

ISSN: 2582-6433



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL FOR LEGAL RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS

Open Access, Refereed Journal Multi Disciplinary
Peer Reviewed 6th Edition

VOLUME 2 ISSUE 7

www.ijlra.com

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INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL FOR LEGAL RESEARCH & ANALYSIS
ISSN

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Emerging Trends In Employee Welfare

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Emerging Trends In Employee Welfare

According to Deloitte's millennial survey, a majority of surveyed millennial's in 19 out of 30 countries report that they do not expect to be "happier" than their parents.¹ In India employee welfare emerges as a strategic priority to face global competition. Human Resource Managers are endeavoring to use strategic approaches towards employee benefits for attracting and retaining the employees. Indian organizations truly have given many advantages to their employees, for example, health benefits, statutory retirement plans, HR benefits and leave benefits programs etc. The bases for vibrant business environment are global competition, foreign investors and educated population. A survey report published by the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) in the year 2017 on strategic use of benefits, found that companies who adopt a key strategy to their employees welfare program are having more satisfied workers as compared to the organizations that are not using such strategic benefits. Human Resource Management should anticipate latest emerging trends towards employee welfare activities to enhance the employee engagement. Many employers are putting in place innovative programs for financial wellness, mental health, healthy diet and exercise, mindfulness, sleep, stress management, and more. The aim is to both increase worker productivity and meet global expectations. This paper tries to identify some important changes in employment relations in the post-reform period.

Keywords: Human Resource Management (HRM), Employee benefits; Labour reforms.

¹ Deloitte, The 2017 Deloitte millennial survey: Apprehensive millennial's: Seeking stability and opportunities in an uncertain world, 2017. Retrieved April 15, 2018, <https://www2.deloitte.com/insights/us/en/focus/human-capital-trends/2018/employee-well-being-programs.html>

Introduction

Labour reforms in year 2019 have been announced by Mody Government and are expected to get Parliament's nod on at least two codes on wages as well as industrial relations. The Indian Ministry is under process of four labour codes on social security & welfare and occupational safety, wages, health and working conditions, industrial relations by amalgamating, simplifying and rationalizing the relevant provisions of the existing central labour laws.

Labour Codes

THE CODE ON WAGES BILL 2017: This was introduced in the Lok Sabha on August 10, 2017 and afterward by the standing committee. The report of the Standing Committee is being awaited. This will enable the Central government to set benchmark minimum wages for different regions across the country. *"Keeping the social security and welfare aspects of workmen better and intact, we are working in the direction of bringing reforms in various labour laws with objective of ease of doing business in new future,"* Labour Minister Santosh Gangwar.

CODE ON SOCIAL SECURITY AND WELFARE: Indian Ministry is formulating Code on Social Security and Welfare on March 1, 2018 with consultation of tripartite body.²

CODE ON OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY HEALTH AND WORKING CONDITIONS: On March 23, 2018 the Indian Ministry is formulating by amalgamation of thirteen labour laws relating to safety and health standards, health and working conditions.

1. *"The Factories Act, 1948 (Act no. 63 of 1948);*
2. *The Mines Act, 1952 (Act no. 35 of 1952);*
3. *The Dock Workers (Safety, Health and Welfare) Act, 1986 (Act no. 54 of 1986) ;*
4. *The Building and Other Construction Workers (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1996 (Act No. 27 of 1996) ;*
5. *The Plantations Labour Act, 1951 (Act No. 69 of 1951) ;*
6. *The Contract Labour (Regulation and Abolition) Act, 1970;*

² Financial Express (2019). Government has seen going full throttle on labour reforms in 2019. Retrieved April 15, 2018, from <https://www.financialexpress.com/economy/government-seen-going-full-throttle-on-labour-reforms-in-2019/1428672/>

7. *The Inter-State Migrant workmen (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1979;*
8. *The Working Journalist and other News Paper Employees (Conditions of Service and Misc. Provision) Act, 1955;*
9. *The Working Journalist (Fixation of rates of wages) Act, 1958;*
10. *The Motor Transport Workers Act, 1961;*
11. *Sales Promotion Employees (Condition of Service) Act, 1976;*
12. *The Beedi and Cigar Workers (Conditions of Employment) Act, 1966;*
13. *The Cine Workers and Cinema Theatre Workers Act, 1981.”³*

MATERNITY BENEFIT (AMENDMENT) ACT, 2017: This came into force from April 1, 2017. Increased paid maternity leave from 12 weeks to 26 weeks and benefited 18 lakhs women employees.

PAYMENT OF GRATUITY (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2018: Payment of Gratuity bill was passed by Parliament. This provides for hike in upper ceiling on tax free gratuity amount from Rs 10 lakh to Rs 20 lakh.

FIXED TERM EMPLOYMENT WORKMAN: The ministry also included the category of fixed term employment workmen for all sectors in the Industrial Employment (Standing Orders) Act, 1946. The objective of fixed term employment is to provide flexibility to the employers in order to meet the challenges of globalization, new practices and methods of doing businesses and it is beneficial for workers also, as it gives the 'Fixed Term Employment Workman' the same statutory benefits as that of regular workers in a proportionate manner. This will decrease the exploitation of contract workers as the employer would directly hire the worker without any third party in the form of contract for a fixed term.⁴ Drastic changing patterns in compensation and benefits trends have kept HR professionals on toes in the last decade. Every organization aims at attracting and retaining highly talented, engaged professional to enhance productivity, and to achieve so, they use every tool at their disposal. Here is the best prevalent practices under compensation and benefits that gained ground during that particular phase and cracked new codes for the future.

³ Government of India, Ministry of Labour and Employment (2018). The draft Labour Code on Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions, 2018.

⁴ The Economic Times (2018) Retrieved April 15, 2018, from <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/policy/modi-government-seen-going-full-throttle-on-labour-reforms-in-2019/articleshow/67307774.cms?from=mdr>

DISPENSARY-CUM-BRANCH OFFICE (DCBO): To administer primary medical services and financial benefits, Employee State Insurance Corporation has begun to gradually establishing at least one contact point in every area of the nation in the form of a dispensary-cum-branch office.

ATAL BIMIT VYAKTI KALYAN YOJANA: The Employee State Insurance Corporation took into account the shift in employment patterns and the current state of employment in India, where short-term contracts have replaced long-term employment, and they authorized the "Atal Bimit Vyakti Kalyan Yojana" scheme for insured persons coverage under the ESI Act, 1948. In the event of unemployment and while the insured person is looking for new employment, this program provides relief that is paid straight into their bank accounts in cash.

“UMANG: BY ESIC CHINTA SE MUKTI” MOBILE APP: The IP can access personal and enrolled family demographic details, contribution details, insurance & eligibility details information on entitled Benefits, claim status, dispensary and branch office to which he is affiliated among other things using the Unified Mobile Application for New-age Governance.

PRADHAN MANTRI ROJGAR PROTSAHAN YOJANA (PMRPY): The Government of India is now paying full employer's contribution (Employee Provident Fund and Earning per Share both) with effect from 1st April, 2018 for a period of 3 years to the new employees as well as to the existing beneficiaries for their remaining period of three years. Before 1st April, 2018, the Government was paying under PMRPY only the EPS share (8.33% of the wages) out of the total employer's share of contribution (12% of the wages).

THE PAYMENT OF GRATUITY (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2018: The Payment of Gratuity bill by Lok Sabha on 15th March, 2018 and by the Rajya Sabha on 22nd March, 2018, has been brought in force on 29th March, 2018. The present upper ceiling on gratuity amount under the Act has been raised from Rs. 10 Lakh, to Rs. 20 Lakhs

SHRAM SUVIDHA PORTAL: A unified web portal called the "Shram Suvidha Portal" was created to increase accountability and transparency in the application of labor regulations.

- ❖ Transparent Labour Inspection Scheme through computerized system
- ❖ Common Registration for ESIC and EPFO
- ❖ Online Registration by Chief Labour Commissioner (Central) under three Acts i.e the Contract Labour Regulation and Abolition Act, 1970, the Inter-State Migrant Workmen (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1979 and The Building and

Other Construction Workers' (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1996. A number of measures have been implemented to increase the safety of mine workers, 110 Mines have received assistance from the Directorate General of Mines Safety (DGMS) in the creation of Safety Management Plans and Risk Assessment Studies. The approach has produced a safer management system that is more pro-active. With the assistance of the relevant state government, the Directorate General of Mines Safety performed occupational health studies on 9863 people working in unorganized stone mines in various states' regions. Affected individuals in 211 cases of silicosis were counted.⁵

Organizational Objective Towards Employee Benefits –

2020:

- ❖ Increase in attraction and retention policy
- ❖ Improves in employee's engagement.
- ❖ Health related benefits cost
- ❖ Improving employee perceived value benefits
- ❖ Alignment with Global benefit strategy
- ❖ Improving Employee wellbeing
- ❖ Improving employee performance
- ❖ Reducing Employee absenteeism
- ❖ Controlling employment cost and others.

Employee Welfare Trends And Opportunities In The Year 2019:

Human Resource professionals required to stay on following emerging trends to increase their employee wellness.

PRIVACY CONCERNS:

⁵ Press Information Bureau Government of India, Ministry of Labour & Employment (2018). Year End Review- 2018: Ministry of Labour & Employment. Retrieved April 15, 2018, from <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=186346>

Data security is not a just IT problem. [Kaiser Health News](#) (KHN) published an article which has shown concerns about the privacy of employee health data collected through participation in workplace wellness programs. Employee wellness data is collected through wellness

surveys, wellness portals, gym records and lab tests. Organizations need to be transparent with their employees about who has access to their health data. Employers also need to make sure their wellness vendors maintain the highest data privacy, security and compliance standards.

Prioritizing Self-Care:

“[Best of 2018](#)” recently announced by company Apple. Self-care helps in burnout a kind or stress from work and increase the feelings of self-worth and self confidence. Company Apple listed out self-care as the trend of the year. According to [Harvard Business Review](#), a wellness program creates a kind of culture in which it is acceptable and encouraged individual to prioritize self-care. It's being offered at some of the world's biggest companies to cut workplace stress and boost productivity. Now reputed organization's employers prioritizing holistic wellness and its a good news.

Onsite Clinics:

Reputed organizations' are selecting onsite health clinics. It's estimated by 2020, two-thirds will have such facilities. Building onsite health clinics shall enable organizations' to offer a competitive edge, control costs and provide quality healthcare to employees. It is essential for wellness professionals to regularly assess and evaluate their wellness strategies. Taking note of the latest industry trends each year can help you refresh your employee wellness strategy and will help keep your employees happy and healthy.⁶

⁶ Kohll,Alan.(2018). Seven Employee Wellness Trends And Opportunities For 2019, Forbs, Retrieved April 15,2018,from<https://www.forbes.com/sites/alankohll/2018/12/12/7-employee-wellness-trends-and-opportunities-for-2019/#525c468034d5>

Conclusion

Welfare is becoming a core responsibility of reputed corporate houses and a critical performance strategy to drive employee engagement, organizational energy, and productivity. It is also a growing expectation among the talent companies for attracting, retaining and training the manpower. Companies should consider a flexible benefits strategy and the type of structure that would encourage employee satisfaction, control on expenses and growth in revenue. Recruitment and retention rates should improve as a result of higher levels of employee satisfaction, tax efficiency and commercial advantages. A proper communication strategy should develop to raise awareness about the retirement benefits. Many major organizations are rethinking their reward and development programs to include some version of holistic, end-to-end well-being programs, which are now both a responsibility of good corporate citizenship and a key element of an enterprise talent strategy. This investment responds to the needs of workers, companies, and corporate leaders, and is being addressed by a growing number of well-being resources and tools.

