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Employee Welfare Measures Practiced at Cement Bricks Manufacturing Units and Employee Retention Tendency

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Abstract
Facility provisions, focusing on welfare of employees both mental and physical health, work life balance, assurance to health and safety in the workplace result in employee motivation, satisfaction and employee retention. This study aims to evidence the employee welfare measures practiced in cement bricks manufacturing units which are an uncovered area of research and to bring out the satisfaction of employees resulting retention tendency. It tests the linear relationship of welfare measures with retention tendency of employees. It emphasizes the importance of experience as a key factor deciding satisfaction on welfare measures and retention tendency. The study adopted questionnaire survey among randomly selected 120 sample respondents. It evidenced the employee welfare measures practiced at Cement Bricks Units - Medical facilities, Canteen Facility, Rest rooms, Safety measures, Insurance Coverage, Water facility, Leisure Hours, Rest Intervals, Tools and Equipment provisions, Trainings and instructions that are significantly contribute to create retention tendency among the respondents. Further, the study identified the significant relationship of experience of respondents with satisfaction on welfare measures in the sampled units resulting retention tendency. This study emphasizes strategic implications that must focus on the development of employees – well being, work life balance, health and safety aspects.

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Keywords: Employee Welfare Measure, Satisfaction, Employee retention, Cement Bricks Manufacturing Industry

1. Employee Welfare

Focusing well-being and development of employees in terms of economical, social and psychological with the concern of labor legislations will result in welfare of employees. This is kept undergoing thrust area of research study across the industries. In fast growing industrial digital era, the organizations have to undergo changes and challenges regards retaining the employees and developing the employees to concern the health and care of employees (W. Liang, D. *et al* (2023) [12], Sabil, S, *et al* (2023) [9]. From agriculture to information sector, welfare measures and schemes are mandatory and necessary to think and treat the human resources as assets and capital. The industries and organizations have responsibilities (Lin, D. *et al* (2023) [6] to employees to be encouraged at all times which may strengthen the sense of belongingness and responsibility of employees towards the organization.

According to International Labor Organization, welfare measures and practices refer to the provision and establishment of services, facilities and amenities in the surroundings of work environment enabling the employees to perform their job roles and works in healthy and peaceful working environment and to improve the level of satisfaction, health and morale of employees (Wei, Yu. *et al* (2020) [13]. Salaria & Salaria (2013) [10] discussed the necessity of employee welfare to make life worth living of employees and for organizations, welfare measures and schemes is basic function to make employees motivated highly towards work satisfaction, work performance and retention. They emphasized the welfare practice responding to the types of welfare schemes statutory that are compulsory to provide by an organization and non statutory schemes are the result of employer's generosity, employee's enlightenment and philanthropic feelings, suggested by the compliance to the laws focusing employee health and safety Anjali Ganesh (2017) [1].

Functional or efficiency theory talks about the welfare measures used as a means to secure, preserve and develop the efficiency of employees in work and make the employees more productive. The theory emphasizes the importance of welfare measures for

productive, happy workplace. Placating theory discusses the demanding part of the labor groups (W.Liang, D. *et al* (2023) [12]. The employees are more conscience of their rights and privileges than ever before. They always place their demand for welfare measures and social well being in the workplace. This theory suggests the timely responses to the demand of employees may make employees to retain in the workplace.

There are organizations to struggle facing the complex issues like lack of labors and workers, competition, un-favorable work environment, unhealthy working conditions, poor living standards, lack of amenities in the workplace, low wage rates, gender discrimination in salary and allowances and insecurity of jobs and so on. The cement manufacturing and bricks manufacturing industry is not exempted from these kinds of issues. This is one of the biggest labor intensive sectors, which contribute to Indian economy and creating employment opportunities at grass route levels covering semi skilled and unskilled workers. Many research studies (Wei, Yu. *et al* (2020) [13], Sabil, S, *et al* (2023) [9] have found that improper implementation of employee welfare measures and schemes have significant negative impact in the workplace like frequent absenteeism, high turnover (W.Liang, D. *et al* (2023) [12], dissatisfaction Lin, D. *et al* (2023) [6], migration and productive inefficiency in work. With this notion and understanding the importance of employee welfare measures required for any organization including cement bricks manufacturing units, the research study was conducted to explore the welfare measures practiced at Cement Bricks Manufacturing Units – Karur, Tamilnadu state and the satisfaction level of employees resulting retention tendency.

2. Literature Reviews

Salaria, P & Salaria, S (2013) [10] stated that spending of organizations in welfare measures is an investment that brings a profitable return in the form of productivity and efficiency in every process. They further elaborated the welfare concept is flexible, elastic and differs widely with times, region to region, industry to industry Anjali Ganesh (2017) [1]. Joyjit Sanyal, & Sujit Sikidar. (2018) [5] discussed in their study, welfare measures and practice refers to the provision of certain facilities and services in addition to wages and salaries by the employers. It includes setting up minimum standards, desirable quality standards, provision of facilities including canteens, stores, recreation clubs, educational trainings and assistance in work carry out. Labor Investigation Committee (1946) listed out responding to the employers' statutory obligation to have different methods of welfare schemes such as welfare amenities, sanitary and hygienic facilities, rest facilities, feeding facilities, medical facilities, family planning, transport facilities, and housing allowances.

Ravindra. K.B. (2013) [8] discussed the importance of welfare measures and proper implementation may include all facets of human resources. He stated that welfare measures and schemes not only the existential necessities but also ensures the improvement in emotional, spiritual and motivational perspectives of employees (Wei, Yu. *et al* (2020) [13]. He discussed the social security system giving assurance to employees about their well being and job security and safety in workplace. Babu, Sai, P.C & Goli Gurunadham, Goli (2016) [2] discussed the role of personnel department to carry out the employee welfare function focusing the development and welfare of employees. They stated that the desired goals and productivity may be achieved by enhancing the provision of designed and systematized welfare measures and schemes in the workplace (Wei, Yu. *et al* (2020) [13]. This will result the extent of satisfaction in the work roles.

2.1. Cement Bricks Manufacturing & Employees

Generating the economic infrastructure in the grass route level, the bricks manufacturing units greatly supports to promoting the socio economic profile of the people who are working in the industry. At the route level, this is one of the potential avenues to create employment opportunities for skilled and semi skilled employees. Such industry will get influenced by various factors internal – employee welfare, turnover, health and safety issues and external environment – labor market and practice, high level competition, government policies and etc Partakson Romun Chiru & L S Sharma (2019) [7].

Das S, Quamrul S.H, *et al*. (2017) [3] stated that brick industries are considered as lucrative trade in Bangladesh. They reviewed the state of brick kiln industries and the impact of workers. They found out various health issues in the work places and the living standard of employees is low. They found out the reasons for accidents in cement bricks processing units that the employees are enforced to work physically in a short span of time and to deliver the maximum output. They also suggested that an improved arrangement of hygiene and sanitation system and environmental measure are essential for the welfare of the workers. Seshananda S at el (2016) conducted a study in Kathmandu Valley at Terai region of Nepal; found that common sickness of the workers is mainly caused by the brick kilns in the form of realizing gas particle. They also found that work-related musculoskeletal disorders (WMSD) are common among the workers in brick production enterprise. Das, Mayuree (2019) [4] was discussing the working hours of the workers in brick industry found to be very long up to 9-10 hours in a day. Due to continuous working in field, they face various health related problems such as back pain, fever, headache, eye problem, skin problem, respiratory disorders and so on. Again after conducting the survey it is also found that the workers live in a very unhygienic environment. With the understanding the employee welfare concepts and need of humanistic and holistic approach to the welfare of cement bricks manufacturing employees; the study has framed the following objectives.

Objectives of the Study

1. To study and explore the various employee welfare measures practiced in the sample cement bricks manufacturing units.
2. To explore the satisfaction of sampled employees towards employee welfare measures resulting in the retention tendency among the respondents.
3. To elicit suggestion to improve employee welfare measures and facilities provided to the sample respondents in the study units.

3. Methodology

The study adopted descriptive research design to study the nature of sample respondents working in cement bricks manufacturing units and to bring out their opinion on welfare measures practiced in the study units.

3.1. Data Collection
The study applied questionnaire survey method to collect the primary data from the sample employee respondents who are working in the three selected sample cement bricks manufacturing units namely Sre Ar Vee Bricks, Kumar Interlock stones, and Mookambika Bricks – Karur City, Tamilnadu. From the sampled units, 120 sample respondents were selected and conducted the study. Karur city is one of the industrial cities in India contributing to textile industry economy. The city is for home textiles, home appliances, cement manufacturing units, bricks manufacturing units, agricultural product processing units and so on.

3.2. Collection Procedure
With proper approval from the manager of bricks manufacturing units for conducting survey and with the validity approval of the subject expert for the questionnaire, the questionnaire was distributed to 120 sample respondents and collected the data. With the permission of the supervisors of plants, the oral interview was also conducted using written notes among the sample respondents regarding welfare measures in common.

3.3. Data Analysis
For the study of demographic profile and opinion of the respondents on welfare measures, descriptive statistical analysis was carried out. To test the hypotheses, chi square and correlation analysis was carried out using SPSS software package.

3.4. Hypotheses of the Study
H_1: There are employee welfare measures available in the sampled cement bricks manufacturing units – Karur
H_2: A significant relationship observed between employee welfare measures practiced in cement bricks manufacturing units Karur and satisfaction of employees towards the welfare measures.
H_3: A significant positive relationship of employee welfare measures practiced in cement bricks manufacturing units Karur with the retention tendency of employees.
H_4: A significant relationship observed between the experience of employees working in cement bricks manufacturing units Karur and retention tendency of employees.
H_5: A significant difference observed between the experience groups of employees working in cement bricks manufacturing units Karur, in the satisfaction towards employee welfare measures practiced.

3.5. Demographic Profile
The study was conducted among the employees working in cement bricks manufacturing units located in Karur city, Tamilnadu. Most of the sampled employee respondents are educationally qualified – higher secondary to college level education (40%), working in bricks manufacturing process sections / units (47%), other working in packing section (15%), delivery section (10%) and storing / inventory section (15%) and office (13%), belong to the age group of 31 – 40 yrs (61%), leading married family life (35%), having 10 yrs of experience (51%), getting per month salary 15000/- to 20000/- (75%), who evidenced the practice of employee welfare measures in the sampled units and they expressed their satisfaction on welfare measures practiced and having retention tendency.

3.6. Frequency of Employees' Satisfaction on Welfare Measures
In an average 46% of the respondents satisfied on welfare measures in the sampled units that are restroom facilities (43% of respondents), canteen facilities (40% of respondents), medical facilities (53% of respondents), water facility (67% of respondents), safety measures – first aid facilities (56% of respondents), allowances – travelling allowance (32% of respondents), overtime allowance (47% of respondents), incentives – bonus and gifts (47% of respondents), rest interval hours (44% of respondents), loans and advances – educational loan and personal loan (53% of respondents), proper salary and wage provision (51% of respondents), training programs (56% of respondents), employee insurance coverage (51% of respondents), provision of tools and equipments (40% of respondents)

3.7. Frequency of Employees' Dissatisfaction on Welfare Measures Practiced
In an average 54% of the respondents dissatisfied on welfare measures in the sampled units that are restroom facilities (57% of respondents), canteen facilities (60% of respondents), medical facilities (47% of respondents), water facility (33% of respondents), safety measures – first aid facilities (44% of respondents), allowances – travelling allowance (68% of respondents), overtime allowance (53% of respondents), incentives – bonus and gifts (53% of respondents), rest interval hours (56% of respondents), loans and advances – educational loan and personal loan (47% of respondents), proper salary and wage provision (49% of respondents), training programs (44% of respondents), employee insurance coverage (49% of respondents), provision of tools and equipments (60% of respondents).

4. Results and Discussion
As far as the welfare of the employees in workplace is concerned, the basic and necessary things of the employees to be given much more attention for their safety, security, development, productivity, retention, satisfaction, health and wellbeing, social interactions and harmonious relationship. The organizations realize the importance of welfare of employees for which they take enormous amount of efforts and steps Sabil, S, *et al* (2023) [9]. Across the sectors and industries, there are welfare measures practiced responding to the nature of industry type, nature of job roles and work tasks. Being the cement manufacturing and cement brick manufacturing industry is a labor intensive industry, strategic attention is required to implement welfare measures focusing the welfare of employees for their livelihood and development for instance the monetary and non monetary benefits, basic amenities in the workplace, safety measures and so on. The study aimed to bring out the welfare measures practiced in the sampled cement brick manufacturing units. It brought out the following.

4.1. Welfare Measures available – a) restroom facilities – provision of restrooms on workplace for both male and female separately, b) canteen facilities – canteen foods with affordable costs in work hours, c) medical facilities – provision of medicines while injuries and accidents, d) medical consultations, e) water facility – provision of sufficient amount of drinking water, f) safety measures – first aid facilities – provision of first aid kits, injury reports, guidelines and directions for using tools and equipments, g)

allowances – travelling allowance – provision of travelling allowance for work related activities, h) overtime allowance – provision of allowance for overtime work, i) incentives – bonus and gifts – provision of bonus and gifts following the government directions, j) rest intervals – interval timings for rests and tea & lunch, k) loans and advances – provision of educational loan and personal loan, l) training programs – arranging machine handling trainings, life skill trainings, instructional training and others, m) employee insurance coverage – following of government employee insurance plans and system, n) provision of tools and equipments – providing the required tools time to time.

Further the study planned to test the relationship of welfare measure practices in the workplace and employees' satisfaction resulting retention tendency. It found out the significant relationship. It tested the directional relationship as well. The directional relationship explains and emphasizes the quality and improvement in welfare measures that may relatively bring changes in retention tendency among the employees in workplace.

4.2. Relationship of employee satisfaction with employee welfare measures - The study explored a significant relationship of the satisfaction of employees (M=3.96, SD=.603) with employee welfare measures (M=3.88, SD=.194) practiced in sampled cement bricks manufacturing units (χ^2=62.475). The (Phi = .913) and (Cramers' V = .645) values are also significant that evidences the medium to high level of relationship.

4.3. Directional Relationship

The study found a significant positive directional relationship of the employee welfare measure practiced (M=3.88, SD=.194) with the employee retention tendency (M=3.96, SD=.603) of sampled employees (r=.583). This means that a change in employee welfare measures practice in the sampled units that may result a relative change in the retention tendency level of employees.

In addition, the study tested the relationship of experience of employees with satisfaction of employees on welfare measures practiced in sampled units, since experience of employees is a key factor for satisfaction, motivation, involvement, retention and productivity. The study explored the difference in satisfaction level of employees across experience groups. The employees who have more than five years experience differ from lesser experience group in satisfaction on welfare measures practiced in the sampled units.

4.4. Relationship of experience of employees using measures with retention tendency of employees - The study explored a significant relationship between the experience of sampled employees and retention tendency of employees (M=3.88, SD=.194), (χ^2= 41.285). The (Phi = .742) and (Cramers' V =.525) values are also significant that evidences the medium to high level of relationship.

4.5. Difference in satisfaction of experience groups on welfare measures - The study analyzed and explored the significant difference between the experience groups of sampled employees in the satisfaction (M=3.96, SD=.603) towards employee welfare measures practiced (M=3.88, SD=.194), F(2,72) = 3.205. The Post hoc analysis evidences the experience groups 0- 5 yrs group and 6-10 yrs groups are significantly differed from the 11- 15 yrs experience group. This difference suggests that the experience of the employees is one of the key factors while framing employee welfare measures.

Overall, the study explored the availability of employee welfare measures in the sampled units and majority of the respondents are satisfied with welfare measures and having retention tendency and the study found out the experience of the employees have significant relationship with satisfaction on welfare measures and explored the significant difference among experience groups of the respondents.

5. Managerial Implications

Based on the study findings the availability of employee welfare measures and satisfaction level among the sampled respondents, and observation in the workplace, oral interview with sampled respondents, the study suggests the followings as strategic implications: a) the number of canteen employees may be increased b) duties may be allotted to keep canteen environment clean, to maintain standard of quality food c) requisition of employees is to take steps to inform the higher medical authorities to appoint lower medical personals d) requisition of employees is to arrange medical consultations and concessions for treatments, at least in the time of accidents and injuries e) policies related to the vehicle and travelling allowances provision for employees may be revised and implemented based on their best performance and their request, who are traveling long distance to workplace f) provision of loans and advances can be revised to increase the amounts aiming the welfare of employees and their children g) extension of rest interval timings 15 minutes to 25 minutes and provision of bonus and gifts and increasing the amount are required by the sampled respondents h) provision of tools and equipments time to time update is required i) Creation of a separate grievance consists of representatives from various levels to settle grievances as early as possible – wage discrimination, work shift issues, harassments and so on j) as per the market rate, there is a need of revising the salary and grades in similar industries are to be revised k) as per the identified significant relationship of experience of employees with satisfaction on welfare measures, there should be implemented the provision of monetary benefits is to be fixed based on the experience and performance l) as per the tested hypothesis, the identified significant relationship between employee welfare measures and retention tendency of employees that suggest the improvement in welfare measures focusing employee welfare and development rather than just employee management that may lead to the satisfaction of employees may result employee retention and growth of productivity.

6. Conclusion

Behind every successful organization there stand its employees. As the non- statutory welfare measures are not only for the employees but it also reaches their family members, the always keep their home a heaven. This has a great their fullest co- operation to the management which results in high productivity. Every industry provides statutory and non-statutory employee welfare measures for the benefits of the employees. The sampled cement bricks manufacturing units have been spending more money regularly on the employee welfare facilities, canteen facilities, rest room and medical insurance etc. The cement manufacturing industry maintains external safety measures and they develop their

some activities for employees' motivations. As there is a cordial relationship between the management and the workers of cement bricks manufacturing units towards welfare facilities and plans whole heartedly and the workers are also contributing more towards betterment of the cement bricks manufacturing units, moving in the right direction, there is no doubt, that these organizations will achieve more in future.

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