



STUDY ON LABOUR WELFARE MEASURES – WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO RUBBER BOARD OF INDIA

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Abstract

This article makes an overview of various Labour Welfare measures in Plantation sector with special reference to Rubber Board, India. This deeply covers amenities offered to the workers in plantation sector for improving their productivity, loyalty and sincerity towards work. The various welfare schemes implemented by the Rubber Board are described here; a detailed study was made among the beneficiaries about these schemes and suggestions are given for improving these schemes.

Keywords: Rubber, Rubber Board, BPL, Labour Welfare, Welfare measures.

Introduction

The term Labour means any productive activity. Labour is one of the three elements of cost. According to Alfred Marshall “Labour is any exertion of mind or body undergone partly or wholly with a view to derive benefit other than the pleasure derived from it. 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, economical and social. Labour welfare includes both social welfare conceptually and operationally. The ‘Labour Welfare’ in a broader sense, means the adoption of measures to promote the physical, social, psychological and general well being of the working population. Such facilities enable the worker and his family to lead a good work life, family life and social life. The concept of ‘Labour Welfare’ originated in the desire for humanitarian approach of suffering of the working class. Later it becomes a utilitarian philosophy which worked as a motivating force for labour and for those who are interested in it.

Labour welfare is the extra dimension, giving satisfaction to the worker in a way which even a good wage cannot. Welfare is the aim of all societies. Every human activities centres on welfare. The traders claim that they increase total welfare of the society by their trade; as they take less by way of profit than what they give as benefit of the society with the growth of industrialization and mechanisation, it has acquired added importance. He needs an added stimulus employer depending on his priorities gives varying degree of importance to labour welfare. It is because the govt. is not sure that all employers are progressive minded and will promote basic welfare measures that it introduces. Today welfare has been generally accepted by employers.

The Committee on Labour Welfare (CLW) found in 1969 to review the labour welfare scheme, described it as social security measure that contribute to improve the condition under which workers are employed in India. In a resolution in 1947, the ILO defined labour welfare as “Services, facilities and amenities that are contributed to improve the conditions under which workers are employed”.

In India, labour welfare activity was largely influenced by humanitarian concept and legislation. The movement to improve the working condition of labour started with the passing of the first Indian Factories Act 1881. Another mile stone in the field of labour welfare was reached with the appointment of Labour Investigation Committee in 1944. The committee went into the details of working condition, including welfare measures available, for workers employed in a large number of industries. The committee covers different area in labour welfare such as Housing policy, rest and recreation occupation, diseases, canteens, medical aid and educational facilities etc. For the first time in India, this committee highlighted the importance of welfare measures for workers in improving their social an economic life.

Background of the Study

Welfare measures play a vital role in enhancing the health and efficiency of the workers. Once a worker realised that the company is concerned about his well being and that he is appreciated for the work done, naturally he will be motivated. It shows that by providing proper welfare measures, company will be able to make the people perform in a better manner .By conducting this study it would be able to know the opinion of the work force in general about various welfare measures which are likely to motivate the production capacity and productivity of Rubber Plantation worker. Plantation workers are undeniably as important to Rubber Plantation industry as producers, dealers and consumers. Production and productivity of Rubber Plantations depend heavily on the performance of workmen employed there in. Their welfare and morale and motivation should, therefore, be of prime concern to planners and promoters of Rubber Industry

The present study is an attempt to assess the various labour welfare measures in Plantation sector with special reference to Rubber Board and is based on the level of satisfaction of Plantation workers regarding those schemes and suggestion for motivation.

Objectives

- 1) To review the Labour Welfare measure adopted by Rubber Board to plantation workers
- 2) To analyse the views of plantation workers towards the welfare measures provided to them
- 3) To make suggestions for possible improvements

Methodology

Both primary and secondary data are used for the study. Primary data are collected with the help of interview schedule, based on various aspects of labour welfare and collected information from different field stations. In this study, inferences are drawn from a sample of 75 Respondents from different field stations. Secondary data collected from office records, Journal and hand books. Relevant information's are also collected by holding discussions with the officials of Rubber Board

Labour Welfare in India

Important legislations for labour welfare provision include Factories Act 1948, Plantation Labour Act 1951, and Motor Transport Workers Act 1961.

Labour welfare is dependent on certain basic principles which must be properly followed to achieve successful implementation of welfare programme. They are

- a) Principles of adequacy of wages
- b) Principle of social responsibility of industry
- c) Principle of efficiency
- d) Principle of totality of welfare
- e) Principle of accountability
- f) Principle of time liners
- g) Principle of self help
- h) Principle of re-personalization
- i) Principle of association or democratic values

The role of a Labour Welfare Officer is important in the field of industry. His duties include

- a) Supervision of Safety, Health and welfare programmes like housing, recreation, sanitation service etc. Grant of leave with wages, Redressal of workers grievances
- b) Counselling workers in Personal and family programmes, Adjustment to their work environment and understanding their rights and privileges
- c) Establishing liaison with workers so that may understand Various limitations under which they work, interpret company policies to the welfare committee, comes to a settlement
- d) Establishing liaison with Management so that the later may appreciate workers view point on various matters in the plant

Labour Welfare Measures in Rubber BOARD

The plant with botanical name "Havea Brasiliensis" was introduced from the rain forests of Amazon in to British India in 1876 and was first cultivated on commercial scale during the year 1902. As a crop, rubber plays a decisive role in the economy of the country as a whole. The entire road transport system and industries manufacturing about 36,000 varieties of rubber related products are thriving round this commodity and a source of livelihood for millions of people. With the increase in vehicle population, there is going to be great demand for rubber in coming years.

The Indian Rubber Board was constituted under the Rubber Act, 1947. The main functions of the Rubber Board are

1. To promote Rubber Industry.
2. To undertake, assist and encourage technical and economic research for the Rubber industry.
3. Training in improved methods of planting, cultivation, manuring and spraying.
4. Supply of technical advices to rubber growers.
5. Marketing of Rubber.
6. Advice Central Government on all matters relating to development of Rubber Industry.
7. Advice Central Government with regard to participation in any international conference or scheme relating to Rubber.
8. Submit to central government half yearly report on its activities and working.

Labour Welfare Measures in Rubber Board

The Labour Welfare Schemes implemented by the Rubber Board are:

- Educational Stipend
- Merit Award
- Medical Attendance
- Housing Subsidy
- Housing Subsidy for North East
- Sanitary Subsidy
- Housing and Sanitary Subsidy
- Group Insurance cum Deposit

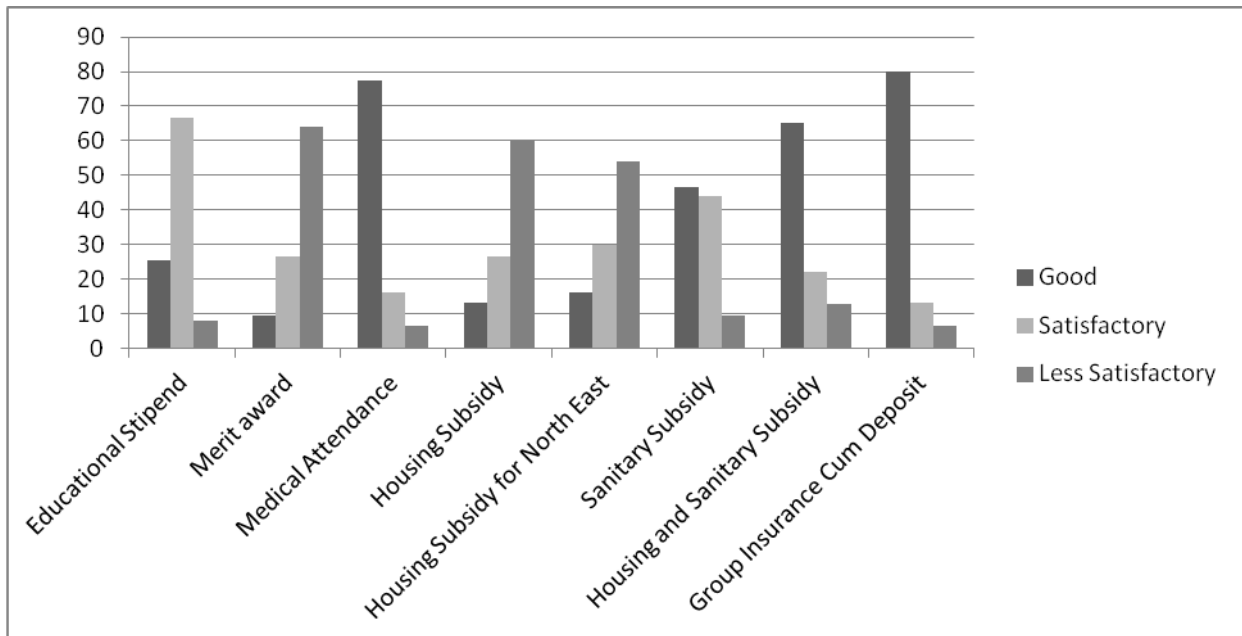


Figure 1 : Opinion of the workers about the various Labour Welfare Schemes of Rubber Board

The educational Stipend Scheme is for the children of Rubber Plantation Workers. This will be in operation during the current financial year. From figure 1, it is clear that, for most of the workers this scheme is only satisfactory because the amount is low in the case of basic and traditional courses.

Merit Award will be granted to children of rubber plantation workers who have secured prescribed marks for the courses. The workers are less satisfied due to small amount of reward.

Medical Attendance Scheme applies to the rubber tappers. It will be in operation during the current financial year for treatment under the systems of Allopathy / Ayurveda and Homoeopathy. 'Illness' means prolonged illness exceeding one week in duration duly certified by 'A' class Medical Practitioner of a Govt. / recognized hospital in the case of ayurvedic / homeopathic treatment during the operation of this scheme. For this purpose, the period of illness would also include period of rest prescribed by the doctor as essential for full recovery before rejoining duties. Medical expenses incurred in connection with pregnancy/ delivery of the tapper shall be considered for reimbursement under this scheme. From the figure, it is clear that about 77% workers are feeling satisfactory with this scheme.

Housing Subsidy Scheme will be applied to all rubber tappers and the land on which the house is proposed to be constructed should be in the ownership and possession of the applicant or his / her spouse or in their joint ownership and possession. The amount of subsidy will be 25% of the estimated cost of the construction or Rs. 12,500/- whichever is less. Most of the workers are saying that it is less satisfactory. It is because of the increased construction cost and material cost.

Housing Subsidy for North East Scheme will be applied to all rubber tappers in the North Eastern Region. The amount of subsidy will be 50% of the cost of construction or Rs. 14000/- whichever is less. The workers are feeling less satisfactory due to insufficient fund.

In the Sanitary Subsidy Scheme, the land on which the latrine is proposed to be constructed should be in the ownership and possession of the applicant / spouse. The applicant / spouse should have a house in his own name. The applicant / spouse should not at present possess a latrine of prescribed minimum standard as laid down under this scheme. The amount of financial assistance will be 75% of the cost of the construction or Rs. 5000/- whichever is less. There is a slight variation between the choices of good and satisfactory.

The Housing and Sanitary Subsidy Scheme is for the rubber tappers among the SC/ST communities in the unorganized sector. The purpose of the scheme is to improve the sanitary facilities of SC/ST rubber tappers and to promote the construction of modern latrine at low cost. the financial assistance will be limited to 25% of the cost of the construction or Rs. 21,000/- whichever is less. The workers are feeling good, because of the higher amount.

Group Insurance cum deposit is intended for giving insurance coverage to tappers in the unorganized Rubber Plantation Sector and also for developing the habit of saving among them. Majority of workers are saying that this scheme is good.

Suggestions

Based on the study, the following suggestions are made:

- During the 'tapping less seasons' tappers are jobless so in order to compensate their life, they must be financially supported.
- An increase in educational stipend from Degree to P.G level is needed to meet the huge expenditure of education during that stage.
- The mark limit for Merit Award Scheme should be decreased since majority of the students under BPL
- The Housing Subsidy Scheme should be paid in two instalments First part is on the completion of Foundation and the Next is on the completion of roof level
- The Welfare Scheme should be implemented to organised sector too, if the employer of the organised sector is not providing the same.

- Institutes should be started by board in order to provide modern cultivation Techniques, Familiarising of Technologies in cultivation, tapping etc.

Conclusion

A well-fed, well-clad and satisfied worker is an asset to the organisation. He makes no loss of man hours by absenteeism, strikes etc. and he feels essence of allegiance to the organisation in which he works. A satisfied worker makes other resources meaningful. It is concluded from this study that Rubber Board is very much interested in providing welfare facility to their plantation workers. Workers have good opinion about Group Insurance Cum Deposit Scheme, Medical Attendance Scheme, Sanitary Subsidy Scheme and Housing and sanitary Subsidy Scheme. Workers are satisfied about Educational Stipend Scheme. They are less satisfied with Merit Award Scheme, Housing Subsidy Scheme for north east

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