

A study about the gender-wise satisfaction of welfare measures in some enterprises in Kerala

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ABSTRACT

Labour welfare includes provision of various facilities and amenities in and around the work place for the better life of the workers. The logic behind providing welfare facilities is to create efficient, healthy, loyal and satisfied labour force for the organization and for the nation as well. Conventionally, male and female are required to perform different duties at home. But as employees in industrial organizations, male and female are supposed to perform their duties irrespective of their gender. In this paper, various welfare measures introduced in the study units were analysed on the basis of the data collected from the male and female employees of these units. Items such as facilities of medical, health and safety, housing, recreation and education were considered for the analysis. The paper concluded that the overall satisfaction about welfare measures provided by different enterprises was not the same for male and female employees of those organizations.

KEY WORDS : Welfare measures, Gender, Job satisfaction

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Labour welfare is a part of social welfare, conceptually and operationally. It covers a broad field and connotes a state of well-being, happiness, satisfaction, conservation and development of human resources. Labour welfare includes provision of various facilities and amenities in and around the work place for the better life of the workers. Expenditure on labour welfare is a profitable investment in the long-run as it motivates the workers for higher productivity. The logic behind providing welfare facilities is to create efficient, healthy, loyal and satisfied labour force for the organization and for the nation as well.

The ILO at its Asian Regional Conference (1950) defined labour welfare as “such services, facilities and amenities as may be established in or in the vicinity of undertakings to enable the persons employed in them to perform their work in healthy, congenial surroundings and to provide them with amenities conducive to good health and high morale (Anonymous, 1950).

Gender difference in enterprises:

Conventionally, male and female are required to perform different duties at home. So, their economic needs and spending habits also differ. But as employees in industrial organizations, male and female are supposed to perform their duties irrespective of their gender. They must be given equal treatment and remuneration.

The Equal Remuneration Act, 1967 provides for payment of equal remuneration to men and women workers performing the same work or work of similar nature *i.e.*, work requiring similar or the same skill, effort and responsibility when performed under similar working conditions and also prohibits any discrimination in recruitment and service conditions except where employment of women is prohibited or restricted by or under any law.

Though as per Indian Constitution, there should be equal pay for equal work for both men and women. It was found during the survey that many of the private sector organizations were not following this in the lower level blue collar jobs.

While examining the female workers marginalization in

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Indian context, Varghese (1991) observed that (1) the female work participation rate in India is not only very low, but also declining over the years, (2) there is a high concentration (80%) of female workers in the primary sector that too mostly as agricultural labourers and unpaid family workers, (3) there is a tendency towards increasing casualisation of female employment in India and (4) unemployment rates among women are consistently higher than that among men.

Kerala-A short profile:

Kerala, located in the south-west corner of India comprises a total land area of 39,000 sq km, and has a population of more than 33 millions. Kerala is bounded by the Arabian Sea in the West and the Western Ghats in the East. The States of Karnataka on the North and Tamil Nadu on the East are Kerala's immediate neighbours. Kerala represents only 1.18 per cent of the total area of India, but 3.43 per cent population of the country.

Kerala has a lopsided structure of economic base with a relatively low share of manufacturing sector in state domestic product and the disproportionately higher share of the tertiary sector. Industrialization in Kerala has been particularly unsuccessful with respect to generating employment opportunities for the relatively educated workforce in the State. Unemployment is one of the chronic problems that the State confronts. There are presently around 43 lakhs of young people registered on the unemployment rolls of the State. Productive employment is being created in the State at a very low rate.

We can see a distinctive pattern of high literacy with low economic profile, low population growth with high rate of unemployment, high level of social consumption with low per capita income and remarkable progress in education and health with low achievement in industrialization and agricultural development in Kerala. High social sector development with lowest economic performance seems a paradox in development.

The specific objectives of the study were:-

- To study the employees satisfaction about various welfare measures in selected Government organisations in Kerala
- To make a comparative analysis between male and female employees about various welfare measures.

METHODOLOGY

Tools used for data collection:

One questionnaire was administered to collect the data from the employees (1) male and (2) female.

Year of study :

The study was conducted in the year 2009.

Sample selection:

- Forty four public sector manufacturing enterprises under the control of industries Department of Government of Kerala constitute the universe from public sector enterprises. For this study, fourteen enterprises from this population (*i.e.*, 30% of the population) has been selected by using random sampling. After this, the same number of enterprises (*i.e.* fourteen) from the private sector was also selected on the basis of purposive sampling. The enterprises selected from private sector also fell in the same industry as in the public sector sample enterprises.

- Since the population from which the sample was taken was not homogeneous, stratified sampling method was applied to obtain representative samples from the population. The population was stratified as (1) male and (2) female. The individual samples arrived at each organization, has been further stratified as employees of different departments and items were selected from each strata using lottery method of simple random sampling. Total sample size was 922 employees.

Table A reveals that the 922 sample respondents were equally selected from male and female employees. Accordingly 468 (50.8 %) sample respondents were from male and 454 (49.2%) were from female employees.

Table A : Category wise distribution of samples

Category	No. of respondents	% of the total sample
Male	468	50.8
Female	454	49.2
Total	922	100

Source: Survey data

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

In the following section, various welfare measures introduced in the study units were analysed on the basis of the data collected from the male and female employees of these units. Items such as medical facilities, health and safety measures, housing facilities, recreation facilities and education facilities were considered for the analysis.

Medical facilities:

It is natural that there may be injuries to employees because of accidents while working. So, first aid facilities must be provided within the factory premises. In addition, reimbursement of medical expenses actually incurred should also be allowed. The organization may also employ doctors from whom the employees may get services in case of need. Medical facilities for employees and their families are in the form of suitably equipped first aid centres ambulance, and dispensaries for the treatment of diseases like T.B., cancer, mental disease etc.

Venkata Ratnam (2006) rightly observed, "Pressure for employer-provided medical care increases in view of the

inadequacy of public health care programmes on the one hand and the mounting health-care cost on the other.”

Gender-wise analysis of satisfaction about medical facilities is given in Table 1.

Gender	N	Mean	S.D	F	P-level
Male	468	2.30	0.75	1.102919	0.294179
Female	454	2.38	0.80		
Total	922	2.34	0.77		

The level of satisfaction about medical facilities based on gender of the employees is presented in Table 1. It is clear from the table that its mean value was high (2.38) among female and low (2.30) among male employees.

An analysis of the statistical significance of the difference indicated that the difference in the mean value was not significant as the calculated value of p (0.2941) which is more than the given value of 0.05 at 5% significance level. Hence, it is concluded that the extent of satisfaction about medical facilities does not differ based on the gender.

Health and safety measures:

Health refers to a complete mental, physical and social well-being of the industrial employees. The importance of health lies in improved productivity, reduced absenteeism and turnover, minimised industrial unrest and indiscipline and improved employee morale and motivation. Safety means the minimization of contact between human and hazard. Neither the employees with ill-health will be in a position to work productively nor the organization itself can afford to retain such non-productive employees for a long period of time. Adequate provision for safety at the workplace also enables the workers to work more and stay in the organization.

Cleanliness, lighting and ventilation, noise, dust, and working space and seating arrangements were considered in health measures. Measures for ensuring industrial safety include safety committee, material handling equipments, guarding of machines, and maintenance of plant, proper clothing and National Safety Day observation.

Proper ventilation is necessary to ensure the circulation of fresh air and remove congestion in the plant. If the ventilation arrangement is not provided the air will become stale and cause headache to the employees. The employees will feel tired and sleepy. This will reduce their efficiency. Noise is a source of disturbance to the employees and does not allow them to work properly.

The level of satisfaction about health and safety measures based on gender of the employees is presented in Table 2. The result indicated that its mean value was high (2.74) among female and low (2.50) among male employees.

An analysis of the statistical significance of the

difference indicated that the difference in the mean value was significant as the calculated value of p (0.0062) was less than the given value of 0.05 at 5% significance level. Hence, it is concluded that the extent of satisfaction about health and safety measures differed based on the gender.

Gender	N	Mean	S.D	F	P-level
Male	468	2.50	0.95	7.558938	0.006207
Female	454	2.74	0.89		
Total	922	2.62	0.93		

Housing facilities:

For improving the general living conditions of the employees, the provision of adequate housing facilities is indispensable, particularly where the workers have to work during night shifts. Housing facilities should be made available in the form of self-contained tenements with all basic facilities like electricity, sanitation and running water supply.

The level of satisfaction about housing facilities based on gender of the employees is presented in Table 3. The study indicated that its mean value was high (2.87) among female and low (2.46) among male employees.

Gender	N	Mean	S.D	F	P-level
Male	468	2.46	0.80	28.10259	0.00000
Female	454	2.87	0.86		
Total	922	2.66	0.86		

An analysis of the statistical significance of the difference indicated that the difference in the mean value was significant as the calculated value of p (0.0000) was less than the given value of 0.05 at 5% significance level. Hence, the study reveals that the extent of satisfaction about housing facilities differed based on the gender.

Recreation facilities:

Recreational facilities provide the employees an opportunity to develop a sense of physical and mental discipline, in the form of music, dance, drama, games and sports, paintings, hobbies and other cultural activities. An employee can give maximum attention to his work only if he is relaxed. Their attitude improves when the routine of everyday living is broken occasionally. More agreeable informal atmosphere can be promoted through the contacts and relationships built up in the recreational events.

The level of satisfaction about recreation facilities based on sector of the employees is presented in Table 4. The study indicated that its mean value was high (2.93) among female and low (2.60) among male employees.

Table 4 : Recreation facilities- gender- wise variance analysis

Gender	N	Mean	S.D	F	P-level
Male	468	2.60	0.88	17.07676	0.00004
Female	454	2.93	0.84		
Total	922	2.77	0.88		

An analysis of the statistical significance of the difference indicated that the difference in the mean value was significant as the calculated value of P (0.0000) was less than the given value of 0.05 at 5% significance level. Hence, it is concluded that the extent of satisfaction about recreation facilities differed based on the gender.

Educational facilities:

Educational facilities for the employees and their children are in the form of provision of schools, reading rooms, libraries, financial assistance etc. All kinds of education are important in an industrial setting. Educational facilities for employees themselves and their children are of utmost significance in any industrial undertaking

The level of satisfaction about education facilities based on sector of the employees is presented in Table 5. The study indicated that its mean value was high (2.58) among female employees and low (2.38) among male employees.

Table 5 : Educational facilities- gender- wise variance analysis

Gender	N	Mean	S.D	F	P-level
Male	468	2.38	0.86	6.062559	0.014174
Female	454	2.58	0.93		
Total	922	2.48	0.90		

An analysis of the statistical significance of the difference indicated that the difference in the mean value was significant as the calculated value of p (0.0141) was less than the given value of 0.05 at 5% significance level. Hence, it is concluded that the extent of satisfaction about education facilities differed based on the gender.

The overall satisfaction about welfare measures based on gender of the employees is presented in Table 6. The study indicated that its mean value was high (15.44) among female employees and low (14.31) among male employees.

An analysis of the statistical significance of the difference indicated that the difference in the mean value was significant as the calculated value of p (0.000) was less than the given value of 0.05 at 5% significance level. Hence, it is concluded that the overall satisfaction about welfare measures

Table 6 : Gender- wise variance analysis:

Gender	N	Mean	S.D	F	p-level
Male	468	14.31	2.95	26.683807	0.00000
Female	454	15.44	3.71		
Total	922	14.87	3.39		

differed based on the gender.

Conclusion:

Labour welfare includes provision of various facilities and amenities in and around the work place for the better life of the workers. The logic behind providing welfare facilities is to create efficient, healthy, loyal and satisfied labour force for the organization and for the nation as well. Conventionally, male and female are required to perform different duties at home. But as employees in industrial organizations, male and female are supposed to perform their duties irrespective of their gender. In this paper, various welfare measures introduced in the study units were analysed on the basis of the data collected from the male and female employees of these units. Items such as medical facilities, health and safety measures, housing facilities, recreation facilities and education facilities were considered for the analysis.

The extent of satisfaction about medical facilities did not differ based on the gender of the employees. The extent of satisfaction about health and safety measures, housing facilities, recreation facilities, education facilities differed based on the gender.

So, it is concluded that the overall satisfaction about welfare measures provided by different enterprises was not the same for male and female employees of those organizations. It was because of the difference in the perception of the employees on the basis of their gender. This was more specific in the case of housing facilities and recreation facilities. So, while framing welfare policies in organizations, Government authorities and management should take utmost care in ensuring the interest of female employees also.

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