

Study on Harmonizing Productivity and Well-Being: Assessing the Crucial Role of Labour Welfare Officers among Youth Working In Private Sectors in Kerala

*Master Of Social Work
Department of Social Work of Amity Institute of Social Sciences
(Amity University, Noida)*

Date of Submission: 25-04-2024

Date of Acceptance: 04-05-2024

ABSTRACT

This study delves into the multifaceted role of Labour Welfare Officers in promoting employee well-being and organizational effectiveness within private sectors in Kerala, India. Utilizing a mixed-methods approach, including surveys and interviews, the research explores the impact of Labour Welfare Officers on workplace culture, productivity, and employee engagement. Findings reveal a critical deficiency in employee awareness regarding the existence and function of Labour Welfare Officers, highlighting challenges in communication and accessibility. Despite this, positive perceptions of Labour Welfare Officers effectiveness in enhancing employee welfare and job satisfaction were prevalent among respondents. The absence of Labour Welfare Officers was identified as a barrier to conflict resolution, employee participation in well-being programs, and establishing effective feedback systems. Recommendations include implementing regular breaks for employee recharge, improving communication channels, decentralizing Labour Welfare Officers roles for enhanced support, and providing psychological interventions. These findings underscore the crucial role of Labour Welfare Officers in fostering a positive work environment and suggest strategies to bridge existing gaps in employee welfare and organizational support within private sectors in Kerala, India.

I. INTRODUCTION

In the ever-evolving landscape of private sector organizations in India, the pursuit of equilibrium between productivity and employee well-being has emerged as a paramount concern. As these organizations navigate the complexities of

a dynamic market environment and a diverse workforce, striking a balance that fosters both organizational success and employee welfare becomes increasingly crucial. This research sets out to delve into this intricate dynamic, focusing specifically on the pivotal role played by labour welfare officers in attaining this delicate balance within the context of Kerala.

This research aims to investigate the impact of Labour Welfare Officers on employee welfare and organizational dynamics within Kerala's private sectors, focusing on the working youth aged 18 to 35. By employing a mixed-methods approach encompassing qualitative interviews and quantitative surveys, the study seeks to explore the effectiveness of Labour Welfare Officers interventions, the challenges they face, and the recommendations for enhancing their role in private sector organizations.

BACKGROUND

India as a rising economic powerhouse is seeing significant development and expansion in many areas, including the corporate world. The emphasis on productivity and employee well-being in the private sectors has drawn a lot of attention as the Indian economy continues to change. The private sector in India faces numerous obstacles in maintaining employee welfare and productivity due to a diversified workforce and a fast-paced corporate environment.

In the context of India, where ancient work cultures and contemporary organisational methods coexist, the idea of balancing productivity and well-being is very important. Prioritising employee wellness in addition to accomplishing organisational goals has gained more traction in recent years. This paradigm shift emphasises how

crucial it is to comprehend the part labour welfare officers play in creating an atmosphere at work that strikes a balance between employee well-being and productivity.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To assess the effectiveness of Labor Welfare Officers in private sector organizations in promoting a conducive work environment that balances productivity and employee well-being.
2. To explore the connection between the presence of Labor Welfare Officers and organizational productivity, conflict resolution, and employee well-being in private sector organizations in Kerala.
3. To identify strategies employed by Labor Welfare Officers to effectively manage conflicts, promote employee well-being, and enhance organizational productivity within private sector organizations in Kerala

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Within the context of corporate governance, labour welfare officers play a crucial role in creating peaceful and effective work environments. Prioritising operational efficiency in addition to employee wellbeing has grown more crucial as private sector companies negotiate the complexity of today's business environments. The vital role that Labour Welfare Officers play in this endeavour is paramount, as they are responsible for both protecting employees' well-being and maximising organisational success.

In the research conducted by Smith. J & Johnson. A in 2018 on the label "The Role of Labor Welfare Officers in Promoting Employee Well-being: A Literature Review", the scholars delve into the multifaceted role of labour welfare officers in promoting employee well-being within corporate settings. Drawing on a wide range of scholarly articles and empirical studies, the authors analyse the responsibilities and functions of Labour Welfare Officers, highlighting their importance in fostering a positive work environment. The review explores various aspects of employee well-being, including physical health, mental wellness, and work-life balance, and examines how LWOs contribute to addressing these aspects through their interventions and initiatives. In this research the scholars have interpreted that, presence of Labour Welfare Officer in a private sector promotes positive working atmosphere and will lead to improved productivity and efficiency.

In the work of Jain. S and Gupta. A, "Achieving Balance: A Review of Strategies for Enhancing Employee Well-being and Organizational Performance in Indian Context" in Indian Journal of Psychology ISSN: 0019-6819, they explore strategies for achieving balance between employee well-being and organizational performance in the Indian context. Drawing on a wide range of research articles, case studies, and theoretical frameworks, the authors analyse the effectiveness of initiatives such as work-life balance programs, employee assistance programs, and leadership development in enhancing both individual and organizational outcomes. The review provides insights into cultural considerations and contextual factors that shape the implementation of these strategies in Indian organizations. They also quote that 'Indian organizations are increasingly recognizing the importance of fostering employee well-being as a strategic imperative for enhancing organizational performance and sustaining competitive advantage in the market'.

Existing laws related to Labour Welfare officer in India.

1) Factories Act 1948.

The Factories Act, 1948, is one of the central laws governing factory operations and the welfare of workers in India. Under Section 49 of this Act, it mandates the appointment of Welfare Officers in factories employing 500 or more workers. These Welfare Officers are responsible for promoting the health, safety, and general welfare of the workers within the factory premises. Their duties include, ensuring the provision of adequate canteen facilities, organizing recreational activities for workers, first aid and medical facilities, addressing grievances related to workers' welfare, promoting sanitation and cleanliness in the workplace and Providing guidance on occupational safety and health measures.

2) The Mines Act, 1952:

The Mines Act, 1952, is specifically aimed at regulating the working conditions and safety measures in mines across India. Section 49 of this Act mandates the appointment of Welfare Officers in mines where 500 or more workers are employed. The role of Welfare Officers in mines is crucial due to the challenging and often hazardous working conditions in mining operations. Their duties include, ensuring proper ventilation and lighting in the mines, organizing health check-ups and medical facilities for miners, educating workers on safety practices and precautions,

addressing issues related to hygiene and sanitation in mining areas, providing guidance on the use of safety equipment and machinery.

3) **The Plantations Labour Act, 1951:**

The Plantations Labour Act, 1951, is applicable to plantation estates across India. Section 16 of this Act mandates the appointment of Welfare Officers in plantations where 300 or more workers are employed. Plantation workers, who often work in remote areas, are covered under this provision to ensure their welfare needs are met. The duties of Welfare Officers in plantations include, organizing and managing housing facilities for plantation workers, ensuring access to clean drinking water and sanitation facilities, implementing health and safety measures specific to plantation work, facilitating educational and recreational activities for workers, addressing grievances and disputes related to workers' welfare.

Other than these major laws there are some other laws such as, the contract labour (Regulation and Abolition act 1970, Building and other construction workers (Regulation of employment and conditions of service act 1996, the shops and establishments act, The industrial employment (standing orders) act 1946 and the industrial disputes act talks about the compulsory presence of labour welfare officer. But no acts comply the mandatory presence of labour welfare officers in each and every corporate or private sectors. It is necessary to understand the importance of presence of labour welfare officer in private sectors to ensure employee wellbeing, productivity, institutional conflict resolution and to have job satisfaction. This research delves in to these elements and identifies the importance of labour welfare officer through surveys and interviews.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH DESIGN

This research is mixed-method research in which both qualitative and quantitative contents are included. In the qualitative part, the researcher explores the role of Labour Welfare Officer in private sectors by exploring various articles and publications to identify various strategies and activities initiated by Labour Welfare Officers in different sectors for employee wellbeing and productivity which includes the suggestions and recommendation from the interview respondents also. The researcher also explores the importance of Labour Welfare Officer in a workspace for improved productivity and efficiency. In the quantitative part, the researcher intakes a proper

survey with more than twenty questions related to the presence of Labour Welfare Officer and the impact in various private sectors.

SAMPLE SELECTION

The samples are collected from youth working in private sectors. The experiences of young people in the workforce are given special attention in this study, recognising their special role in influencing the dynamics of organisations in the future. Young people are an important part of the labour market because of their dynamism, flexibility, and growth potential.

UNIVERSE OF SAMPLE COLLECTION

The samples are collected from the private sectors in Kerala. Focusing on data collection from private sectors in Kerala provides a unique and valuable perspective on the role of Labour Welfare Officers within a distinct regional context.

DATA COLLECTION

This study investigates the role of labour welfare officers in private sector organizations in Kerala, India, with a focus on the youth demographic. By examining both qualitative insights garnered through interviews and quantitative data obtained from a survey, this research aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the strategies employed by Labour welfare officers, their perceived effectiveness, and their influence on employee wellbeing and productivity.

IV. DATA ANALYSIS

The data collected from the survey questionnaire were analysed using the chi-square method to examine the relationships between the presence of Labour Welfare Officers and various indicators of employee wellbeing and productivity. Chi-square analysis is particularly well-suited for analysing categorical data and determining whether observed frequencies differ significantly from expected frequencies.

V. FINDINGS

The findings of the study highlight the critical role labour welfare officers play in improving employee welfare and creating a healthy work environment in Kerala, India's private sectors. Recognising the unique contributions of Labour Welfare Officers is critical as the focus on organisational productivity and employee wellbeing grows. Using a mixed-methods approach that includes both qualitative interviews and

quantitative surveys, this study investigates the effects of Labour Welfare Officers interventions on workplace culture and the complex dynamics of labour relations.

Presence of Labour Welfare Officer:

Almost 68% of participants said they were unaware that their organisation had a Labour Welfare Officer. This research highlights a critical deficiency in knowledge or communication among employees in Kerala's private sectors about the function and existence of Labour Welfare Officer. The lack of awareness about the existence of Labour Welfare Officers suggests potential shortcomings in organizational communication channels or transparency regarding labour welfare initiatives. It also raises questions about the accessibility of Labour Welfare Officers to employees and the effectiveness of their engagement with the workforce.

Impact on the effectiveness in employees:

The rating given by the participants in the survey are mostly above 3. This indicates the presence of Labour Welfare Officer is positively affecting the efficiency among the employees. The majority of participants, represented by ratings above 3 out of 5, indicated a positive perception of the effectiveness of Labour Welfare Officers in fulfilling their roles. This suggests a general sentiment among employees that Labour Welfare Officers are actively engaged in addressing their concerns and promoting their well-being within the workplace. By analysing this scientifically with chi square test, it was proven that presence of labour welfare officer is directly proportional to effectiveness in the private sectors.

Impact on the Job Satisfaction level:

The data concerning overall satisfaction with the work environment within the organization mirrors the trends observed in the assessment of labour welfare officers' effectiveness. A majority of respondents expressed satisfaction with the overall work environment, reflecting positively on the efforts made by the organization and its stakeholders, including labour welfare officers, to cultivate a conducive and supportive atmosphere. The high levels of satisfaction stated on the work environment suggest that employees view their workplace as accommodating, inclusive, and favourable to their well-being, which is similar to the findings regarding the efficacy of labour welfare officers. Chi square test aligns with the same hypothesis and shows the proportionality positively.

Impact on the well-being through initiatives:

As many of respondents haven't even heard about the presence of Labour welfare officer, it was predictable to know that the participation of these respondents in the employee well-being programs will be less since there is no labour welfare officer in the workspace. The survey findings reveal a striking disparity in employee participation in well-being programs or initiatives organized by the labour welfare officer within their workspace. A significant majority, comprising 84% of respondents, indicated that they had not participated in any such programs.

Impact on Conflict Resolution:

Almost 47% respondents don't know whether the conflict in the organization is solved on time or not and almost 19% are sure that the conflicts are not solved on time. From the image 1 it is understandable that almost 63% respondents haven't heard about the presence of the labour welfare officer, since there is no such officer, the employees don't even know whether the problems are resolved or not. By analysing this scientifically with chi square test, it was proven that presence of labour welfare officer is directly proportional to conflict resolutions in the private sectors.

Impact on Employee participation:

The survey findings regarding the frequency of interactions with the labour welfare officer concerning work-related issues provide valuable insights into the level of employee engagement and the impact of the absence of a labour welfare officer on labour participation within private sectors in Kerala. The data reveals a concerning trend, with a significant portion of respondents reporting limited or no interaction with a labour welfare officer. Specifically, 37% indicated never interacting with a labour welfare officer, while 21% reported rarely doing so. Only 25% reported sometimes interacting with a labour welfare officer, and the remaining respondents stated interacting often.

Impact on organisational support:

The results of this poll that asked workers about how supportive their employers felt for their well-being and work-life balance point to a serious problem that is made worse by the fact that Kerala's private sectors do not have labour welfare officers. The information shows an alarming trend: many respondents reported differing levels of help from the company for their work-life balance and general well-being. In particular, 21% said they felt supported infrequently, 31% said they felt

supported occasionally, and 37% said they felt supported frequently.

VI. DISCUSSIONS AND COMPARING WITH THE PREVIOUS STUDIES

- The role and impact of presence of labour welfare officer:

The findings of the current study reveal a concerning lack of awareness among employees in Kerala's private sectors regarding the presence of Labour Welfare Officers. Approximately 68% of the participants were unaware of the existence of Labour Welfare Officers within their organizations. This lack of awareness signifies a critical deficiency in organizational communication channels or transparency regarding labour welfare initiatives. In contrast, previous studies, such as those conducted by Smith. J & Johnson. A (2018), emphasized the importance of Labour Welfare Officers in promoting employee well-being and creating a positive work environment. These studies highlighted the significance of Labour Welfare Officers in fostering a conducive atmosphere and improving productivity and efficiency. However, the current findings suggest that despite the acknowledged importance of Labour Welfare Officers, there remains a significant gap in employees' awareness of their presence and role within organizations.

- Impact on the effectiveness among the employees.

The current study's findings regarding employees' perceptions of Labour Welfare Officers' effectiveness align with the previous literature, indicating a generally positive sentiment towards Labour Welfare Officers roles. The majority of participants in the current study expressed positive perceptions of Labour Welfare Officers effectiveness in fulfilling their roles, consistent with previous studies' findings. Mishra P and Das S. (2016) highlighted the various functions and responsibilities of Labour Welfare Officers based on existing scholarly literature, emphasizing their role in promoting employee welfare and organizational development. Similarly, Kumar. A and Singh. R (2017) denoted the crucial role of LWOs in fostering positive workplace environments and promoting organizational effectiveness. However, while the current study reflects a generally positive perception of Labour Welfare Officers effectiveness, it also acknowledges individual incidents where employees believe Labour Welfare Officers could be more effective or responsive. This suggests the

need for ongoing evaluation and improvement of Labour Welfare Officers interventions to address specific employee concerns effectively.

- Impact on wellbeing among the employees,

The current study's findings regarding employee participation in well-being initiatives organized by Labour Welfare Officers shed light on a significant disparity compared to previous studies' expectations. While previous literature emphasized the importance of Labour Welfare Officers in facilitating employee well-being programs, the current study reveals a stark reality: a significant majority of respondents (84%) had not participated in any such programs. This lack of participation was primarily attributed to the absence of Labour Welfare Officers in their workplaces. In contrast, previous studies highlighted the positive impact of Labour Welfare Officers interventions on employee well-being and organizational performance. Patel. K and Desai. M (Year) underscored the significance of Labour Welfare Officers in addressing employee needs and fostering a positive work culture. However, the current findings suggest that without the presence of Labour Welfare Officers, employees may face barriers to accessing well-being resources and support systems, hindering their participation in such initiatives.

VII. RECOMMENDATION FOR ACTION:

- 1) Implementing and effective feedback system.

The creation of a more efficient feedback mechanism is one of the main recommendations made by survey participants. This suggestion is in line with earlier research that emphasises the value of feedback and communication in creating a happy workplace.

- 2) Increase intervention for employee wellbeing.

Respondents also emphasized the need for more interventions aimed at improving employee well-being and job satisfaction. This recommendation underscores the importance of investing in employee welfare initiatives to support the physical, mental, and emotional health of employees.

- 3) Prioritising employee comfort and productivity:

The significance of creating a comfortable work environment for employees in order to

increase productivity is another important recommendation from the poll. This suggestion highlights how important it is to have a welcoming and inclusive workplace where staff members feel appreciated and inspired to give their all.

4) Deploying decentralised welfare officers:

In order to effectively meet the requirements of each employee, respondents also recommended the decentralised deployment of Labour Welfare Officers. This suggestion emphasises how crucial it is to have committed staff members who can speak up for workers' rights and offer individualised support.

5) Enhancing the communication facilities:

Enhancing communication with employees and better understanding their requirements is another suggestion made by the poll. The significance of encouraging open and honest lines of communication between staff members and management is emphasised by this recommendation.

6) Facilitate regular team meetings:

In order to foster greater cooperation and communication among staff members, respondents also recommended holding frequent team meetings. This suggestion emphasises how crucial it is to promote cooperation and teamwork in order to meet organisational objectives.

7) Promoting awareness about labour welfare officers:

Raising awareness of labour welfare officers and their function inside the company is another suggestion made by the poll. The need of making sure staff members is informed about the resources and assistance at their disposal is emphasised by this guideline.

8) Improving work-life balance:

The significance of promoting a work-life balance for enhancing employee well-being and job satisfaction was also highlighted by the respondents. This suggestion emphasises how important it is to support a healthy balance between obligations in one's personal and professional life.

VIII. LIMITATION OF THE RESEARCH:

The research faces several limitations that should be taken into account when interpreting its findings. The primary constraint lies in the relatively small sample size of 40 respondents, which restricts the study's ability to generalize results to a broader population. This limited sample size also impacts the statistical analyses,

particularly the application of chi-square tests, which require larger samples for robust results.

Furthermore, the study's use of convenience sampling introduces the potential for sampling bias, as participants self-selected to respond to the survey. This bias may affect the generalizability of the findings to the entire working youth population in Kerala's private sectors. The cross-sectional design of the study limits the examination of changes over time, and the lack of a control group hinders the ability to attribute observed effects solely to the presence of Labour Welfare Officers.

The reliance on self-reported data poses a risk of self-reporting bias, where participants may provide socially desirable responses. Response rate variability among participants and the absence of longitudinal data collection further constrain the depth of analysis. Despite these limitations, the study offers valuable insights into the perceptions and experiences of employees regarding Labour Welfare Officers in Kerala's private sectors, highlighting the need for future research with larger samples, diverse methodologies, and longitudinal approaches to provide a more comprehensive understanding of labour welfare dynamics.

IX. CONCLUSION:

The findings of the study shed light on the critical role of Labour Welfare Officers in improving employee welfare and creating a healthy work environment within Kerala's private sectors. Through a mixed-methods approach involving qualitative interviews and quantitative surveys, the research investigated the impact of Labour welfare officers' interventions on workplace culture, labour relations dynamics, and employee well-being among the working youth aged 18 to 35. The study revealed several key insights regarding the presence and effectiveness of Labour welfare officers within private sector organizations in Kerala. It was notable that a significant proportion of the participants were women, highlighting the importance of considering gender dynamics in labour welfare initiatives. Historically, women have faced unique challenges in the workplace, and their perspectives are crucial in assessing the effectiveness of labour welfare programs in addressing gender-specific concerns.

The study discovered that most participants had a positive perception of Labour welfare officers despite their low awareness levels, suggesting that their presence improved worker productivity and well-being. Participants' responses indicated a degree of satisfaction and trust with the

help that Labour welfare officers gave in resolving workplace issues and securing welfare benefits. There was still room for improvement, though, since several respondents suggested that Labour welfare officers could respond or be more successful in some circumstances. Additionally, the study demonstrated how Labour welfare officers affect a number of organisational dynamics factors, such as employee participation, work satisfaction, and conflict resolution. Individuals who had more regular interactions with Labour welfare officers expressed greater engagement in organisational procedures and higher levels of job environment satisfaction. On the other hand, the lack of Labour welfare officers was linked to difficulties resolving conflicts, low employee involvement, and opinions of insufficient organisational support for wellbeing and work-life balance.

REFERENCES

- [1]. Mishra, P and Das. S (2016). Functions and Responsibilities of Labor Welfare Officers: Insights from the Literature. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Management Research and Innovation*, 13(2), 78-95.
- [2]. Kumar, A and Singh. R (2017). The Role of Labor Welfare Officers in Promoting Organizational Effectiveness: A Review of Empirical Studies. *International Journal of Management*, 34(1), 112-129.
- [3]. Smith, J., & Johnson, A. (2018). The Role of Labor Welfare Officers in Promoting Employee Well-being: A Literature Review
- [4]. Patel. K and Desai. M (2016). Understanding the Importance of Labor Welfare Officers in Ensuring Employee Satisfaction: A Review of Existing Literature. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 18(4), 589-607.
- [5]. Gupta. S and Sharma. R (2019). Exploring the Functions and Responsibilities of Labor Welfare Officers in Indian Corporate Sectors: A Systematic Review. *International Journal of Industrial Relations*, 25(2), 87-104.
- [6]. Jiwaji University: journal on Role of Labour Welfare Officer. https://jiwaji.edu/pdf/ecourse/political_sciences/MBA_HRD_204%20FUNCTIONS,%20ROLE%20AND%20RESPONSIBILITY%20OF%20LABOUR%20WELFARE.pdf
- [7]. E- Adhyayan report on 'Human Resource'.
<https://ebooks.inflibnet.ac.in/mgmt01/cha/pter/employee-welfare/#:~:text=The%20labour%2Femployee%20welfare%20work,good%20health%20and%20high%20morale.>
- [8]. Research Gate publication on 'Employee Welfare'.
https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Chandra-Sekhar-Patro/publication/281967931_Employee_Welfare_Measures_in_Public_and_Private_Sectors_A_Comparative_Analysis/links/5bb19a97299bf13e60596b0f/Employee-Welfare-Measures-in-Public-and-Private-Sectors-A-Comparative-Analysis.pdf
- [9]. National Career Service (NCS) report on 'Labour Welfare Officer'.
<https://www.ncs.gov.in/content-repository/Pages/ViewNcoDetails.aspx?List=8db9be14%2D2b47%2D4f30%2D97fb%2D5de315d871c0&ID=5251&ContentTypeId=0x01003FEA8C7117A78D4F93DC52780D878B2F0015F91119E23A874E9006B0F068F1089C>
- [10]. Enterslice Report on 'Duties of labour welfare officer in factories act'.
<https://enterslice.com/learning/duties-of-welfare-officer-under-factories-act/>
- [11]. Rajiv Gandhi National Institute of Youth Development report on 'Overview of labour welfare measures in India'.
https://www.rgniyd.gov.in/sites/default/files/academic_pdf_publication/The%20overview%20of%20labour%20welfare%20measures%20in%20Indian%20scenario.pdf