

B.A. Part III (Economics Honours)
Paper – VIII (Labour Economics)
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Concept of Labour Welfare Measures

The economic development of a country depends upon the production of commodities and services. The production is the result of five factors of production viz; land, labour, capital, organization or management and entrepreneurship. Out of these five factors, the labour is the active factor of production. The productivity of labour has gained the greatest attention of industrial psychologists and researchers in the field of economics and management. The productivity of labour depends upon its efficiency. Quality of labour depends primarily upon its health and nutrition, literacy and social values and customs. Poor diets, unhygienic conditions, inadequate disease preventive measures and lack of medicines and medical care have an adverse bearing on their efficiency. The happiness and the efficiency of workers are the mirror of the prosperity of an industry. This prosperity of an industry is the end result of productivity. To neglect the labour class is to neglect the productivity. So labour welfare measures become crucial because of the reasons like low level of wages, irregular working hours, inability of trade union to undertake welfare work, to build up a stable labour force for creating a genuine welfare state, to create good psychological feelings and to create good moral habits. Under such conditions labour welfare can be only relief to labouring class.

The concept of 'labour welfare' is necessarily flexible and elastic and differs widely with time, region, industry, social values and customs, degree of

industrialization, the general socio-economic development of the people and the political ideologies prevailing at a particular time. It is also moulded according to the age-group, sex socio-cultural background, marital and economic status and educational level of the workers in various industries. Accordingly, the concept cannot be very precisely defined. A series of sharply diverse opinions exists on the motives and merits of labour welfare as well. In its widest sense, it is more or less synonymous with labour conditions and as a whole, including labour legislation and social insurance. Another focus of interpretation centres round the voluntary or statutory nature of welfare for working class.

Welfare in Indian industry implies the provision of medical and educational services, a congenial work atmosphere, etc. The need for providing such services and facilities arises from the social responsibility of industry, a desire for upholding democratic values and a concern for employees. Labour welfare implies providing better work conditions, such as proper lighting, heat control, cleanliness, low noise level, toilet and drinking-water facilities, canteen and rest rooms, health and safety measures, reasonable hours of work and holidays, and welfare services, such as housing, education, recreation, transportation and counseling.

Definitions of Labour Welfare Measures

A few definitions of labour welfare measures are given as under:-

The **Labour Investigation Committee** was of the view to include under ' Labour Welfare: "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 of the contractual benefits for which workers may have bargained."

According to the **Committee on Labour Welfare**, welfare services should mean, “Such Services, facilities, and amenities as adequate canteens, rest and recreation facilities, sanitary and medical facilities, arrangements for travel to and from place of 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 the conditions under which workers are employed.”

The **International Labour Organisation (ILO)** report refers to labour welfare as, “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 provided with amenities conducive to good health and high morale.”