

# Employee health safety and welfare social work essay



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## **INTRODUCTION**

For smooth functioning of an organization, the employer should to ensure safety and security of his employees. Health and safety form an integral part of work environment. A work environment should enhance the well being of employees and thus should be accident free. The terms health, safety and security are closely related to each other. Health is the general state of well being. It not only includes physical well being, but also emotional and mental well being. Safety refers to the act of protecting the physical well being of an employee. It will include the risk of accidents caused due to machinery, fire or diseases. Security refers to protecting facilities and equipments from unauthorized access and protecting employees while they are on work. In organizations the responsibility of employee health and safety falls on the office in charge of Human Resource (HR). An HR manager can help in coordinating safety programs, making employees aware about the health and safety policy of the company, conduct formal safety training, etc. The supervisors and departmental heads are responsible for maintaining safe working conditions. International Labour Organization (ILO) has defined labour welfare as a term which is understood to include such services, facilities and amenities as 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 to provide them with amenities conducive to good health and high morale. Welfare includes anything that is done for the comfort and improvement of employees and is provided over and above the wages. Welfare 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.

## **HEALTH AND SAFETY**

### **General guidelines for integrating workplace health and safety in human resources management practices which include:**

Preventing work related injuries and illnesses; Fostering a workplace safety culture in which employees and their supervisors work together to ensure workplace safety; Establishing administrative procedures that encourage employees to report unsafe conditions and unsafe practices to their supervisors without fear of being disciplined; Developing appropriate hiring, training and performance appraisal practices; Recruiting and retaining the best employees who care about their own well being and the wellbeing of co-workers. Ensuring that the health and safety policies and procedures conform with the applicable occupational health and safety legislation and accepted best practices in similar organizations; Establishing procedures for enforcing company safety rules; Helping reduce costs associated with losses due to absenteeism injuries, Workers' Compensation, disability, and health care; Maintaining records of injuries, illnesses and workers' compensation; Coordinating first aid training and the provision of first aid to employees; Providing advice to employees and the employer in matters of occupational health and safety.

### **Workplace Safety Programs**

Effective designing and implementation of workplace safety programs can minimize the loss and damage caused to persons and property by

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eliminating the risk of industrial accidents. In addition to it, the employee safety programs can result in substantial cost savings, increased productivity and establishing harmonious relations with workers. For designing effective safety plans and implementing them requires thorough analysis of workplace conditions and determining the level of protection required. The degree of protection depends upon the degree of risk involved in any job. For example, people working in mines require more safety than those working in a Business Processing Outsourcing (BPO). It also depends on the kind of job the person is engaged in. Sales personnel may require higher level of protection than the one in any administrative job. Workplace safety programs are not only effective in eliminating the risk of damage caused to person but is also an effective tool in retaining the existing and attracting new talent from the industry. Who doesn't want a safe and healthy work environment? Around 90 percent of working professionals seek safety at workplace rather than a fat package. Organizations can reduce the risk of accidents at workplace by identifying the level of risk, modifying the already existing policy and implementing it effectively. For this, it needs to design proper and efficient management programs to improve physical environment employee assistance programs to help them diagnose and treat their stress-related problems. Here is a mention of few workplace safety programs that are implemented by top-notch organizations to ensure workers' physical and mental safety: Safety Policy: It contains a declaration of the employer's intent towards the safety of employees and means to realize it. It includes causes, extent and remedies for accidents at workplace. The policy specifies the company's goals and responsibilities and caveats and sanctions for failing to fulfill them. Provision of Physical Health Services: Many

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organizations render periodical physical health check-up services to their employees. Regular medical check-ups of employees help detect the signs and symptoms of tension, stress, ulcers, depression and other diseases resulting from the exposure to harmful gases or other irritants. It is considered as one of the major steps to control occupational health hazards and treat them before they become worse. In addition to this, it helps managers in rehabilitating the employees by redesigning their jobs in order to eliminate the further damage to their health.

**Mental Health Services:** In order to reduce the risk of mental breakdowns because of tension, pressure and depression and mental illness, a mental health service is provided to the employees in different ways such as psychiatric counseling, co-operation and consultation with specialists, educating employees about the importance of mental health and establishment, development and maintenance of harmonious human relations at workplace.

**Employee Assistance Programs:** These are specially designed to deal with stress-related problems of the employees and help in diagnosis, treatment, screening and prevention of both work and non-work related problems. These programs provide real help to professionals and do not carry any negative implications.

**Fitness Programs:** These programs focus on overall health of employees and include both disease identification as well as lifestyle modification. The most common programs carried out by the organizations are hypertension identification, physical fitness, exercise, nutrition, smoking and drinking cessation, diet control and personal and work-related stress management.

**Awareness Programs:** Conducting the workshops about sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV AIDS help a lot in raising the awareness of employees towards such dreadful diseases. Such programs clear out the confusion and

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disruption in the workforce. We all must have heard of a simple phrase, "Health is Wealth." This is true for individuals as well as organizations. Understanding, developing, implementing and evaluating workplace safety programs not only helps individuals in maintaining their health but also helps organizations in retaining their resources.

## **Safety and Health Management System**

A safety and health management system means the part of the overall management system that includes the organisational structure, planning activities, responsibilities, practices, procedures and resources for developing, implementing, achieving, reviewing and maintaining the occupational safety and health policy. The key elements of a successful safety and health management system are:

### **Policy and commitment**

The organisation should prepare an occupational safety and health policy programme as part of the preparation of the safety statement. Effective safety and health policies should set a clear direction for the organisation to follow. They will contribute to all aspects of business performance as part of a demonstrable commitment to continuous improvement. Responsibilities to people and the working environment will be met in a way that fulfils the spirit and letter of the law. Cost-effective approaches to preserving and developing human and physical resources will reduce financial losses and liabilities. In a wider context, stakeholders' expectations, whether they are shareholders, employees or their representatives, customers or society at large, can be met.

## **Planning**

The organisation should formulate a plan to fulfil its safety and health policy as set out in the safety statement. An effective management structure and arrangements should be put in place for delivering the policy. Safety and health objectives and targets should be set for all managers and employees.

## **Implementation and operation**

For effective implementation, organisations should develop the capabilities and support mechanisms necessary to achieve the safety and health policy, objectives and targets. All staff should be motivated and empowered to work safely and to protect their long-term health, not simply to avoid accidents.

The arrangements should be: underpinned by effective staff involvement and participation through appropriate consultation, the use of the safety committee where it exists and representation systems, sustained by effective communication and the promotion of competence, which allows all employees and their representatives to make a responsible and informed contribution to the safety and health effort. There should be a planned and systematic approach to implementing the safety and health policy through an effective safety and health management system. The aim is to minimise risks. Risk assessment methods should be used to determine priorities and set objectives for eliminating hazards and reducing risks. Wherever possible, risks should be eliminated through the selection and design of facilities, equipment and processes. If risks cannot be eliminated, they should be minimised by the use of physical controls and safe systems of work or, as a last resort, through the provision of PPE. Performance standards should be

established and used for measuring achievement. Specific actions to promote a positive safety and health culture should be identified.

## **Measuring performance**

The organisation should measure, monitor and evaluate safety and health performance. Performance can be measured against agreed standards to reveal when and where improvement is needed. Active self-monitoring reveals how effectively the safety and health management system is functioning. Self-monitoring looks at both hardware (premises, plant and substances) and software (people, procedures and systems, including individual behaviour and performance). If controls fail, reactive monitoring should find out why they failed, by investigating the accidents, ill health or incidents, which could have caused harm or loss. The objectives of active and reactive monitoring are: to determine the immediate causes of substandard performance to identify any underlying causes and implications for the design and operation of the safety and health management system.

## **Auditing and reviewing performance**

The organisation should review and improve its safety and health management system continuously, so that its overall safety and health performance improves constantly. The organisation can learn from relevant experience and apply the lessons. There should be a systematic review of performance based on data from monitoring and from independent audits of the whole safety and health management system. There should be a strong commitment to continuous improvement involving the development of policies, systems and techniques of risk control. Performance should be assessed by: internal reference to key performance indicators external  
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comparison with the performance of business competitors and best practice in the organisation's employment sector.

## **WELFARE**

Welfare provision generally refers to those policies which are directed at some aspect of employee well being both in a physical and emotional sense.

Labor welfare entails all those activities of employer which are directed towards providing the employees with certain facilities and services in addition to wages or salaries. Having welfare matters taken care of saves costs by reducing absenteeism and improving the performance of employees in the workplace by addressing any problem or concerns that they might have including: Schemes for occupational sick pay, extended sick leave and access to the firm's medical adviser; Schemes for bereavement or other special leave; The rehabilitation of injured/unfit/ disabled employees and temporary or permanent move to lighter work; The maintenance of disablement statistics and registers (there are complicated legal requirements in respect of quotas of disabled workers and a need for 'certificates' where quota are not fulfilled and recruitment must take place); Provision of financial and other support for sports, social, hobbies, activities of many kinds which are work related; Provision of canteens and other catering facilities; Possibly assistance with financial and other aid to employees in difficulty (supervision, maybe, of an employee managed benevolent fund or scheme); Provision of information handbooks, Running of pre-retirement courses and similar fringe activities; Care for the welfare aspects of health and safety legislation and provision of first-aid training.

## **Objectives of a Welfare System**

Labor welfare has the following objectives: To provide better life and health to the workers To make the workers happy and satisfied To relieve workers from industrial fatigue and to improve intellectual, cultural and material conditions of living of the workers. The basic features of labor welfare measures are as follows: Labor welfare includes various facilities, services and amenities provided to workers for improving their health, efficiency, economic betterment and social status. Welfare measures are in addition to regular wages and other economic benefits available to workers due to legal provisions and collective bargaining. Labor welfare schemes are flexible and ever-changing. New welfare measures are added to the existing ones from time to time. Welfare measures may be introduced by the employers, government, employees or by any social or charitable agency. The purpose of labor welfare is to bring about the development of the whole personality of the workers to make a better workforce.

## **Benefits of Welfare Measures**

The very logic behind providing welfare schemes is to create efficient, healthy, loyal and satisfied labor force for the organization. The purpose of providing such facilities is to make their work life better and also to raise their standard of living. The important benefits of welfare measures can be summarized as follows: They provide better physical and mental health to workers and thus promote a healthy work environment Facilities like housing schemes, medical benefits, and education and recreation facilities for workers' families help in raising their standards of living. This makes workers to pay more attention towards work and thus increases their productivity.

Employers get stable labor force by providing welfare facilities. Workers take active interest in their jobs and work with a feeling of involvement and participation. Employee welfare measures increase the productivity of organization and promote healthy industrial relations thereby maintaining industrial peace. The social evils prevalent among the labors such as substance abuse, etc are reduced to a greater extent by the welfare policies.

## **Employee Welfare Schemes**

Organizations provide welfare facilities to their employees to keep their motivation levels high. The employee welfare schemes can be classified into two categories viz. statutory and non-statutory welfare schemes. The statutory schemes are those schemes that are compulsory to provide by an organization as compliance to the laws governing employee health and safety. These include provisions provided in industrial acts like Factories Act 1948, Dock Workers Act (safety, health and welfare) 1986, Mines Act 1962. The non-statutory schemes differ from organization to organization and from industry to industry.

## **Statutory Welfare Schemes**

The statutory welfare schemes include the following provisions: Drinking Water -At all the working places safe hygienic drinking water should be provided. Facilities for sitting - In every organization, especially factories, suitable seating arrangements are to be provided. First aid appliances - First aid appliances are to be provided and should be readily assessable so that in case of any minor accident initial medication can be provided to the needed employee. Latrines and Urinals - A sufficient number of latrines and urinals are to be provided in the office and factory premises and are also to be

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maintained in a neat and clean condition. Canteen facilities - Cafeteria or canteens are to be provided by the employer so as to provide hygienic and nutritious food to the employees. Spittoons - In every work place, such as ware houses, store places, in the dock area and office premises spittoons are to be provided in convenient places and same are to be maintained in a hygienic condition. Lighting - Proper and sufficient lights are to be provided for employees so that they can work safely during the night shifts. Washing places - Adequate washing places such as bathrooms, wash basins with tap and tap on the stand pipe are provided in the port area in the vicinity of the work places. Changing rooms - Adequate changing rooms are to be provided for workers to change their cloth in the factory area and office premises. Adequate lockers are also provided to the workers to keep their clothes and belongings. Rest rooms - Adequate numbers of restrooms are provided to the workers with provisions of water supply, wash basins, toilets, bathrooms, etc.

## **Non Statutory Schemes**

Many non-statutory welfare schemes may include the following schemes:

Personal Health Care (Regular medical check-ups): Some of the companies provide the facility for extensive health check-up

Flexi-time: The main objective of the flexitime policy is to provide opportunity to employees to work with flexible working schedules. Flexible work schedules are initiated by employees and approved by management to meet business commitments while supporting employee personal life needs

Employee Assistance Programs: Various assistant programs are arranged like external counselling service so that employees or members of their immediate family can get

counselling on various matters. Harassment Policy: To protect an employee from harassments of any kind, guidelines are provided for proper action and also for protecting the aggrieved employee. Maternity & Adoption Leave - Employees can avail maternity or adoption leaves. Paternity leave policies have also been introduced by various companies. Medi-claim Insurance Scheme: This insurance scheme provides adequate insurance coverage of employees for expenses related to hospitalization due to illness, disease or injury or pregnancy. Employee Referral Scheme: In several companies employee referral scheme is implemented to encourage employees to refer friends and relatives for employment in the organization.

## **Approaches to Labour Welfare**

Approaches to employee welfare refer to the beliefs and attitudes held by agencies which provide welfare facilities. Some agencies provide welfare facilities inspired by religious faith, others as a philanthropic duty and the like. The various approaches to labour welfare reflect the attitudes and beliefs of the agencies which are engaged in welfare activities. Welfare facilities may be provided on religious, philanthropic or some other grounds. Moreover, the different approaches to labour welfare reflect the evolution of the concept of welfare. In bygone days, the government of the land had to compel the owner of an industrial establishment to provide such basic amenities as canteens, rest rooms, drinking water, good working conditions, and so forth, for their employees. Such compulsion was necessary because the employer believed in exploiting labour and treating it in an unfair manner. But times have changed, and the concept of welfare, too, has undergone changes. Many progressive managements today provide welfare

facilities, voluntarily and with enlightened willingness and enthusiasm. In fact, welfare facilities are not restricted to the workers alone. They have now been extended to the society in general. In other words, labour welfare has been extended to include social welfare. Tata Steel Works at Jamshedpur, for example, spends Rs 10 crore each year on social welfare. Brooke Bond have set up a free animal welfare clinic at Gevrai, Aurangabad, under the direct charge of a qualified veterinary doctor. Jindal Aluminium, Bangalore, maintains the famous Naturopathy and Yogic Sciences Centre and a public school for the benefit of the public. The Jindal Scholarship Trust has been set up, under which deserving students are given scholarships. The Hindustan Machine Tools has a big playground and a community hall, which are let out for competitions and functions. A study of the approaches to labour welfare is desirable for the management, the workers and the general reader. For the general reader, a study of approaches is essential because his/her knowledge of the subject is incomplete without a knowledge of these approaches, and a knowledge of approaches enables the manager and the worker to have a better perspective on welfare work. The approaches and their brief descriptions are: The policing theory of labour welfare. The religion theory of labour welfare. The philanthropic theory of labour welfare. The paternalistic theory of labour welfare. The placating theory of labour welfare. The public relations theory of labour welfare. The functional theory of labour welfare.

## **The social theory of labour welfare.**

### **Policing Theory**

According to this view, the factory and other industrial workplaces provide ample opportunities for owners and managers of capital to exploit workers in an unfair manner. This could be done by making the labour work for long hours, by paying workers low wages, by keeping the workplaces in an unhygienic condition, by neglecting safety and health provisions, and by ignoring the provision of elementary human amenities, such as drinking water, latrines, rest rooms and canteens. Clearly, a welfare state cannot remain a passive spectator of this limitless exploitation. It enacts legislation under which managements are compelled to provide basic amenities to the workers. In short, the state assumes the role of a policeman, and compels the managers of industrial establishments to provide welfare facilities, and punishes the non-complier. This is the policing theory of labour welfare. 8

### **Religion Theory**

The religion theory has two connotations, namely, the investment and atonement aspects. The investment aspect of the religion theory implies that the fruits of today's deeds will be reaped tomorrow. Any action, good or bad, is therefore treated as an investment. Inspired by this belief, some employers plan and organise canteens and creches. The atonement aspect of the religion theory implies that the present disabilities of a person are the result of the sins committed by him/her previously. He/she should undertake to do good deeds now to atone or compensate for his/her sins. There is the story of a big Jain employer who firmly held the belief that the provision of welfare facilities for workers was outside the duties of the management.

Whatever he did provide was under government compulsion and supervision. It so happened, however, that the children born to him died as soon as they were born. Later, his own health suffered. He felt that, as a compensation, or expiration or even as an investment in a good deed (punyam), he should liberally contribute to the creche in the factory (as well as to other child-welfare institutions), and also to medical services for his workers. Consequently, in this particular factory, there came to exist an excellent creche and a well-organised dispensary. 9

## **Philanthropic Theory**

Philanthropy means affection for mankind. The philanthropic theory of labour welfare refers to the provision of good working conditions, creches and canteens out of pity on the part of the employers who want to remove the disabilities of the workers. Robert Owen of England was a philanthropic employer, who worked for the welfare of his workers. The philanthropic theory is more common in social welfare. Student hostels, drinking water facilities, the rehabilitation of crippled persons, donations to religious and educational institutions, and so forth are examples of philanthropic deeds.

## **Paternalistic Theory**

According to the paternalistic theory, also called the trusteeship theory, of labour welfare, the industrialist or the employer holds the total industrial estate, properties and the profits accruing from them, in trust. The property which he/she can use or abuse as he/she likes is not entirely his/her own. He/she holds it for his/her use, no doubt, but also for the benefit of his/her workers, if not for the whole society. For several reasons, such as low wages, lack of education, and so forth the workers are at present unable to take <https://assignbuster.com/employee-health-safety-and-welfare-social-work-essay/>



care of themselves. They are, therefore, like minors, and the employers should provide for their well-being out of funds in their control. The trusteeship is not actual and legal, but it is moral and, therefore, not less real.

### **Placating Theory**

This theory is based on the assumption that appeasement pays when the workers are organised and are militant. Peace can be bought by welfare measures. Workers are like children who are intelligent, but not fully so. As crying children are pacified by sweets, workers should be pleased by welfare works.

### **Public Relations Theory**

According to this theory, welfare activities are provided to create a good impression on the minds of the workers and the public, particularly the latter. Clean and safe working conditions, a good canteen, creche and other amenities, make a good impression on the workers, visitors and the public. Some employers proudly take their visitors round the plant to show how well they have organised their welfare activities.

### **Functional Theory**

Also known as the efficiency theory of labour welfare, the functional theory implies that welfare facilities are provided to make the workers more efficient. If workers are fed properly, clothed adequately and treated kindly, and if the conditions of their work are congenial, they will work efficiently. Welfare work is a means of securing, preserving and increasing the efficiency of labour.

## **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 condition of its employees. Labour welfare, as mentioned earlier, is gradually becoming social welfare.