

A Comparison on Staff Welfare Schemes: India & Abroad

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Staff Welfare:

The words 'Staff Welfare' are quite a hygiene factor when it comes to employment and at times is in itself the possible successful desirable outcome that is desired by the working staff. In our country, as we descended from the British empire, we took some of the positives from them in our working culture which was developed in their society during the post-industrialization period, which included staff welfare schemes like labor laws regulating the workers and the working conditions and also at times regulating compensation with perks and allowances. Staff welfare is called upon by the subjects as a respite from the earlier slave-like conditions and has introduced classes like the bourgeoisie of the upper class (executive) and the workers thus totaling both blue-collared and white-collared employees. Some of the measures that were introduced by them were at the time of working which were non-financial were working-hours, proper leaves in the form of casual, privileged, and sick leaves with also loss of pay and proper monitoring of work through attendance, dress sense, and several perks and allowances which are available as per specific position or post—creation of organizational-hierarchy as well as various posts with designated job specifications. The financial parameters are provident fund, pension, gratuity, bonus and other time-to-time introduced incentives like insurance for both self as well as for family which are introduced by the employer as per work ethics.

How to cite this paper: Vividh Bansal "A Comparison on Staff Welfare Schemes: India & Abroad" Published in International Journal of Trend in Scientific Research and Development (ijtsrd), ISSN: 2456-6470, Volume-8 | Issue-1, February 2024, pp.583-585, URL: www.ijtsrd.com/papers/ijtsrd63467.pdf



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'Staff welfare' – It is a concept of Western origin particularly if we consider the implementation and concepts involved. All the financial incentives and other allowances administered today are taken from it. Especially the concepts of 'pension' and 'insurance' are taken from it.

What we are missing is the Indian system of Staff welfare and the organizational hierarchy in which it was applicable.

In our country, there were fewer organizational positions, especially considering the smaller governing bodies. We were largely agrarian and there was almost no hierarchy except at the very highest level with the king and his nobles serving their land with an army commanded by the general who used to hold an important position under the king. At the lowest level, it was *lassie faire* with power vested in the powerful landlords. The sole earnings were through crops and related products. There used to be a leader but mostly every position was filled based on blood relations. It was poor and used to be fed by their intense labor. They were neither heard nor

followed whereas few used to enjoy the fruits of these poor and used to enjoy life with vested power. There was no order and help, proper judgements were almost absent and no proper written land of law was there. But the concept of pension was there and it used to be given only to higher authorities from the state collection of revenue. Royalty was based on lineage and ability was absent at all levels of rulers. The 'ability' used to come at the lowest level in the courtiers and nobles.

Wars are used to define the change in ruling power. This changed with the coming of industrialization. Although in a certain residual form, it is still present in European countries and our country too it is there but authority has been taken out or absorbed by the state or parliament and even the right of pension too has been taken away by the government of today. So, after the British rule the concept of 'Staff Welfare' has spread from few to the masses, and in a democratic nation like us, this is a major boon.

In India, in our transgress to civilization each person was from birth allocated to work in the caste and

ethnicity basis. So, as he grew he was assigned the teachings or instructions keeping in mind the work he would do as he grew up. The first twenty-five years were assigned to teaching and instruction so he could learn his job and take on responsibilities. During these formative years, no one asked the person to earn a living. He was freed to learn and students were asked to live life in sustenance. They had to feed themselves by asking for food from various households and no one was allowed to cook food themselves. Next came the Grahstya or family age where the man was married and he used to earn sustenance. He reared the family and worked to hold a position in society and family.

After that next year when his sons start their second stage of life, he enters into the third stage which was to be the chief of his family. It is here where he has full control over money earned and the decision-making body to 'How to spend it?' Slowly he becomes old and renounces the world to live as a sage to counter-penance his sins.

Civilization as we see was based on 'karma' and although never told to be in excesses but always taught us to live at a minimum and helped in adhere to civilization by first working and then giving back to civilization after achieving substantial stature in society by entering into decision making framework of a unit or a big conglomerate as per achievements. The last phase is for the person to go in god's grace with prayers for repentance for wrongdoings and reverence of God by spiritual journey.

In each phase, there were teachers and guidance through bodies who maintained touch with each other at local levels. For further guidance subjects used to approach the king and his court. In all phases of life, such was the influence that no one slept without food and all the cycles of life were shared jointly by all in a healthier way. Our culture never taught us to live in excess but to support and help everyone to live in harmony.

With industrialization, this has changed a lot. A new form of classes was introduced as per work which has changed the existing classes and caste structure. The process to enter into these positions too changed and was through competition as decided by the competent authority. So, everything that we have started to break. Compensation according to work and product was introduced. Also introduced were packages and fixed income with the coming up of special economic zones. The agrarian economy was weak and slow but post-industrialization the whole structure has changed. Margins of considerable proportions were introduced in a new field came up known as 'Marketing'. With resources started to swell up from

a few to lakhs. Cities started to evolve and education changed to convent. Retail started to take place and instead of posts on bloodlines, ability started to take precedence. 'Sales and marketing' thus evolved and with the technology the evolution in communication, movement, and health too started to gain heights.

So, if we see we have transcended from our inherent culture of values and customs designed for 'basic amenities' for all we have now come to a perspiring product-based job where you are monitored and your output quantized and accordingly you are paid. 'Compensation' is now introduced. Everything is put on the weighted value and is sold for money.

'What we have lost in the process?'

We have lost four basic things which are values, happiness, culture, and time. The adage, 'Everything can be bought by money except happiness' holds very true. Cordial-Relations stands broken and false self stands gratified.

So, employment in this form itself has a lacuna which we can see as highlighted above. 'Welfare' – has a very wide meaning and happiness precedes money. You cannot buy values, relations, happiness, and your associated culture with money although it may help you attain all four in certain small proportions. The purpose of life stands defeated. We are fighting for something which in an actual sense is materialistic and is of no use for human life. So, all the compensation we are making in the name of staff welfare stands defeated if we see life as a purpose. 'Continuity' with work and giving it back to society is what should take precedence.

We all agree that in old age definitely, we need a break from work but not forever. Still, the experienced professional has a high caliber and his guidance can do wonders. The nation must take the help in other ways not through compulsion but by proper allocation of duties to them. 'Compensation' stands for duties and giving a pension for no work just defeats the very purpose of the same. The idea is not to earn but to contribute to the growth and development. At such a stage with so much experience the ideal way is to give them decision-making powers and with a technology-enabled environment allow them to work from anywhere to everywhere and take them out of the labor laws which means no fixed hours of work and no compensation as per the days but all on the quality of work. Here we should take into consideration all the retired staff and get them involved in the work somehow or the other. Label each position and open channels designated as on various quality levels and with a screening process filter them all into various vacant places. 'PF and

Gratuity' can be paid either on retirement or on specific levels of age to the staff. Insurance and allowances can be adjusted as per the needs of staff. 'Pension' is a dilemma in our work-structure. It bonds employees to the organization definitely but at the same time, it also leads to the necessary evil of losing experienced staff at a time when he could be the need of the organization.

Retirement in itself tells that the person now is not in the state to hold a position and should be relieved from the job actively. I agreed with the viewpoint but he should not be cut off from the work but should be relieved passively and compensation should be made in such a manner that his minimum passive participation is ensured until he resigns from the job.

Well, retirement and resignation are two synonymous terms but in meanings differ a lot. Retirement happens once in a lifetime and resignation can be given at any point in time and suitably on movement from one post to another after serving a notice period. A person who retires should still be kept on office rolls if he wants the facility of pension and related insurance coverage from the organization. He should be assigned remote work as well as work requested by him. He should be relieved from attendance, reporting, and office hours and should be evaluated if to be done, based on output only. If he wants to quit and resign, he should be allowed to do so only he should agree he won't draw a pension from the organization and other perks and allowances should continue as such. The reason is that pension costs much more to the organization and it looks like it is 'pay without work'. To promote the work culture, it is essential to take measures as suggested. The insurance part is the most important and should be given to all family members of the employee to cover any health issues. Interestingly the Western culture and its takeaways are in reality positive in many aspects but it doesn't fit fully in the Indian culture. *India is the land of Lord Rama and Lord Shri Hari Krishna who were the ideal king and the ideal in all*

aspects of life for a commoner. Money is required at all levels of growth in life, for every occasion but the way it should be pumped into the pocket of citizens is a big question still.

All the compensation-related terms like pension, gratuity, provident fund, bonus, salary, loans, and others are according to the Western lifestyle and the Indian lifestyle demands a different structure of the same. First of all, as the child is registered as a citizen of the state for the first 10-15 years, he should live a life as per his father's standard and it should be ensured by the administration that the practice is put into practice through local governing bodies. It should include health, education, ambience, evaluation, and camaraderie. After the evaluation, the child should be graded and put into the specified group or channel where he can overcome his shortcomings and become the best in his chosen field. Once he starts earning, he should be evaluated to hold additional responsibilities with the regular ones.

Subsidy, loans, and scholarships are few to be named to allow him through the first phase of life. Second phase when he starts earning, he should be groomed for additional social and civic responsibilities and should raise his own family. This will go on until his sons start to earn and he should then assume bigger leadership roles. And lastly, in the last phase, he should be aptly covered by health insurance and other related schemes. Care-takers should be allotted and the best health facilities should be provided.

At last, money can buy you everything except happiness. So, keeping it in mind and the discussed issues Staff Welfare should be designed. The welfare of staff has been linked to the welfare of the state here and too much emphasis on money has been curtailed. Sources of money and the way to earn it with proper recruitment and selection bodies to do the same too also have been highlighted. Identification of talent and related growth and establishment of an individual has been discussed aptly.