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Voluntary Labour Welfare Schemes: Measures adopted by Garment Export Units in Bangalore, India

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Abstract:

Labour welfare schemes whether statutory or non-statutory fosters a healthy and safe work place environment for the labor that keeps the motivation levels high. The various welfare measures provided by the employer have an immediate impact on the health, physical and mental ability of the workers which in turn displays higher productivity and efficiency at the workplace (Tiwari, November 2014). As garment manufacturing process is mostly labour driven, implementation of labour welfare schemes are very essential for a sustainable business. The welfare measures, influences the sentiments of the workers, thus leading to industrial peace. Measures toward safe work place environment leads to reduced risk and work related injuries thus increasing work place confidence and satisfaction. A healthy workplace leads to a healthy work force both physically and mentally thus reducing labour turnover and absenteeism. In addition to statutory labour welfare measures, non-statutory (voluntary) welfare measures play an important role as a compensation for the work. Non-statutory welfare brings in a sense of loyalty and gratitude among the workers that motivate them to stick to the organization and work hard. This paper is an attempt to understand the voluntary welfare measures adopted by the garment manufacturing units in Bangalore (Southern part of India) in the wake of serious labour scarcity faced by the industry.

Keywords: Labour, welfare, non statutory, voluntary welfare measures, garment manufacturing

1. Introduction

Labour laws and labour welfare has been a focus area of researcher. This paper focuses on the garment industry, especially garment export units and their efforts at initiating voluntary welfare schemes.

Labour laws in India date back to the year 1881 when the Indian Factories act was passed. After this, number of such laws was passed to safeguard the working conditions in the industries. Till 1948, the Factories Act saw many amendments put in place. The main purpose of this act was to ameliorate working conditions in factories and to take proper steps for safety, health and welfare of the workers. The Factories act falls under the category of statutory acts that are enforced by the government for the welfare of the workers and the improvement in the working environment. The International Labor Organization (ILO) at its Asian Regional Conference defined labour welfare as a term that includes all the services, facilities and amenities in a working environment to enable the employees to perform their work in a healthy, congenial environment conducive to good health and high morale. Labour welfare includes anything that is done to alleviate the working condition, creation of industrial harmony, betterment of health, provision for education facility for the employee and the family in addition to wages and salaries (KT, 2013).

Labour welfare may be divided into Statutory, Voluntary and Mutual welfare schemes. Statutory welfare measure includes those provisions that are enforced by government on the organization through different factory acts and regulations. It is obligatory for any employer to abide by the provisions under the acts. Statutory labour welfare encompasses provisions for providing facilities like drinking water, ergonomically designed work place, first aid appliances, latrines and urinals, canteen facilities, proper lighting, crèche, rest rooms, changing rooms etc. Voluntary welfare works include those activities undertaken by the employers for the well-being of the works voluntarily. Mutual welfare is the effort of the workers themselves in mutual agreement with the employers for the betterment of the workplace. Both Voluntary and Mutual agreements are Non-Statutory labour welfare schemes (R. Santhanakrishnan, 2015). Some of the Non-Statutory schemes have personal health care, flexi working hours, employee assistance programs, harassment policy, maternity and child care schemes, employee referral schemes, medi- claim policy and other motivational schemes. In fact, welfare schemes are not only restricted to the employees alone but is extended to the society. This is a part of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). CSR percolates through the entire supply chain of the business and labour welfare is an integral part of CSR. CSR practices give an edge to the practicing company (Bajpai, 2013). It gives positive impact on consumer's perception about the company, their working procedure and their commitment towards their employee and the society.

2. Impact of Labour Welfare Schemes

Labour welfare schemes whether statutory or non-statutory, fosters a healthy and safe work place environment for the labour which keeps the motivation levels high. The various welfare measures provided by the employer have an immediate impact on the health, physical and mental ability of the workers which in turn displays higher productivity and efficiency at the workplace (Tiwari, November 2014). The welfare measures influence the sentiments of the workers thus leading to industrial peace. Measures toward safe workplace environment leads to reduced risk and work related injuries thus increasing work place confidence and satisfaction. A healthy workplace leads to a healthy work force both physically and mentally thus reducing labour turnover and absenteeism. This creates a permanent settled labour force that has attained a certain level of productivity and efficiency. This leaves the unit with further scope of improved productivity and efficiency and reduced training cost (Kanawaty, 1992).

In addition to statutory labour welfare measures, non-statutory or voluntary welfare measures play an important role as a compensation for the work. Voluntary welfare brings in a sense of loyalty and gratitude among the workers that motivate them to stick to the organization and work hard. The workers develop a kind of belongingness to the organization as they understand that these measures are undertaken by the employers for the workers at their own (Sharma, 2014).

This paper is an attempt to understand the voluntary welfare measures adopted by the garment manufacturing units in Bangalore in the wake of serious labor scarcity face by the industry. As garment manufacturing process is mostly labour driven, implementation of labour welfare schemes are very essential for a sustainable business.

3. Purpose of the Study

Garment manufacturing industry in India is a labour oriented industry. The entire supply chain of garment manufacturing is a labour intensive process. According to Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, Textile and Garment Industry in India employs 15.23 million people of which 2.3 million working in the factory (Rosanna M. Vetticad, 2015). It is the largest employer in India after agriculture providing employment to over 45 million people directly and 60 million people indirectly (IBEF, 2016). Although there has been a technological advancement in the garment manufacturing sector, this industry is hugely dependent on skilled and unskilled labours. This leads to high impact of labour productivity on overall production levels. Absenteeism and lateness, poor workmanship, accidents and occupational hazards are some of the associated disadvantage attached to a labour oriented industry. Such ineffective human resource factors are the bi-product of poor human resource management system, poor labour welfare policies and poor working environment (Kanawaty, 1992). Being a labour oriented sector and the rising competition in terms of productivity, pricing and quality, it has become imperative for the Indian Garment Manufacturing Industry to strengthen their human resource through an efficient human resource management and labour welfare policies. Presently Indian garment industry is facing with the serious predicament of labour scarcity. In this scenario the industry is taking up constructive steps towards retaining the workforce by embracing non – statutory labor or voluntary welfare measures in addition to statutory labour welfare measures. This paper is a compilation implementation of voluntary labour welfare schemes adopted by 7 export garment manufacturing units in Bangalore with a sizeable business. The participating samples were human resource managers (HR manager) at the factory. This is a qualitative survey based research and the geographical scope of this study is Bangalore, in the Southern part of India.

The main objective of the survey is to understand the voluntary labour welfare schemes adopted by the export garment manufacturers in Bangalore.

4. Review of Literature

Medha in a research paper stressed the importance of efficient labor welfare measures in an organization. According to her findings, in addition to statutory welfare measures organization should provide additional labor welfare facilities to the employees that will increase the retention of employees which in turn will contribute to a strengthen industrial relation (Medha, 2011).

According to Jaishree (2015) labour measures and its impact on job satisfaction in Garment Industries in Tirupur indicates that welfare measures is positively related with job satisfaction, better working conditions, canteen facilities, rest rooms facility and financial incentives.

A research paper by University of Sussex reveals that policy interventions cannot simply depend on company's competitiveness enhancement or capital gain but it should be directed towards worker welfare driven by corporate and civil society agendas. In small scale enterprise cluster, labour welfare interventions are important and necessary for a sustainable growth of an organization. Labour welfare schemes should be directed towards better employer- worker relationship, mobility of labour, subsidized housing, and transport facility. health-care, education, training and skill enhancement etc. Such interventions would aim at stabilizing the labour supply with enhanced product quality and productivity (Neve, 2011).

Srinivas, in his research paper attempted to understand the various labour welfare measures adopted at Bosch and to find out the awareness of such measures and the level of satisfactions among workers. According to the author welfare benefits are important in every organization at all levels in order to motivate the employees. These measures foster a kind of belongingness and responsibility of the workers towards the company. The research reveals that although the level of satisfaction among the workers at Bosch is commendable there is significant scope of improvement that further enhance effectiveness, efficiency and productivity to accomplish organizational goal (Srinivas, 2013).

Textile and Garment Industry in India plays a vital role in Indian economy as it contributes substantially to India's export earnings. The apparel trade from India crossed US\$ 11 billion in 2010 and is estimated to cross US\$ 50 billion by 2020. The Indian Textile and Apparel market is estimated at INR 3,20,000 crore (US\$ 58 billion) in 2013 and is projected to grow at a CAGR of 9% to INR 7,57,000 crore (US\$ 138 billion) by 2023 (Technopak, June 2012). India is the second largest exporter of textile and apparel after

China. Indian garment industry is guided by the statutory labour welfare policies under the Factories act and local laws and non-statutory schemes adopted by factories from time to time. In addition to this, the export manufacturing units catering to the giant buyers in USA, UK and European countries come under purview of some code of conducts that safeguards the workplace environment of the labours. These are in the form of code of conducts from different individual buyers like the NIKE code of conduct, Gap's code of conduct, Kohl's code of conduct etc. Another form is in the form of third party audit social compliance certification like the SA800 (Social Accountability 8000), WRAP (Worldwide Responsible Accredited Production), ETI (Ethical Trade initiatives), BSCI (Business Social Compliance Initiatives) etc. Indian apparel industry seems to have taken these initiatives of ethical sourcing and responsible business quite seriously. With the pressure from the consumers, Indian Manufacturers are under compulsion to follow norms and code of conduct in the work place. Eagerness among the apparel manufacturers in India to be socially compliant has increased in the last few years ([http:// www.saasaccreditation.org](http://www.saasaccreditation.org)). In today's scenario it is not only the quality of the product that is important but the quality of the work place where the product is produced has to equally conducive (Rohitratana, 2002). Manufacturing units in India catering to the export market are forced to oblige the individual buyer's code of conducts or adapt to the social compliance certification core elements. The core elements are Child Labour, Forced and Compulsory Labour, Health & Safety, Freedom of Association and Right to Collective Bargaining, Discrimination, Disciplinary Practices, Working Hours, Remuneration and Management System (SAI, 2013). In addition to this some certification also have the environmental conscious, custom compliance and cargo security elements also. All the core elements are focused towards fostering a healthy work place environment for the labours thus enhancing the productivity and quality through reduction of operational, administrative and training cost. SA8000 is viewed as a tool to improve the quality of life of employees (Rohitratana, 2002). The success of all the such code of conducts or all the statutory norms for the improvement of work place environment cannot be successful until and unless there is motivation and eagerness among the company's management and workers themselves. Such measures when taken voluntarily can be more successful rather than being forced to. Thus, in addition to the statutory labour welfare schemes, Non Statutory labour welfare schemes can bring in lot of satisfaction and motivation among the workers. As the workers understand that these are addressed by the employers in addition to the statutory schemes, this brings in a sense of belongingness and loyalty. Below are some of the non-statutory labour welfare schemes adopted by some leading garment manufacturers in Bengaluru.

5. Statutory Labour Welfare Measures Adopted by Garment Manufacturing Units in Bangalore

5.1. Housing and Transport Facility

Bangalore houses more than 1200 big, medium and small garment industry with nearly five hundred lakhs workers. About 80% of the workforce is women mainly engaged in sewing and finishing sections (Saha, 2014). Garment factories in Bangalore are witnessing a steep rise of migrant workers. According to a leading newspaper, The Hindu, published that about 80% of workers in Bangalore are migrant workers from the rural areas surrounding Bangalore. But today there is a huge influx of migrant workers from the nearby states like Orissa, Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh (ICN, 2016). Housing facilities for these migrant workers play a significant role. Most of the migrant workers prefer the accommodation facilities provided by the company. Some of the leading garment manufacturers in Bangalore are providing hostel or dormitory facilities to the workers free of cost or at a very subsidized rate. These facilities are either within the factory premises or near to the factory. Sometimes the residences are run by the factories but mostly it is subcontracted. These residential facilities are of great assistance to the migrant workers. These facilities are mostly in the hostel form and group accommodation and separate for both man and women. As these factories are mostly situated in urban Bangalore and the rent in urban Bangalore is 50 – 60 % higher than rural without such housing facility, there survival is challenging. With the kind of labor crisis in Bangalore, company provided housing facility is one of the ways to attract migrant workers. Safe and hygienic housing facility with proper sanitary and drinking water facility is viewed as one of the main tool to attract a stable labor force as cited by one of the HR manager. According to the Inter – State Migrant Workman Act, 1997, the employers or the contractors are obligated to provide and maintain suitable residential accommodation for any migrant workers throughout their service period. This fosters a healthy, stress free, safe lifestyle among the workers which in turn reduces their illness. This reduces absenteeism and striving work force. As opined by a HR manager such residential facility provided are not merely to fulfill the legal requirement but are well provided with basic amenities and safety. The amenities provided in the hostel vary from one hostel to the other. The rooms are in sharing basis with common toilets and provision for drinking water. Fire extinguishers, emergency lights and first aid boxes are provided. But there are many reports that also talk about the plight of migrant workers in such company provided hostels. The hostels are also provided with a security guard for the safety. As opined by the HR managers, although providing such residential facility can be cumbersome most of the time, if efforts are taken in the right direction and one is compliant towards the labour laws, such issues can be tackled effectively. But the co-operation from the workers or the residence is equally important. Out the 7 sample units, 5 units are providing transport facility to the workers who reside in the far of places free of cost. The workers are picked up and dropped at a designated place from where commuting to their respective homes becomes easier. Three of the units are providing drop facility to women workers only during the overtime period. As opined by an HR manager, the transport facility is contributing greatly in timely commencement of the work in the morning. Such facility ensures a loyal, motivated workforce.

5.2. Educational and Training Facility to the Employers and Ward

Education and training of workers is indispensable for the overall growth of an organization. Education can be in the form of literacy education, skill enhancement, labor education, leisure education, health and hygiene education etc. to the workers and extended to their family. Education and training are important tools to create awareness among workforce for a sustainable business. The export

units in Bangalore, under the strict ordinance of different codes of conduct from the buyers and an efficient management system provides regular trainings to the workforce on workplace standards, social securities, health and hygiene, freedom of labour, equal remuneration etc. (SAI, 2013). Apart from this, some of the companies are providing education facility to the wards of the employees at different levels like primary education or middle school or upto the high school leaving certificate. While others provide the school fees or other basic requirements like books and uniforms. Apart from this some provide scholarships or sponsor the higher education to meritorious wards of the workers. While some companies provide school utilities like tables, benches, boards, water purifier etc. others sponsor the mid-day meal to the students at school. Some other companies also have adopted entire school in the locality and under-takes the functioning of the same. Some companies run training institute at the nearby villages. Such institutes provide skill development training required in garment manufacturing and also create employment opportunity in the company at the end of the training. This creates job opportunities and livelihood for the people in the villages. The initiatives taken by garment manufacturers towards education and child welfare are not new but the efforts are commendable across pan India. For instance, Texport Industries in Bangalore is working with 14 Government primary schools for the up-gradation of the school. Garment exporters also collaborate with local NGOs in supporting them in their cause for spreading education (RESOURCES, 2015). As told by a factory HR of a leading export firm in Bangalore, that the company's focus area in women empowerment. In this pursuit, the company offers free of cost vocational skill development trainings and life skills to women and then create employment opportunities in their own factory. Such education facility provided to the wards fosters a high sense of satisfaction among the workers. The workers feel contented as they understand the importance of education and feel gratified their needs have been addressed by the employer.

5.3. Referral Bonus

Garment companies in Bangalore are facing a steep challenge of high labor turnover and un-settled workforce. The attrition rate is as high as 7-8% (D'souza, 2013). Recruitment and training exercise are turning out to be a futile with such unstable workforce. The reason for such unstable workforce is many but one of the main reasons can be attributed to in feeling of insecurity among the workers specially women workers as cited by one of the factory HR manager. Again garment industry in Bangalore is estimated to have highest share of women workers among all the other garment sectors in India. About 90% of the workforce is women and about half of them are young women between 20 to 30 years (Ferus-Comelo, 2012). Such concern about of safety is more pertinent to this part of India as there is a huge influx of migrant workers to the garment industry from different states of India (ICN, 2016). As cited by all the HR managers of the 7 sample unit's referral hiring assist in hiring a suitable worker who tends to stick to the company for a longer period of time. It is observed that when the workers come from the same locality and background tend to stick to the company together for a longer period. The rate of absenteeism also is somewhat reduced among such workers. Almost all the garment units in Bangalore employ referral hiring and about 25% of the workforces in one of the unit are referred workforce. Referred workforce is again very common among migrant workers who come in groups. But the referred worker can be risky at times, more in case of group reference. This is because quitting of work by one worker leaves a strong impact on the other worker as cited by a HR manager. In garment industry in Bangalore in order to attract workers to refer their friends and family members, companies offer referral bonus to the workers who so ever refers any worker to the company. On an average referral bonus ranges from Rs.550 -Rs.1000 per person referred. This motivates workers to refer their friends and family members and also have some extra earnings over and above the regular wages.

5.4. Flexi Timings

Garment manufacturing units in Bangalore work on shift basis of 8 hours per shift and 6 working days per week with Sunday as a holiday. During peak seasons the company also undertake over time work. According to The Factories Act, 1948, no adult is allowed to work more than 48 hours per week and addition of 12 hours of overtime which again have to be voluntary. As the majority of workforce in the garment manufacturing units in Bangalore is women flexible working hours can be one of the tools to boost workforce moral as opined by a HR manager. This survey has come across companies that are trying to offer flexible timings to workers based on their requirements. One of the company works 5 days a week with Saturday and Sunday as a holiday for the entire workforce. The company works one hour extra on 5 working days i.e. 9 hours of shift and half day (3hours) on one Saturday of the month to compensate for the other 3 Saturdays being holiday. The company opined this has brought down their absenteeism rate and operators turnover to a great extent. Another company permits new mothers and pregnant women workers to report to office one hour late and then compensate the same by working one hour more in the evening. Some companies are also giving additional break to breast feeding mothers to feed their child in the Crèche. The migrant workers are also allowed to go on long leaves for a month or so to visit their native place in the less peak season as opined by another HR manager. Such flexible timings reduce the stress level in workers and increases worker's efficiency. Absenteeism is reduced as the workers are able to accommodate their parental responsibilities and still continue with their work. This also helps in retaining the talented workers which is a real predicament often faced by developing countries. Greater female population, need for dual income, nuclear families are some of the factors that are driving companies to adopt flexible working policies (Williams, 2005)

5.5. Attenance Bonus

Garment industry in Bengaluru is facing a significant problem of labor absenteeism. As the process of garment manufacturing is mostly labor driven, absenteeism impacts the productivity to a greater extent. It is an industrial malady that impacts productivity, profit, investment, quality and the worker themselves. Assembly line production systems that are mostly common in garment manufacturing units in Bengaluru leads to a serious problem due to the habitual absenteeism of the operators in the sewing floor.

There are many factors that affect absenteeism so it is not feasible to establish one specific answer to the problem (Bhatia, June 1981). Work place environment that provides a stress free working atmosphere both mentally and physically, proper attendance policy and attendance incentives are some of the factors that reduces absenteeism. In garment industry attendance bonus is mainly used for the sewing operators and in the finishing department. All the 7 sample units have also adopted the attendance bonus scheme. Attendance bonus or attendance incentives policies differ from one company to other. While one unit gives attendance bonus those workers that have 100% attendance for the month while other unit have a system that allows attendance bonus with 100% attendance and a reduced bonus with maximum 2 days of permitted leave per month. As cited by the HR manager, this system of “reduced bonus” is working out for those workers who had genuinely availed leave at the starting of the month but still remains motivated throughout the month by the “reduced bonus” scheme. There is another unit that accumulates the attendance bonus for 3 months, the HR manager is of the view that this enables the operators to some lump sum amount and also creates the sense of savings. The attendance bonus varies from Rs.550/- to Rs.1000/- per month. One of the companies revealed that this led to reduction in absenteeism by 8 to 10%. Many HR personals are of the view that in addition attendance incentives a healthy work place environment that helps in up keeping the health and safety of the workers, plays a promising role in motivating workers to attend work regularly. In Bengaluru as majority of the workforce is women, day to day women oriented workplace benefits are important in addition to the legal benefits. Non Statutory welfare measures also play a substantial role in reducing absenteeism. Some of the garment manufacturing units in Bengaluru are in the pursuit to make a friendly work place environment for the workers. They are adopting different measures like Crèche and feeding facilities for new mothers, regular counseling sessions to deal with work place and personal stress, well-lit and ventilated workplace that fosters a healthy work environment. Some companies also have separate day care facilities for wards of workers that are suffering from minor illness. Workers are provided with personal protective equipment that prevents them from workplace accidents and hazards. Overall management is striving to make the place attractive for the workers to motivate them to attend their work regularly.

5.6. Production Incentives

Production incentives are tools used to recognize and reward outstanding performers as a mode to motivate them to continue the good job. The garment industry in Bangalore has adopted the system of offering production incentives to the workers especially in the sewing floor. According to a HR manager, it does not make sense to give individual production incentives when the workers are on weekly or monthly wages. Group incentives are more recommended in this scenario. Individual production incentives are beneficial in piece rate system. Among the 7 sample units only 3 units implement production incentive schemes. In some cases, incentives are given to those operators that produce more than the target production for a month while another company is providing the incentives for meeting the target production. Such incentives are mainly given mostly in the form of gifts and sometimes also in cash. One of the sample unit also announces the best performer of the day, that finally accumulates to best performer of the month. Such best performers are awarded with gifts every month. Some companies also offer an ex –gratia amount to best performing workers annually. According to the HR personals, such policies motivate workers to strive to achieve the set targets. This indirectly develops a set of loyal workforce, reduce absenteeism and thus increase productivity.

5.7. Mentoring and Grievance Addressing

An efficient and effective grievance addressing and settlement system is intended to serve both the employer and the employee (Lawrence Nurse, 2007). The workers employed in the garment industry usually comprises of unskilled or semi-skilled workers. Some of them in the due course of time do become skill workers. Around 70% of the workers in Bangalore are women hailing from rural areas of Karnataka and other Indian States like Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh etc. as mentioned above. The first few months are very stressful for the migrant workers. Lack of knowledge in the local language is one of the significant discomfort in addition to dissimilarity in food habits, new working environment etc. as cited by one HR manager. Some of the companies have developed the system where they attach these workers to a mentor. A mentor is an experienced local worker in the unit who has the ability and willingness to help the new worker and communicate in language which the new worker can understand. Such system gives a level of comfort to the workers and their adaptation to the new environment becomes easier and faster. One of the surveyed units referred it to “Buddy system”. In addition to the company’s grievance addressing cell, some companies have also tied up with the local NGO who regularly counsel the workers specially the women to handle both personal and workplace stress and investment and savings. The company stresses the fact that the workers feel more comfortable in discussing and consulting their issues with the representative from the NGO than the company personal. The companies have different committee like work committee, grievance committee, sexual harassment committee also to handle any such issues faced by the workforce in an efficient and timely manner.

5.8. Personal Advancement and Career Enhancement Trainings

Training programs both for personal development and work skill development plays a significant role in the overall growth of an employee. Garment industry in Bengaluru is imparting training to the workers aimed at personal development as well skill development for career progress. Such skill development training is provided to develop multi skilled operators so as to offer job rotation to break the monotony. Some of the trainings are women oriented where women workers are trained to handle workplace stress as well as stress in the home front. Women are trained on work life balance, home management, money management and violence against women, family planning and to handle such issues. In the career front the workers are trained to acquire new skills, hone the existing ones so that they can perform better and increase productivity and earnings. According to HR personals, although such trainings are both strenuous to the company in terms of money and time, the benefits are manifold. Workers are more confident,

happy as they are able to strike a balance between work and home. They have become wiser in handling their money. Training is also imparted in the area of health and hygiene related to water, sanitation and cleanliness that are extended even to the nearby locality.

5.9. Ergonomics at Work Place

Ergonomics enhances functional effectiveness of workplace and equipment that not only ensures the protection of worker's physical integrity but it aims attaining the most optimal working condition that encompasses physical, physiological and psychological capabilities of employees (Kanawaty, 1992). Garment industry in Bangalore are working towards improving the work place environment by developing ergonomically designed workplace for the workers that prevent long term impact on the worker's health due to repetitive nature of work. Companies are regularly working towards re – engineering the work stations, introducing work aids and material handling systems that ease the work of the workers. All the workers are provided with personal protective equipment to protect them from work related accidents and health hazards. The companies also educate the workers of the benefit of personal protective equipment (PPE) and also emphasizes that such equipment are used regularly. As told by a HR manager that most of the worker's express discomfort in using the PPE liking needle guard finger guard, mask, earplug etc. but the unit have made it compulsory for all the workers to use the PPE. The factories are well lit with maximum natural lights with proper ventilation for air circulation and minimum noise levels. The work place is also created keeping in mind the women work force with crèche facility, after school waiting room for young ones, breast feeding and rest rooms and separate urinals and toilets. Such work place environment creates a positive impact on the productivity levels of the workers. As opined by one HR manager that working environment in the unit have improved substantially by implementation of manufacturing management tools like 5s, Kaizen, Kanban card system, Single minute exchange of dies (SMED), Poka Yoka, Total Productive Maintenance (TPM) etc. Another HR manager opined that one cannot reap the benefit of such management instantly, rather these are continuous process that assist in streamlining the production systems, with an optimum systematic work flow that reduces that the stress level of the workers and improves productivity.

5.10. Extra-Curricular Activities

Amidst the tight working schedule, Garment manufacturing units in Bangalore have adopted the practices of conducting different cultural and sports activities at regular intervals for the workers. As told by one HR manager, such activities help in developing a sense of group dynamics, leadership quality and happiness among the workforce. This also helps in breaking the day to day monotony. One of the manufacturing units has also gone up to the extent of wishing the workers on their birthday and displaying their picture on the notice board. Another company plays music for the workers at designated time in order to break the monotony of work. All the sample units at regular intervals conducts health camps like eye checkup, dental checkup, heart checkup camps. Recently most of the units have facilitated Adhaar card camp within the premises for the work force and their family. Such extra-curricular activities foster team work, self-esteem, leadership qualities among the workers.

6. Conclusion

Although there are different statutory laws of the land and other code of conducts that governs the work place functioning and the welfare of the work force, the voluntary worker welfare schemes as discussed above plays a significant role. Non Statutory or voluntary worker welfare measures bring in a sense of loyalty and gratitude among the workers motivates them and in turn reduces absenteeism and labor turnover. From among the 7 sample units, it is observed that in addition to the statutory labour welfare scheme, voluntary welfare schemes are widely adopted by garment industry in Bangalore. Some of the voluntary welfare schemes are providing education to the wards of employee, adapting a nearby school, providing healthy and safe housing facilities, providing flexi timing, attendance and production bonus, referral bonus personal and career enhancement training, efficient grievance addressing system, ergonomics at workplace and extra-curricular activities etc. As the workforce in garment units in Bangalore are majorly women the units are adopting women oriented welfare separately. The women oriented welfares include separate housing facilities for women with enhanced security system, Crèche facility for infant and after school waiting rooms for younger kids, separate facility for breast feeding and un-well children, separate resting and changing area for women etc. The companies are also conducting counseling sessions for the women to deal with work and family related issues and also on family planning, wise investment and saving plans. In addition to this garment industry is also making provisions for employing differently abled people in the suitable work area. The HR managers are of the view that although such voluntary labor welfare schemes have financial implication, the benefits derived from such schemes are manifold. As the Indian garment industry is facing a serious predicament of huge labor absenteeism and labor turnover. Voluntary welfare schemes in addition to strict compliance of statutory laws of the land and other code of conducts like SA8000, WRAP, ETI, BSCI etc. can act as a dynamic tool to hone a stable set of workforce. Voluntary labor welfare schemes are a continuous process and effective implementation if the same can contribute to strengthen industrial relation.

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