

A Study on Employee Welfare Schemes in Post Pandemic Era

Dr. Sahana Maiya

Assistant Professor, Centre for Management Studies, Jain University, Bangalore, India.

Abstract - Employees are considered as a valuable asset for an organization. Employee welfare schemes are the initiatives taken by the organization with regard to intellectual or social upliftment that makes the life of employees a worth living.

In recent times, the labour market has witnessed the physical, mental and psychological pressure created by the COVID-19 pandemic. This has led to the change in work environment due to negative consequences faced by both organization and workforce. Considering the impact created by the pandemic to the workforce in all verticals of industries worldwide, the present study aims to identify the rise in demand of the factors influencing the need and importance of employee welfare officer in an organization. The study also highlights the revival of existing employee welfare schemes for the employee wellbeing in the current context. The study provides the conceptual model for implementing employee welfare schemes in an organization during uncertainty or pandemic situation.

Keywords: Employee Welfare schemes, Employee Welfare Officer, COVID-19 Pandemic, Counselling, Mentoring, Work-Life Balance, Medical Benefits

I. INTRODUCTION

An organization considers its employees as an asset. This asset can be meaningful if the skills and competency are utilized to the fullest extent. The onus lies on the organization in managing the people and getting the work done. This requires the cooperation and the engagement of the workforce towards the organization. The welfare programs adopted by the organization and the working conditions plays a major role in engaging the employees to the work. Good working conditions that include pleasant atmosphere, good temperature, adequate lighting arrangements etc brings a positive thought of care a management has towards their employees. This in turn benefit not only in improvising the efficiency of employees but also to organization in increasing its productivity. Amid influenced by Corona situation, organizations are realizing the importance of the need of employee welfare schemes that can contribute on the way of health and efficiency of the employees in the long run.

Welfare schemes roots back to the year 1931, when the Royal Commission stated initiatives for the advancement of the working conditions of labour in industries. Employee welfare can be defined as the initiative taken by the organization in making the employees life worth living. Apart from salary or wages, the welfare schemes entail all the activities undertaken by the organization in improvising the employees working and living conditions.

Employee welfare in simple terms can be defined as the initiatives taken by the organization with regard to intellectual or social upliftment that makes the life of

employees a worth living [4]. It encloses the services, facilities and amenities provided for the progress of the employees. Employees are treated as a valuable asset for any organization. Unlike the material assets which gets depreciated with time, the efficiency of the employees increases years after year through the provision of training and employee welfare schemes. The factors like ageing, unhealthy conditions etc slows down the process and can be reason for other factors like attrition, inefficiency and decrease in productivity [1]. One of the major factors for the success of the organization lies with the existence of satisfied workforce. Welfare schemes always target to increase the number of satisfied employees within an organization.

Features of Employee Welfare includes:

- Provision of facilities, amenities and services to improve the economic, social and health conditions of workers.
- Provision undertaken by government, employers, workers, charitable agencies etc
- Provisions are flexible and volatile
- Provisions are based on legal and collective bargaining as demanded by workers with the inclusion of regular wages.

Objective of the welfare schemes:

- Overall development of workforce
- To enhance the levels of efficiency, health, loyalty and satisfaction of the workers towards organization.

- To improve the conditions of work life and their standard of living

Advantages of Employee welfare schemes:

- Creation of healthy work environment by provision of better physical and mental health to employees.
- Raise in standard of living by catering to the basic amenities of life like housing facility, medical benefits, education, recreational facilities etc to the families of workers.
- Raise in productivity of workers
- Long lasting labour force for an organization
- Increase in the involvement and participative behaviour of workers towards organization
- Creation of healthy industrial relations

As discussed above the employee welfare schemes are volatile varies with time, organization, region, state, country, cultural values, political scenarios, unforeseen conditions etc. It also depends on the demographic parameters of workers, economic conditions of region, cadre of worker etc in various sectors [2].

COVID-19 pandemic created the challenging situation for both the organization and the workforce. In order to limit the contact, there was radical changes in the work place environment and policies viz., Shift to remote workplace, work in different time shift etc. Such isolation and balancing work and family life created psychological and work pressure on the workforce. Increased workloads, reduced rest periods, longer working hours and passing on the virus to family and others led to huge layoffs, pay cuts and job insecurity [3]. All these consequences led by the uncertain situation of pandemic brings a great threat to employee wellbeing and marks the need for revive and identify the influencing factors of existing employee welfare schemes.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Venkatesh et al., (2020), conducted research study on Employee Welfare Measures with Reference to Kawman Pharma Private Limited. The objective of the study was to collect employee opinion about the safety measures and the health advantages provided by the organization. Based on the descriptive research technique, systematic sampling method was used to administer questionnaire. The study observed the relation between age of medical insurance and the HR Allowances. The research also showed the existence of relation between income and working environment.

In a study conducted by Vanaja et al., (2020), on the employee welfare measures with reference to animation industry observed the effect of welfare facilities on the efficiency of employees. Primary research was undertaken to analyze the welfare facilities provided by the organization. The study concluded that, there was a significant relationship between age of the respondents and their level of satisfaction with respect to rest room and lunch

room facilities. The study also observed that there is no significance between gender and their level of satisfaction with respect to welfare schemes.

A case study was conducted by Gupta (2015) on Amritsar Swadeshi Woollen Mills with an objective to study the importance of welfare schemes in India in order to assess the status of labour welfare schemes at industry level. The study also intended to assess the awareness among workers about various statutory/non-statutory facilities given by the organization.

Lakkoju et al., (2017) in his study compared various welfare practices between two PSUs and identified similarities and differences in their operations. Similar conditions were observed in both BHEL and RINL PSU Units with regard to recreation, educational allowance, workplace safety, canteen subsidy, canteen hygiene, workplace hygiene, medical facilities, family welfare, housing facilities, etc. While, staff benevolent fund, pension scheme, quality of canteen food, rest rooms, medical benefits, cooperative credit society and ambulance and medical services were observed more in BHEL.

A Case Study of MAHARATAN BHEL of U.P was conducted by Pandey (2014) to know the satisfaction level of the PSUs employees with reference to employee welfare schemes. The exploratory study highlights the differences in the employee welfare schemes of PSU and Private sector. The study concludes saying that PSUs sector have attained greater cooperation and support of workers as compared to Private sector.

In the project of Chandrasekaran (2020), an attempt was made to study the welfare schemes available in construction industries. Employees were selected at random through primary survey and responses were analysed through percentage analysing. It was observed that employees were satisfied with welfare schemes of festival advances, medical, lighting, sitting and drinking water. While, Accident benefit scheme provided maximum satisfaction. Most of the employees agreed that labour turnover can be reduced through proper motivational techniques.

Fareeth (2021) in his study examined the perceptions of various employee welfare measures taken by the engineering colleges and also the parameters that influence them. The study highlighted the fact the teachers have tendency towards various non-monetary schemes viz., legal, transportation, health measures that strongly influenced their perceptions towards welfare schemes.

III. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND OF STUDY

Employee welfare schemes provide workers a better working conditions with improved physical, mental health, safe working atmosphere, accommodations, medical care, schooling, recreational facilities for employee family [5]. It enhances the involvement of workers towards the job and thereby increases the productivity. This in turn improves the commitment of the workers and sense of responsibility

creating a stable workforce. The welfare schemes help in raising the productivity of an organization and to maintain sound industrial relations and peace with outer world.

Statement of Problem

The outburst of Corona disease shaken the entire global market. During crisis, the organization and the workforce realized the need and importance of good employee welfare schemes. Few organizations suggested minor changes in the schemes and others managed the crisis somehow [10].

Objectives of The Study

1. To study the importance of Employee welfare schemes during COVID 19
2. To identify the need of the influencing factors for Employee welfare Officer in implementing Employee Welfare schemes in times of pandemic

Coronavirus Pandemic:

The employee wellbeing faced greater impact due to corona virus pandemic and lockdown around the globe. The study intends to address the gap created by the inclusion of pandemic and identify the need and necessity of influencing factors that connects with the employee welfare schemes.

Effect of COVID Pandemic

In India, COVID pandemic has left the repercussions to all ages and economic status of the people. Even after a year, the employees are struggling [7] to cope up with the after effects of pandemic, be it with physical, mental and professional. The Corporate world perceived the impact and started issuing work from home options to the employees during pandemic situation [13]. Through this, employees could shift their focus to mental and physical wellbeing along with taking care of their dear ones at family[19]. Organizations also taken steps to collaborate with health providers for affordable treatment/vaccination for the employees and their families with paid time off. Unlike Corporate world, Manufacturing sector lagged in taking initiatives as greater portion of the workforce faced to their native place [7]. Such Covid pandemic uncertain situation creates the need to prioritize the welfare schemes along with the existence of employee welfare officer (EWO)

Conceptual Model

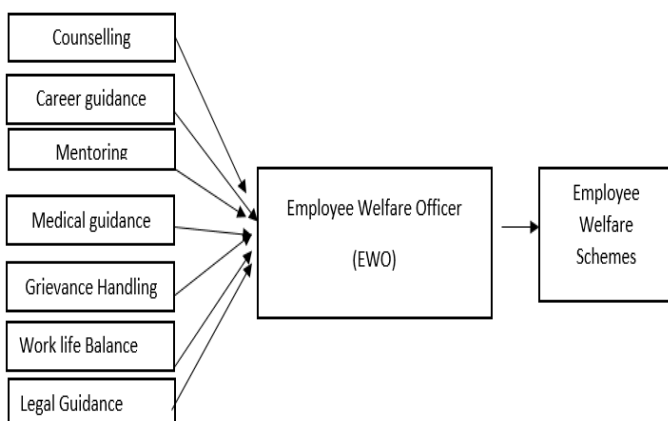


Fig 1: Conceptual Model of influencing factors

The above structural diagram depicts the functionality of an employee welfare officer who acts as a bridge between an organization and the workforce. The Influencing factors that are considered as the need of an hour in current pandemic situation are as follows:

1. **Counselling:** During the COVID-19 pandemic, many organizations opted for work from home culture. Employees had to manage their work and had to take care of their dear ones simultaneously. This created a lot of psychological and mental pressure among employees that badly affected their work as well. Employee welfare officer has to monitor the absenteeism rate of employees and counsel them, understand their situation and provide them tips to cope up with the situation that would help in reducing the stress level of the employees.
2. **Career guidance:** Employee welfare officer can play a vital role in guiding the employees in their career path. He/she can provide a road map for a worker to improvise his skills professionally using various welfare schemes and best practices of industry. This leads to the upliftment of the worker professionally.
3. **Mentoring:** Organization can know the employee’s expectation and future plans through employee welfare officer and thereby can mentor the employees with proper training and facilities. Employee welfare officer has to monitor the behavioural/attitudinal profile of employees and should mentor them accordingly by motivating their performance. This helps the organizations in maintaining sustainability and productivity.
4. **Medical guidance:** During the times of uncertainty, medical guidance can be delivered by the employee welfare officer with regard to medical officer, approachable hospitals, medical allowance by organization, health issues, information of vaccination, compensation of injuries etc
5. **Grievance handing:** An employee Welfare officer should be capable of handling the grievance of employees be in terms of transportation, canteen, policies, working hours, drinking facility etc. Organizations has to adopt speedy grievance redressal procedure for the employees.
6. **Work life Balance:** In the times of Pandemic, balancing work and professional life was a major challenge faced by the employees. Hence, organization should arrange for workshops and training sessions for the employees on work life balance. Employee welfare officer should guide employees in this regard by providing information on using welfare schemes to balance work and personal life.
7. **Legal Guidance:** Employees should be educated and made aware about the legal provisions available under employee welfare schemes by the employee welfare

officer. Employee welfare officer can also provide suggestions for an organization to know and utilise the existing labour laws.

All the above factors identified can be influencing factors in increasing employee engagement and commitment towards the organization.

Suggestions to revive the existing Employee Welfare schemes in the times of Pandemic:

- Organizations should make provide Medicare care and advisory services from experts
- Remote nursing support for monitoring, consultations with physicians, dieticians and psychologists for employees
- Arrangement of meals to the workers who are affected by pandemic
- Paid leave covering consultation, medicine and vaccination to employees
- Employees should be benefitted off 4 to 5 days paid leave to take care of their family members during emergency who are affected by pandemic
- Arrangement of ambulance, oxygen supply and medical aid for timely support
- Provision of e-consultation, home delivery medicines and support for home isolation of employees
- Creation of group of employees by Employee Welfare officer who can help in getting medical attention, assistance by doctors, booking of beds and other medical resources for the employees
- Creation of rooms/ spaces for the employees who are advised for isolation

IV. CONCLUSION

Employee Welfare schemes are successful if provided with facilities of medical, pantry, free food in canteen, job security, safe and healthy working environment, HR Allowances etc. The success can be measured through lower absenteeism, increase in efficiency of employees, increase in morale, increase in productivity and so on. This in turn strengthens Industrial relations, labour laws and contributes to the success of an organization in achieving its goals and accomplishments.

The present study identified the importance of the influencing factors of the employee welfare schemes during pandemic. The study also proposed the need of the role of Employee Welfare Officer in all verticals of the organization to face the uncertainty situation in future times. The proposed influencing factors would help employees to adjust and adopt themselves to the changing or pandemic situations. Thus, the employee welfare schemes will bring win-win situation to both organization and employees for all situations in long run.

REFERENCES

- [1] Venkatesh P (A Study On Employee Welfare Measures With Reference To Kawman Pharma Private Limited”, Ilkogretim Online - Elementary Education Online, 2020; Vol 19 (Issue 3): pp. 4701-4714
- [2] Vanaja V (2020), A Study On Employee Welfare Measures With Reference To Animation Industry, Vol-6 Issue-4, 358-366.
- [3] Gupta, Deepkshi (2015), Labour Welfare in India –A Case Study of Amritsar Swadeshi Woollen Mills, International Journal of Research in Economics and Social Sciences, Volume 5, Issue 6 (June, 2015) 139-153.
- [4] Vaid, K.N. (1970). Labour Welfare in India, Shri Ram Centers for Industrial Relations, New Delhi.
- [5] Rowan, Richard, L. (1980). Reading in Labour Economics and Labour Relations, Printed In USA.
- [6] Kapoor, K.N. (1990). Handbook of Industrial Law, Published By Sultan Chand and Sons, New Delhi
- [7] Lakkoju, Srinivas. Vani Thamma and Nirmala Deepika, K. B. (2017), How Good is Employee Welfare in Indian PSUs? Some Empirical Evidence, An International Journal of Management Studies Vol.7, No.4, 187-193.
- [8] Deb, Tapomoy (2010). Reforming labour legislation on working conditions for competitive advantage: an empirical study. Indian Journal of Industrial Relations, 46(2).
- [9] Praveen Kumar, Santosh, J., Arun Kumar, A. & Jahangir, Y. (2015), “A Study on H R Audit in Organization Systems of BHEL Hyderabad”, International Journal of Business and General Management, 4(5): 49-58
- [10] Arpit Patel, Archana Gohil and Heli Shah [2017], A study on labor welfare measures and social security on selected engineering unit of Ahmadabad, IBMRD's journal of management & research volume 6, Issue 1, March 2017, print ISSN: 2277- 7830,(online) ISSN: 2348-5922.
- [11] Chaudhary Asiya, Iqbal Roohi (2019), “An Empirical Study on Effect of Welfare Measures on Employees Satisfaction in Indian Railways”, International Journal of Research in Commerce and Management, vol.2, issue9
- [12] Dr.V.Seetha, S.Aruna (2019) a study on “Employees Welfare Measures: Importance, Statutory Provisions and Various Agencies Protecting the Welfare of Employees”.Shanlax International Journal of Commerce,vol.7,no.2,2019, pp. 25–30.

- [13] Dr.K.Lalitha, T.Priyanka, (2014) a study on “Employee welfare measures with reference to IT industry”. International Journal of Engineering Technology, Management and Applied Sciences, Volume 2 Issue 7, ISSN 2349-4476
- [14] Pandey, Poonam (2014), “Labour Welfare: A Test Of Significance on Labour Welfare Facilities In Psu’s (Case Study OF MAHARATAN BHEL Of U.P.)”, International Journal of Scientific & Engineering Research, Volume 5, Issue 12, December-2014, 111-116.
- [15] .Chandrasekaran P, P.Ganeshprabhu (2020), “A Study On Employee Welfare Measures In Construction Industry In India”, International Journal Of Scientific & Technology Research Volume 9, Issue 02, February 2020, 990-997.
- [16] Fareeth Shaith, P.V. Muthu Perumal, N. Shankar. (2021). “Employee Welfare Measures - A Study on Engineering College Teachers”, Journal of Education: Rabindrabharati University, Vol. : XXIV, No. :7, 108-114
- [17] Sheikfareeth,S, “A Study on welfare measures of school teachers in Dindigul district”, Kala sarovar, Vol. 24, No.2(A), April- June, 2021,pp.30-35
- [18] Prabhakar,S,,”Employees satisfaction and welfare measures : A case study with special references to Don Bosco college of arts and science, sogathur, Dharmapuri district”, Asia pacific journal of research, Vol: III Special issue:X, October, 2013
- [19] De-la-Calle-Durán, M. C., & Rodríguez-Sánchez, J. L. (2021). Employee Engagement and Wellbeing in Times of COVID-19: A Proposal of the 5Cs Model. International journal of environmental research and public health, 18(10), 5470. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph18105470>