



Role of Labor Welfare Initiatives in Social Development: An Empirical Study

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DOI : <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.18214918>

ARTICLE DETAILS

Research Paper

Accepted: 17-12-2025

Published: 10-01-2026

Keywords:

Labour Welfare, Social Development, and Poverty Eradication.

ABSTRACT

This paper examines the importance of welfare measures in social development within the industrial sector. A nation's progress and industrial growth depend on a content workforce. Labour welfare benefits are crucial, as workers often cannot secure them individually. These schemes are wise investments, improving work conditions, employee lives, and productivity. Workers, often from rural areas, face unhealthy conditions and need support. Welfare measures address health, education, and economic security, benefiting workers and their families. The study, conducted among medium-scale industries in Udyambag, Belagavi, and highlights labour welfare's role in social development.

INTRODUCTION:

Labour plays a vital role in a country's national economy. Growth, development, and welfare depend on labour's creativeness and innovativeness in production. Various labour types - manual, skilled (like doctors, engineers, teachers), semi-skilled, and less-skilled - contribute to social development. As industries expand production and capital investment in the 21st century, labour-capital relations become complex. Dr. Panandikar (2005) notes that widening capital-labour gaps make labour relations impersonal. Trade unions help address this, highlighting workers' needs for job security, comforts, and better living conditions.

Labour utilization must be streamlined for individual and societal benefits, driven by welfare measures like the Factories Act 1948. In India, 33.4% of people constitute the workforce, with 19% in



industries (Bundhwar & Boyne, 2004). The Government enacts legislations for labour welfare, aiming for social development.

The Karnataka Labour Welfare Board is an autonomous government body established to promote worker welfare and economic empowerment in the state. It was set up on January 27, 1969, under the Karnataka Labour Welfare Fund Act, 1965, with rules framed in 1968. The Karnataka Labour Welfare Board will be reconstituted with the following independent members/representatives/women members as announced in the Karnataka State Special Gazette Letter. 1) Independent Members-4 2) Employers' Representatives-4 3) Workers' Representatives-4 4) Women Members 2 The Honorable Labour Minister is the Chairman and The Welfare Commissioner is the Chief Executive Officer of the Karnataka Labour Welfare Board.

LABOUR WELFARE:

Labour welfare measures are initiatives to support workers' well-being, covering health, safety, work-life balance, financial support, skill development, and social support. Examples include medical aid, flexible hours, insurance, training, and canteens. Labour welfare measures improve productivity by promoting the overall development of labour. They improve industrial relations, create a favourable environment for management and workers to execute organisational plans, and achieve common goals.

Significance for labour welfare measures:

Becker, B. and Gerhart, B. (2005) mentions that welfare includes anything that is done for the comfort and improvement of employees, provided over and above the wages, which keep employees morale and motivation high such that welfare measures need not be in monetary terms alone but may be in any forms or kinds. Bhatnagar, T. and Sharma, A. (2005) expressed that in 1961, Employee federation of India observed that welfare measure constituted 20 percent to 30 percent of wage Bill which varied from industry to industry. As regards the necessity of welfare in India, workers have to work for long hours under unhealthy surroundings, separated from the village community and thrown into a strange and uncongenial environment liable to become easily victims of alcohol, gambling and other vices, which continue towards their demoralization and ruin. A satisfied, stable and official labour force, therefore, cannot be built up without an improvement in the conditions of their life and work in industrial countries. National Working Conditions Survey (2005) among 23,400 employees reveal 40 percent of employees are able to work until the age of 60 years, but only around 20 percent of all employees are willing to do so. Furthermore only 13 percent are both willing and able to work until they are 60 years old. Analyzing



the causes reveals that health and working conditions play an important role in making more employees stop working before they are 60 years old. Delaney, J. T. and Huselid, M. A. (1996), systematic labour welfare policy automatically makes employees mentally satisfied, thereby their physical contribution becomes significant to the social development, both to their industry and to the society.

Stamina of Social Development in Poverty Eradication:

James Midgley (2015) states that social development brings change in the social institutions, social behavior, social relations, social structure and communities, to produce a social well-being that makes people capable of acting, living together and making their own decisions in a broad sense. Social development programmes include healthcare for rural ties, alternative schools for slum dwellers, capacity building support from elementary school, continuing education programme (CEP) for girl children and rural water schemes targeting sustainable health and hygiene. Similarly, social development at industrial setting is brought through welfare amenities amended by the Factories Act, 1948. The Quality of Work Life (QWL), control of drug abuse, alcoholism and AIDS, accident prevention and safety, coping with stress, and employee counseling are the latest social development of this century. Green, W. K. and Medlin, B. (2016) say that Quality of Work Life consists of job enrichment, autonomous workgroup, work schedules with flexi time, job redesign with participative system. Khandwalla, P. (2011) reveals that industrial accidents can be avoided through safety training, maintenance of plant, providing protective kits and floor free from oils. Randall Schular, S. (2006) states that coping with stress has strategy to recognize symptoms, changing perceptions, positive attitude, setting clear objectives for individuals and developing career plans consideration of individual capabilities and aspirations. Paul, A.K. (2003) says that employee counseling will turn individuals as responsible employees with renewed morale and affinity to the organization.

William Scot., Y. (2017) claims poverty entails more than the lack of income and productive resources to ensure sustainable livelihoods. Its manifestations include hunger and malnutrition, limited access to education and other basic services, social discrimination and exclusion as well as the lack of participation in decision making. The World Social Summit called on governments to address the root causes of poverty, to provide basic needs for all, and ensure that the poor have access to productive resources, including credit, education and training. An integrated poverty eradication strategy covers education to uplift knowledge about the happenings in the environment, meals schemes to make downtrodden to get at least a square meal a day, local government to provide necessary education and training for self-employment, financial support with less interest, water shedding scheme for yearly



cultivation and free medicines with health insurance for the underprivileged. Concurrent national health evaluation brings down industrial absentees and turnover; thereby the unemployment virus can be wiped out, leading to the maintenance of monthly financial position of the labours.

METHODOLOGY

The study focused on medium-scale industries in Belagavi city, involved in casting iron, heavy boiler welding, steel rolling for construction, and iron bolt & nut fabrication. Using a descriptive research design, primary data was collected via structured questionnaires covering personal, organizational, and hypothesis-related data. Secondary data was gathered from journals, reports, and websites. 50 respondents were selected through stratified random sampling.

Objectives of the Study:

- 1) To assess awareness of social development among respondents.
- 2) To evaluate the impact of labour welfare measures on social development.
- 3) To examine the relationship between welfare schemes and poverty eradication.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Table 1: Respondent Segmentation Overview

S.No.	Category	No. of Respondents (n=50)	Percentage (100%)
1.	Gender		
	Male	37	74
	Female	13	26
2	Industry		
	Iron casting	11	22
	Boilder welding	11	22
	Steel rolling	05	10
	Iron bolts & nut fabrications	23	46
3	No. of dependents		
	0-2	19	38
	3-5	23	46



5-7	04	16
7 & above	04	16

Overall, 37 male and 13 female respondents were sampled. 22% each were from iron casting and boiler welding industries, 10% from steel rolling, and 46% from iron bolts & nut fabrication. Regarding dependents: 38% had 0-2, 46% had 3-5, and 16% had 5-7 or more family dependents.

H (1): Labour welfare schemes show no significant association with social development.

Sl No.	Industry	Mean	SD	SS	Df	MS	Statistical inference
1	Labour welfare measures						F = .414
	Between Groups			110.965	3	36.988	P > 0.05
	G1(n=11)	156.55	10.463				Not Significant
	G2(n=11)	160.91	5.356				
	G3(n=5)	159.60	7.403				
	G4(n=23)	159.39	10.672				
	Within Groups			4106.315	46	89.268	
2	Social development						F = 1.818
	Between Groups			301.623	3	100.541	P > 0.05
	G1(n=11)	161.00	5.779				Not Significant
	G2(n=11)	159.00	6.050				
	G3(n=5)	156.60	5.595				
	G4(n=23)	155.04	8.839				
	Within Groups			2544.157	46	55.308	

G1=Production/ G2=Marketing / G3=Finance/ G4=QC P = 0.743/ 0.157

The table shows labour welfare measures have no significant relation with poverty eradication ($P = 0.743 > 0.05$) or social development ($P = 0.157 > 0.05$). Thus, the null hypothesis is accepted, implying no significant relationship between labour welfare measures and poverty eradication/social development.

**H (2): Welfare schemes show no significant association with poverty eradication.**

Sl No.	Gunder	Mean	SD	Statistical inference
1	Labour welfare measures			t = 1.347
	Male (n+37)	158.08	9.224	P > 0.05
	Female (n+13)	162.08	9.133	Not Significant
2	Poverty eradication			t = 2.050
	Male (n+37)	158.65	7.620	P > 0.05
	Female (n+13)	153.77	6.623	Not Significant

Df = 48 P = .184/ 0.46

The above table shows that labour welfare measures had no relations with poverty eradication, such that P + .184 which is > significant level (0.05) for social development, P = .046 which is > significant level (0.05) for poverty eradication. Thus null hypothesis is rejected which implies that there is a significant relationship between labour welfare measures and poverty eradication.

H (3): There is no significant relationship between labour welfare measures and poverty eradication.

Sl No.	No. of Dependence	Mean	SD	SS	Df	MS	Statistical inference
1	Labour welfare measures						F = .190
	Between Groups			51.701	3	17.234	P > 0.05
	G1(n=20)	159.85	10.644				Not Significant
	G2(n=15)	159.47	10.141				
	G3(n=11)	158.36	7.229				
	G4(n=4)	156.25	4.113				
	Within Groups			4165.579	46	90.556	
2	Poverty eradication						F = 0.991
	Between Groups			172.703	3	57.568	P > 0.05



	G1(n=20)	157.55	7.930				Not Significant
	G2(n=15)	158.20	8.833				
	G3(n=11)	154.45	5.768				
	G4(n=4)	161.50	4.203				
	Within Groups			2673.077	46	58.110	

G1=0 to 2 members/ G=3 to 5 members G3 = 5 to 7 members /G4=7 & above P= .902/ .406

The above table shows that social development had no relations with labour welfare measures, such that $P = .902$ which is $>$ significant level (0.05) for social development, $P = .406$ which is $>$ significant level (0.05) for poverty eradication, Thus null hypothesis is rejected which implies that there is a significant relationship between labour welfare measures and poverty eradication.

At 0.05 and 0.01 significance levels, the table shows:

1. Quality of work life isn't linked to employee counseling or poverty eradication programs.
2. Control of addiction/AIDS isn't linked to poverty eradication.
3. Coping with stress isn't linked to accident prevention/safety or most poverty programs (except water shedding).
4. Employee counseling isn't linked to quality of work life, safety, or most poverty programs (except education/training).
5. Social development isn't linked to poverty eradication programs.
6. Education/training isn't linked to most social development schemes (except employee counseling).

CONCLUSION:

Role of Labor Welfare Initiatives in Social Development: An Empirical Study" describes research that uses real-world data to demonstrate how programs aimed at improving the well-being of workers contribute significantly to the overall progress of society. These studies typically find that such initiatives, both statutory (required by law) and non-statutory (voluntary), lead to a healthier, more productive, and stable workforce, which in turn benefits the nation's economic and social fabric. Labor is a prominent force in any industry and the backbone of national economic growth, playing a major role in employers' profitability and their own livelihood. A satisfied workforce boosts commitment, morale, motivation, and self-actualization. Welfare measures focusing on safety, security, and health can reduce poverty and enhance social development in India.



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