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Health and Welfare Measures in Factories

38.1 Introduction

The term ‘Labour Welfare’ refers to the facilities provided to workers in and outside the factory premises such as canteens, rest and recreation facilities, housing and all other services that contribute to the well-being of workers. Welfare measures are concerned with general well-being and efficiency of workers. In the early stages of industrialisation, welfare activities for factory workers did not receive adequate attention. Employers were not inclined to accept the financial burden of welfare activities. Wherever employers provided for such amenities, it was more with a paternalistic approach to labour rather than a recognition of workers’ needs. Hence the state had to intervene, in discharge of its welfare responsibility, by using its persuasive powers and/or by enforcing legislation, where persuasion failed. Compulsory provisions are thus incorporated in the Factories Act, 1948 with respect to the health, safety and welfare of workers engaged in the manufacturing process. In the previous lesson you have studied the nature and characteristics of factories. In this lesson, you will come to know about the health and welfare measures for workers in factories.
38.2 Objective

After studying this lesson, you will be able to:

- describe the provisions regarding health of workers in factories, and
- explain the provisions relating to various welfare measures in factories.

38.3 Provisions regarding health of factory workers

To take care of the health of workers in factories, the Factories Act, 1948 has provided for certain measures which are stated below:

(i) Cleanliness of the factory premises

Every factory shall be kept clean and free from effluvia arising from any drain, privy or other nuisance. It is specifically provided that in a factory—

- accumulations of dirt and refuse shall be removed daily, by sweeping or any other method, from the floors and benches of work rooms and from stair cases and passages, and disposed off in a suitable manner;

- the floor of every room shall be cleaned. This shall be done at least once every week by washing, using disinfectant or by some other effective method;

- where a floor is liable to become wet in the course of any manufacturing process to such an extent as is capable of being drained, effective means of drainage shall be provided.

- all inside wall and partitions, all ceilings or tops of rooms and all walls, sides and tops of passages and staircases shall

  a) be painted or varnished, and repainted and revarnished at least once in a period of five years; where they are painted or varnished, be cleaned at least once in a period of 14 months by such methods as may be prescribed by the Government.
b) Where painting or varnishing is not required, be kept white washed or colourwashed, and the white washing or colour washing shall be carried out at least once in every period of 14 months.

(ii) Disposal of Wastes and Effluents

Effective arrangement shall be made for the disposal of wastes and effluents arising out of manufacturing process in the factories.

(iii) Ventilation and Temperature

Provision to be made for ventilation and regulation of temperature in the factories. Effective and suitable measures shall be adopted for securing and maintaining in every room—

— adequate ventilation by the circulation of fresh air, and

— such a temperature as will secure to workers reasonable conditions of comfort, and prevent injury to health, and in particular the walls and roofs shall be of such material and so designed that such temperature shall not exceed but kept within reasonable limits.

The state government shall prescribe the standards of adequate ventilation and reasonable temperature for any factory or part thereof.

(iv) Dust and Fume

In every factory, where due to manufacturing process, dust or fume or other impurity arise which is likely to be injurious to the health of workers employed, effective measures shall be taken to prevent its inhalation, and accumulation in any workroom. If it is necessary to instal exhaust appliances, it would be installed near the point of origin of the dust, fumes, or other impurity. Measures shall be taken to enclose such points.

(v) Artificial humidification

Artificial creation of humidity is employed in India in cotton textile mills and in cigarette making factories. In respect of factories, where
humidity of the air is artificially increased, it is provided to make rules—

— prescribing standard of humidification;
— regulating the methods used for artificially increasing the humidity of the air;
— directing prescribed tests for determining the humidity of the air to be correctly carried out and recorded, and
— prescribing methods to be adopted for securing adequate ventilation and cooling of the air and the work rooms.

(vi) **Overcrowding**

No room in any factory shall be overcrowded to such an extent which becomes injurious to the health of the workers employed therein. The Chief Inspector of factories by order in writing shall fix the maximum member of workers to be employed in each room in the factory.

(vii) **Lighting**

The Factories Act provides for sufficient and suitable lighting, natural or artificial where workers are working or passing through. Provision of cleaning of inner and outer surface is provided for all glazed windows and skylights used for the lighting of the workrooms. In every factory, effective provision shall be made for the prevention of

a) glare, either directly from a source of light or by reflection from a smooth or polished surface;

b) the formation of shadows to such an extent as to cause eye-strain or the risk of accident to any worker.

(viii) **Drinking Water**

In every factory, effective arrangement shall be made at suitable places for sufficient supply of wholesome drinking water. Such places shall be legibly marked ‘Drinking Water’ in a language understood by a majority of the workers employed in the factory. In case of factories employing more than 250 workers, provisions shall be made for cooling drinking
water during hot weather by effective means, and for its distribution.

(ix) Latrines and Urinals

The Factories Act requires that provision should be made for —

a) sufficient latrine and urinal accommodation conveniently situated and accessible to workers while they are in the factory;

b) separate enclosed accommodation for male and female workers;

c) such accommodation being adequately lighted and ventilated;

d) all such accommodation being maintained in a clean and sanitary condition;

e) sweepers being employed to clean latrines, urinals and washing places;

Where the number of workers in a factory is more than 250

i) latrines and urinals shall be of prescribed sanitary types;

ii) the floor and internal walls of the latrines and urinals shall be laid with glazed tiles;

iii) floors and walls and the sanitary pans of latrines and urinals shall be thoroughly washed and cleaned at least once in every seven days with suitable detergents or disinfectants or with both.

(x) Spittoons

Sufficient number of spittoons must be provided in every factory and maintained in clean and hygienic condition. No person shall spit within the premises of a factory except in the spittoons. A notice containing this provision and the penalty for its violation shall be prominently displayed at suitable places in the factory premises.
Intext Questions 38.1

1. Fill in the blanks by appropriate expressions.

   (i) Health and welfare measures are provided for workers in the __________

   (ii) Effective arrangement shall be made for the disposal of wastes and effluents arising out of manufacturing process in every __________

   (iii) Factories Act makes provision for adequate ventilation by the__________ of fresh air.

   (iv) No room in any factory shall be over-crowded to such an extent which becomes injurious to the health of __________ employed therein.

2. State whether the following statements are true or false

   (i) In every factory effective arrangement shall be made at suitable place for sufficient supply of wholesome drinking water.

   (ii) The Factories Act does not provide for sufficient and suitable lighting where workers are wroking or passing through.

   (iii) The Factories Act provides for separate latrines and urinals for male and female workers.

38.4 Welfare provisions in the factories

(i) **Washing facilities:** The Factories Act provides for -

   a) adequate and suitable facilities for washing for the use of workers in the factories. The workers who live in crowded areas have inadequate facilities for washing at their homes, and bathing facilities add to their comfort, health and efficiency.
b) Separate and adequately screened washing facilities for the use of male and female workers.

c) Such facilities being conveniently accessible, and being kept clean.

(ii) **Facilities for storing and drying clothes:**

A suitable place for keeping clothes not worn during working hours shall be provided in every factory. Facilities shall also be provided for the drying of wet clothes.

(iii) **Facilities for sitting:**

For workers who are to work in a standing position, suitable arrangement for sitting shall be provided in the factories. This is to enable workers to take advantage of any opportunity for rest which may occur in the course of their work.

(iv) **First-aid appliances:**

First-aid boxes or cupboards equipped with the required contents should be provided for workers in every factory. This should be readily accessible to them during all working hours. The number of such first aid boxes shall not be less than one for every 150 workers employed in the factory.

Such first-aid box shall be kept in the charge of a responsible person who is trained in first-aid treatment and who shall be available during the working hours of the factory.

In factories employing more than 500 workers, there shall be an ambulance room. It should contain the prescribed equipments, and be in the charge of such medical and nursing staff as may be prescribed.

(v) **Canteens:**

In factories employing more than 250 workers, there shall be a canteen for the use of workers. The government may prescribe the rules in respect of the —
— food stuff to be served in the canteen;
— charges to be made;
— constitution of a managing committee for the canteen; and
— representation of the workers in the management of the canteen.

(vi) Shelters, restrooms and lunch rooms:

Adequate and suitable shelters, rest rooms, and lunch rooms with drinking water facility shall be made in factories employing 150 workers or more. Workers can eat meals brought by them in such rooms. Rest and lunch rooms shall be sufficiently lighted and ventilated. It shall be maintained in cool and clean conditions.

(vii) Creches:

In every factory, where more than 50 women workers are employed, provision shall be made for suitable and adequate room for the use of children under the age of six years of such women. Such a room shall be adequately lighted and ventilated. It shall be maintained in clean and sanitary conditions under the charge of a woman trained in the care of children and infants.

(viii) Welfare Officer:

The factories Act also provides for employment of welfare officers with prescribed qualification to look into the implementation of various facilities provided for. Such a provision exist in every factory employing more than 500 workers.

Welfare facilities outside factory premises

In addition to providing welfare facilities in the factory premises, workers are also provided certain benefits and facilities outside the factory. These include:

— maternity benefits;
— gratuity, pension and provident fund benefits;
— medical benefits;
— educational facilities;
— housing facilities;
— recreational facilities including sports and cultural activities;
— library and reading rooms;
— holiday home and leave travel facilities;
— consumers’ cooperative stores and fair price shops;
— vocational training; and
— transportation facility to and from the place of work.

Intext Questions 38.2

1. State which of the following statements are true and which are false:

   (i) The Factories Act does not provide for adequate washing facilities (T/F)

   (ii) Some of the facilities like Canteen, Creches, and Shelters and Rest room depend upon the number of workers employed in the factories. (T/F)

2. Fill in the blanks with appropriate words:

   (i) Canteen facilities shall be provided only in those factories where the number of workers working is __________

   2 The Factories Act provides for employment of __________ to look after the implementation of various facilities provided for.
38.5 What you have learnt

— Labour welfare facilities are those which result in improving the conditions under which workers are employed and work. These include not only the health but also welfare measures adopted for the benefit of the workers.

— The Factories Act, 1948 has provided for certain health and welfare measures for workers working in factories in India.

— Health facilities provided in factories for workers include provision for cleanliness of the factory premises, disposal of wastes and effluents, ventilation and temperature, dust and fumes.

— Artificial humidification, overcrowding, lighting, drinking water, latrines and urinals and spittoons.

— Welfare facilities for workers include adequate washing facilities, facilities for storing and drying clothing, sitting facility, first-aid, and canteen facility; and facilities for shelters, rest rooms, lunch rooms and creches.

— Welfare amenities provided to workers outside the factory premises include medical and retirement benefits, housing and educational facilities, recreational facilities, holiday homes and leave travel facilities and transportation facility to and from the place of work.

39.6 Terminal Questions

1. Explain the meaning of the term ‘Labour Welfare’. Also point out the welfare facilities provided to workers inside and outside the factory premises.

2. Explain the provisions for cleanliness of the factory premises.

3. Describe any two of the provisions in respect of the following:
   a) Washing facilities
   b) First-aid appliances
   c) Creches
   d) Canteens in the factories.
38.6 Answers to Intext Questions

38.1 1. (i) The Factories Act, 1948
      (ii) The Factory
      (iii) Circulation
      (iv) Workers

2. (i) T
    (ii) F
    (iii) T

38.2 1. (i) F
      (ii) T

2. (i) More than 250
    (ii) Welfare Officer