

Meaning and Theories of labour welfare

Labour Welfare – Meaning

Labour welfare relates to taking care of the well-being of workers by employers, trade unions, governmental and non-governmental institutions and agencies. 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. 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.

Oxford dictionary- “Labour welfare is efforts to make life worth living for workmen.” The need for providing such services and facilities arise from the social responsibility of industries, a desire for upholding democratic values and a concern for employees. Welfare includes anything that is done for the comfort and improvement of employees and is provided over and above the wages.

According to ILO, labour welfare can be defined 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.

Seven Theories constituting the conceptual frame work of labour welfare activities are the following:

1. The Policing Theory of Labour Welfare:

The policing theory is based on assumption that Human Being is so much selfish and always tries for own benefits whether on the cost of others welfare. Any of the employers will not work for the welfare of employees until he is forced to do so. This theory is based on the contention that a minimum standard of welfare is necessary for workers.

The assumption on which the theory is based is the without compulsion, supervision and fear of punishment, no employer will provide even the barest minimum of welfare facilities for workers this theory is based on the assumption that man is selfish and self-centered, and always tries to achieve his own ends, even at the cost of the welfare of others. 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.

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 of Labour Welfare:

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. The theory views were an essentially religious. Religious feelings are what sometimes prompt employers to take up welfare activities in the belief of benefits either in his life or in support after life.

Any good work is considered an investment, because both the benefactor and the beneficiary are benefited by the good work done by the benefactor. This theory does not take into consideration that the workers are not beneficiaries but rightful claimants to a part of the gains derived by their labour.

3. The Philanthropic Theory of Labour Welfare:

Philanthropy is the inclination to do or practice of doing well to ones fellow men. Man is basically self- centered and acts of these kinds stem from personal motivation, when some employers take compassion on their fellowmen, they may undertake labor welfare measures for their workers.

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 Paternalistic or Trusteeship Theory of Labour Welfare:

In this theory it is held that the industrialists or employers hold the total industrial estate, properties and profits accruing form them in trust for the workmen, for him, and for society. It

assumes that the workmen are like minors and are not able to look after their own interests that they are ignorant because of lack of education. Employers therefore have the moral responsibility to look after the interests of their wards, who are the workers.

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 of Labour Welfare:

As labour groups are becoming better organized and are becoming demanding and militant, being more conscious of their rights and privileges than even before, their demand for higher wages and better standards increases. The placing theory advocates timely and periodical acts of labour welfare to appease the workers.

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 Relations Theory of Labour Welfare:

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.

The labour welfare movements may be utilized to improve relations between management and labour. An advertisement or an exhibition of a labour welfare programme may help the management projects a good image of the company.

7. The Functional Theory of Labour Welfare:

The concept behind this theory is that a happy and healthy person is a better, more productive worker. Here, welfare is used as a means to secure, preserve and develop the efficiency and productivity of labour. The approach to any solutions, especially as that as between the workers and the management should be dialogue and an understanding of one another's viewpoint.