

LABOUR WELFARE IN INDIA: AN OVERVIEW

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ABSTRACT

May all enjoy happiness, may all be free from disease, may all with auspiciousness and may there be no one burdened with misery.

All civilized societies throughout the globe have been praying for the well being of the entire mankind. In India our sages longed for 'may all be happy' and worked for devising such institutions as could promote the welfare of all and strengthening them from time to time. There are evidences in Kautilya's Arthashastra and the edicts of Ashoka to show that the labourers were treated very kindly and wages were paid regularly. Labourers were entitled to get handsome wages. They were treated kindly and accommodated comfortably. But the conditions of workers deteriorated under the Muslim rule, especially in the Royal factories known as Shahi Karkhanas. The king knew little about the working of such factories. Workers were not happy. They were treated very harshly and were even flogged. The modern industrial working class grew up in the country after the advent of large scale industries. Most of the early industries were started by the Europeans. The temptation of cheap, helpless and submissive labour, used to long hours of work and a low standard of living, proved too strong for many who secured enormous profits by terrible sweating of men, women and children. Many attempts were made to improve their conditions by organising the workers. Government of the day also interfered by passing various laws in this direction. But it proved to be a futile exercise because of the fact that the object of the laws was not wholly the welfare of the workers but the measures were adopted either from the political point of view or from the point of view of increasing the cost of production of Indian industries. Industrialization gives birth to so many labour problems. Therefore, it is the paramount obligation of the State to deal with all such labour problems effectively and to enact laws relating to labour welfare. Therefore, in the present paper, an attempt has been made to discuss comprehensively the concept of 'labour welfare' and its various aspects.

KEYWORDS: Human Resource, Labour Welfare, 5 Year Plans