the labourers and their dependents. In return, their co-operation will be wholehearted, efficiency will be maximum and attitude will be proper and congenial.

Therefore the ultimate purposes of labour welfare are:

- to promote greater efficiency of the workers,
- assure proper human conditions to the workers and their family members,
- supplement their wages in monetary terms,
- team development,
- give more real wages and foster better industrial relations.

**Merits and Demerits of Labour welfare:**

Labour welfare is justified for several reasons: (Merits)

A. **Humanitarian Ground:**
   - Safeguards the socio-economic factors of the industries
   - Motivation and Retention of Employees
   - Minimizing the social evils
   - Boost up employee’s morale and create and improve sound IR
   - Create a sense of belongings among employees and to retain them.
   - Buys employee loyalty and Commitment to org.

B. **General Ground:**
   - Meets the criteria’s as a social security
   - Meet requirements of various legislations relating to fringe benefits: Providing welfare measures makes the employers to meet the
obligations of the statutory requirements of various welfare and social security legislations.

• Provide qualitative work environment and work life

• Provide security to the employees against social risks like old age benefits and maternity benefits.

• Meet trade union demands – such as life insurance, beauty clinics etc. for the members etc.

However, demerits of employee welfare measures are limited compare to merits. Demerits include:

1. Cost to the Employer – providing welfare measures to the employees and their family members in variably increases cost of labour to the employers.

2. As a matter of right – Employees and their family members feel that they have a legal right to get welfare measures. Therefore, employees sometimes may not be satisfied and loyal to the organizations. In fact, satisfied needs are no longer motivators.

3. Discrepancies and de – motivation: Employers may commit some mistakes while providing welfare measures, which may lead to discrepancies. These situation lead to employee de-motivation.

Thanks – Dr. S.Gomes

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Chapter – 2:

THEORIES, PRINCIPLES and APPROACHES OF LABOUR WELFARE

The form of labor welfare activities is flexible, elastic and differs from time to time, region to region, industry to industry and country to country depending upon the value system, level of education, social customs, degree of industrialization and general standard of the socio-economic development of the nation. Seven theories constituting the conceptual frame work of labour welfare activities are the following:-

1. **The Policing Theory**: This is based on the contention that a minimum standard of welfare is necessary for labourers. Here the assumption is that without policing, that is, without compulsion, employers do not provide even the minimum facilities for workers. Apparently, this theory assumes that man is selfish and self centered and always tries to achieve his own ends, even at the cost of the welfare of others. According to this theory, owners and managers of industrial undertakings get many opportunities for exploitation of labour. Hence, the state has to intervene to provide minimum standard of welfare to the working class.

2. **The Religious Theory**: This is based on the concept that man is essentially "a religious animal." Even today, many acts of man are related to religious sentiments and beliefs. These religious feelings sometimes prompt an employer to take up welfare activities in the expectation of future emancipation either in this life or after it.

3. **The Philanthropic Theory**: This theory is based on man's love for mankind. Philanthropy means "Loving mankind." Man is believed to have an instinctive urge by which he strives to remove the suffering of others and promote their well-being. In fact, the labour welfare movement began in the early years of the industrial revolution with the support of philanthropists.

4. **The Trusteeship Theory**: This is also called the Paternalistic Theory of Labour Welfare. According to this the industrialist or employer holds the total industrial estate, properties, and profits accruing from them in a trust. In other words, the employer should hold the industrial assets for himself, for the benefit of his workers, and also for society. The main emphasis of this theory is that employers should provide funds on an ongoing basis for the well-being of their employees.

5. **The Placating Theory**: This theory is based on the fact that the labour groups are becoming demanding and militant and are more conscious of their rights and privileges than ever before. Their demand for higher wages and better standards of living cannot be ignored. According to this
theory, timely and periodical acts of labour welfare can appease the workers. They are some kind of pacifiers which come with a friendly gesture.

6. **The Public Relation Theory**: This theory provides the basis for an atmosphere of goodwill between labour and management, and also between management and the public, labour welfare programmes under this theory, work as a sort of an advertisement and help an organization to project its good image and build up and promote good and healthy public relations.

7. **The Functional Theory**: This is also called the Efficiency Theory. Here, welfare work is used as a means to secure, preserve and develop the efficiency and productivity of labour. It is obvious that if an employer takes good care of his workers, they will tend to become more efficient and will thereby step up production. This theory is a reflection of contemporary support for labour welfare. It can work well if both the parties have an identical aim in view; that is, higher production through better welfare. And this will encourage labour's participation in welfare programmes.

8. **The Social Theory**: The social obligation of an industrial establishment has been assuming great significance these days. The social theory implies that a factory is morally bound to improve the conditions of the society in addition to improving the conditions of its employees. Labour welfare, as mentioned earlier, is gradually become social / welfare

**PRINCIPLES FOR SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION OF WELFARE ACTIVITIES**

The success of welfare activities depends on the approach which has been taken into account in providing such activities to the employees. Welfare policy should be guided by idealistic morale and human value. Every effort should be made to give workers/employees some voice in the choice of welfare activities so long as it does not amount to dictation from workers.

There are employers who consider all labour welfare activities as distasteful legal liability. There are workers who look upon welfare activities in terms of their inherent right. Both parties have to accept welfare as activities of mutual concern. Constructive and lasting Progress in the matter of social justice can be achieved only if welfare activities are accepted as essential factors in the progress of the business organization.

Labour welfare is dependent on certain basic principles. The following are the principles on which successful implementation of welfare programmes depends:
1. **Adequacy of Wages**: Labour welfare measures cannot be a substitute for wages. Workers have a right to adequate wages. But high wage rates alone cannot create healthy atmosphere, nor bring about a sense of commitment on the part of workers. A combination of social welfare, emotional welfare and economic welfare together would achieve good results.

2. **Social Liability of Industry**: Industry, according to this principle, has an obligation or duty towards its employees to look after their welfare. The constitution of India also emphasizes this aspect of labour welfare.

3. **Impact on Efficiency**: This plays an important role in welfare services, and is based on the relationship between welfare and efficiency, though it is difficult to measure this relationship. Programmes for housing, education and training, the provision of balanced diet and family planning measures are some of the important programmes of labour welfare which increases the efficiency of the workers, especially in underdeveloped or developing countries.

4. **Increase in Personality**: The development of the human personality is given here as the goal of industrial welfare which, according to this principle, should counteract the baneful effects of the industrial system. Therefore, it is necessary to implement labour welfare services. Both inside and outside the factory, that is, provide intra-mural and extra-mural labour welfare services.

5. **Totality of Welfare**: This emphasizes that the concept of labour welfare must spread throughout the hierarchy of an organization. Employees at all levels must accept this total concept of labour welfare programme will never really get off the ground.

6. **Co-ordination or Integration**: This plays an important role in the success of welfare services. From this angle, a co-ordinated approach will promote a healthy development of the worker in his work, home and community. This is essential for the sake of harmony and continuity in labour welfare services.

7. **Democratic Values**: The co-operation of the worker is the basis of this principle. Consultation with, and the agreement of workers in, the formulation and implementation of labour welfare services are very necessary for their success. This principle is based on the assumption that the worker is "a mature and rational individual." Industrial democracy is the driving force here. Workers also develop a sense of pride when they are made to feel that labour welfare programmes are created by them and for them.

8. **Responsibility**: This recognizes the fact that both employers and workers are responsible for labour welfare. Trade unions, too, are involved in these programmes in healthy manner, for basically labour welfare belongs to the domain of trade union activity. Further, when responsibility is shared by different groups, labour welfare work becomes simpler and easier.

9. **Accountability**: This may also be called the Principle of Evaluation. Here, one responsible person gives an assessment or evaluation of existing
welfare services on a periodical basis to a higher authority. This is very necessary, for then one can judge and analyze the success of labour welfare programmes.

10. **Timely**: The timeliness of any service helps in its success. To identify the labour problem and to discover what kind of help is necessary to solve it and when to provide this help are all very necessary in planning labour welfare programmes. Timely action in the proper direction is essential in any kind of social work.

Last, but not the least is the fact that labour welfare must aim at helping workers to help themselves in the long run. This helps them to become more responsible and more efficient.

**PERCEPTIVE OF LABOUR WELFARE ACTIVITIES:**

The focus on the labour welfare Activities has led to a growing interest by stakeholders who have started to identify the problem of the labour welfare and formulate their position. The main stakeholders are the enterprises investors, employees, trade unions and governments. They are, therefore, gradually becoming aware of the potential of labour welfare activities, albeit from different prospective.

The basic questions in this prospective are the followings:

1. Should labour welfare activities be mandatory for enterprises?
2. If mandatory should law and/or social organization should regulate the labour welfare activities?
3. If voluntary, how to secure the interests of the employees at enterprise level?

**Conclusion:**

Industrial development in recent years has resulted in the advent of large enterprises with large labour force. Obviously, the larger the labour force, the greater are the potential problems. Besides, the recent trends indicate that the employee can no longer be viewed as commodity.

The socialistic pattern of society, the advent of invention by the nation and the idea of a welfare state must & move to the recognition of labour welfare activities. Enterprises can use the labour in proper direction for maximum utilizations through their satisfaction which is possible only when labour is satisfied. To keep the employees motivated and committed various activities are needed.

India introduced literal industrial policy which is aimed at stepping up industrial
growth promoting modernization and technological upgradation to make industrial competitive in both domestic and global market. In this perspective enterprises have to improve their production and productivity which is possible with the satisfaction of labour.

Even today's scientific development of modern technology production methods higher productivity depends on workers. If they are rightly directed and fully used, it would make a great contribution to the prosperity of the enterprise.

The high rate of labour absenteeism in Indian industries is indicative of the lack of commitment on the part of the workers. This can be reduced to a great extent by provision of good housing, health and family care canteens, educational and training facilities, provision of welfare activities enables the workers to live a richer and more satisfactory life and contributes to the productivity of labour, efficiency of the enterprise and helps in maintaining industrial peace. Hence steps need to be taken on a larger scale to improve the quality of life of the workers.

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Dr. Shyamal Gomes / PM department / XISS, Ranchi.