

Course Name: Labour Welfare and Industrial Relations

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Week: 5

Lecture: 24

Lec 24: Role of Welfare officer, problems in enforcement of welfare amenities.

Hello, learners. Welcome back to the course on labor welfare and industrial relations. We move to the last lecture of the module five. We'll try to conclude the labor welfare critically. We'll look into the role of labor welfare officer.

We'll look into the problems in implementation or enforcement of certain welfare amenities. We started with those critical issues in the previous lecture. We'll continue that and we'll certainly look into the need for an integrated social security.

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Let's look into role of welfare officer in greater detail. When you look into the welfare officer, there are certain important roles this particular welfare officer would be actually dealing with. The first one being executing policies regarding working conditions, welfare, etc.

So when you are trying to understand the the working condition you are also listening or you are also making yourself as a wire media between the employer and employee so this this happens as a consequence maintaining a liaison between management and labor and promoting harmonious relation between them There is yet another important role which is bringing grievances of workers to the notice of the management. Now, who will do this part? This would be one of the most thankless job as if you ask me, then this is given to the welfare officers. A welfare officer essentially should act as I've already mentioned.

He should act as a via media between the management and the workers. So he should or she should essentially bring the grievances of the workers to the notice of management. He or she should also interpret labor laws. So there should be proper understanding and knowledge of

labour laws to workers and advising management on the various statutory obligation. And finally, labour welfare officer promotes harmonious relations between management and workers to ensure efficiency in production.

So it is not only the perspective of the labour, it is also the perspective of the management which is being considered by the welfare officer. So welfare officer acts as a wire media and I certainly tell this with great assertiveness that if he or she is taking sides then there will be a lack of balance and it will certainly affect the efficiency in production which is detrimental finally to both the stakeholders Both management as well as the labor workforce. When you look into the role of welfare officer, again, there are certain welfare activities and the welfare officer critically looks into the formation of these welfare activities.

It could be something like the recreational facilities. sanitation education of children etc so all these welfare activities welfare officer happens to be the nodal officer he or she also helps in formulating employment and recruitment policies specifically in consultation with the management and workers and their representatives and also negotiating settlement by conciliation in the event of dispute between workers and management specifically and you look into the administrative action the welfare officer ensures all administrative action on part of the management in case of labor trouble so please note he is not a person only of labor workforce. He's also a person of management.

This is the point I wanted to underscore from the beginning. So ultimately, the role of welfare officer is in assisting employees. And I will say the employers in their personal problems and, you know, make the functioning of the production unit or the plant smooth and efficient. When you look into the problems concerning enforcement of welfare amenities, we have started discussing this in the previous lecture. If you have seen, if you have gone through the lecture, you will understand.

I would like to bring in a different angle altogether. There are certain issues of bureaucratic inefficiencies and this is with respect to the complex procedures. Many a time what happens is that there are lengthy and complicated administrative processes that can typically delay or prevent the delivery of welfare services. And there are issues of poor coordination also among different government agencies which can ultimately lead to fragmented and inefficient service deliveries. That said, it is not only bureaucratic inefficiencies, there are issues associated with inadequate resources also.

Lack of resources or inadequate resources also is critical, especially the funding constraints. When you're looking into insufficient funding, that can certainly limit the availability and the quality of welfare services. And not to mention one of the most important asset or most important resource, which is a human resource, a lack of adequately trained personnel. It is not only personal, it is trained human resource, trained personnel can hinder the effective implementation of welfare programs.

I repeat, a lack of adequately trained personnel can hinder the effective implementation of welfare schemes and welfare programs. When you look into other important dimensions of problems in enforcement of welfare amenities, I have mentioned about the corruption and leak. I will also mention about the corruption and mismanagement. Certainly, the points that would come under this main agenda would be embezzlement and fraud.

When you look into funds meant for welfare schemes being misappropriated or embezzled by officials, it is a case of corruption and mismanagement. So is nepotism and favoritism. Benefits may be distributed based on personal connections rather than need. So this is critically a big issue, especially You know, most of the welfare amenities are certainly ingrained with such troubles of corruption and mismanagement from nepotism and favoritism.

And then there are also dimensions of lack of awareness and access, which I have categorically explained in my previous lecture. This essentially comes from the information gap. beneficiaries may not be aware of the available services or how to access them there may be also problems associated with the geographical barriers you know India is a diverse country but there are also critical geographical barriers or geographical constraints especially Remote or underserved areas are there which may have limited access to welfare amenities due to the logistical challenges. So this is also emerging as one of the critical problem in the enforcement of welfare amenities.

When you look into other issues like political interference, you have the policy instability. Policy instability is nothing but the frequent changes in policies and priorities which can disrupt the ongoing welfare programs. Whereas politicization is different from policy instability. Politicization is more of welfare services that may be used as a political tool. So this is where the political interference becomes critical.

Maybe for the vote bank politics, maybe as a political tool leading to biased or uneven distribution policies. creates a big problem in the enforcement of welfare amenities please take note of that then there are also dimensions of cultural and social barriers i've already mentioned

about the stigma you know somebody using this scheme they might be stigmatized there might be social stigma and discrimination associated with this based on gender, based on caste, ethnicity or disability can prevent certain groups from accessing the welfare services. We have talked extensively in one of our NPTEL courses itself like diversity. We have talked about ableism in organizational behavior course.

which brings in stigma and discrimination. So when you extrapolate this to the welfare amenity scheme, we'll understand how culture and social barriers certainly ends up as a stigma and discrimination. There are also situations and circumstances of cultural resistance. Some communities may resist certain welfare interventions due to their cultural beliefs or practices. They might be more traditional.

They might be more, you know, ingrained with the cultural practices so that they cannot stay away from that. So any level of you know, separation would actually hurt their cultural sentiment and there will be certainly cultural resistance associated with that. When you're looking into another dimension, we have to acknowledge and appreciate monitoring and accountability issues being there. We have to understand that there are lack of transparency issues.

Poor transparency in the implementation of welfare programs can actually obscure misuse and inefficiencies. There might be also inadequate oversight. Weak monitoring and evaluation mechanisms can result in in poor accountability and certainly continuous inefficiencies. Finally, when you look into the economic factors very quickly, you will see that economic instability, economic downturns can be there.

It can strain government budgets. It can strain outlays. It can strain financial budgeting, leading to cuts in welfare spending. So economic instability can also be a reason or a problem in the enforcement of welfare amenities.

And finally, inflation rising costs that can definitely erode the value of welfare benefits, making them less effective. That's why periodic revision of at least the amount, at least the amount of the compensation given as part of any or every single program is critical when it comes to addressing the challenges of inflation. Let's note one thing, addressing these challenges require a multifaceted approach. There is no denying the fact it will include policy reform. It should include capacity building.

It should include better resource allocation. It should enhance the transparency. And finally, there should be increased accountability and awareness. So these are some of the significant factors

which have to be taken care if you are thinking of addressing or mitigating in the enforce or the problems in the enforcement of welfare amenities and welfare programs specifically now we have to understand that we started with different schemes there are different schemes spread across different sectors spread across different dimensions within the sectors there are different schemes

Targeting different set of people in terms of the usability, there are differences in terms of utilization, there are differences. So there is a typical need for an integrated social security scheme. So we have different schemes scattered in different places, different sectors, targeting different population, everything is there. But we need a comprehensive coverage. We need to integrate a social security scheme.

And that is typically the end of this module where we try to emphasize on this theme. We need a comprehensive coverage. We need a situation where there is unified access, where there is inclusivity. Let's look into that with greater detail. When you look into comprehensive coverage, we have to understand that an integrated system ensures that all individuals have access to various social security benefits.

So unified access is critical. Then it includes, all the schemes should include various groups, vulnerable groups who might otherwise fall through the cracks of this fragmented system. So unified access, inclusivity is relevant when you talk about the comprehensive coverage. When you talk about efficiency, there should be a reduced redundancy. You know, you have to streamline different programs into a single system, reducing the administrative cost and the redundancy.

So this would be another important segment or factor or element in increasing the efficiency. And there should be an approach to facilitate or make it easier for beneficiaries to understand and navigate the system leading to better utilization process. Simplified process would be a one shot solution for bringing out a certain efficiency to the system. When we look into equity, equity happens to be one of the biggest concern. And for that, we need to have integrated system and the dimension capable for that would be fair distribution.

It ensures fair distribution, ensures a more equitable distribution of resources. Targeting those who are most in need. So rather than looking into the people who are otherwise not requiring something. Equity. Equity like this would be more critical.

A fair distribution would be more critical. When you look into the consistency, there should be a standardized benefits or movement of standardized benefits and services, reducing disparities

between different programs and regions. So consistency also caters to the equity. Another critical aspect that would, you know, emphasize on the need for integrated social security scheme would be enhanced data management.

If we have a centralized system which allows for better data collection, management and analysis, a unified database, that would be definitely a welcome change there should be some fraud prevention. There should be fraud prevention which is easier to detect and prevent those fraudulent activities and abuse through cross-referencing data. So something like that would actually prevent the fraudulent interventions or the fraudulent practices. And finally, when you look into economic stability, provides Poverty alleviation is one of the most important significant aspect.

It provides a reliable safety net reducing poverty and promoting social stability. Why we are doing all this? Why we need a social security? Why we have to integrate the social security? If poverty alleviation is not one of the significant factor, then we are not doing justice to the cause of social security.

I will go to that extent and tell that. Economic growth is critical. Economic growth is critical, so is poverty alleviation. When you are looking into ensuring a basic level of economic security, individuals can contribute more effectively to the economy. So that is the relevance of economic growth, there is no doubt about it.

But if the social security scheme cannot provide a reliable safety net, cannot ensure reduced poverty or mitigate poverty and promote social stability, then there is no use, absolutely no use of social security. When you look into improved policy making, comprehensive data from an integrated system aids in more informed and effective policy making. So informed decisions have to be made and this will come from comprehensive data from integrated system. And finally, we need to have a responsive, more adaptive change mentality towards changing economic and social conditions. And we have to also look into the coordination and collaboration issues.

Specifically, when we have a lot of schemes running, there should be interagency collaboration. It categorically promotes coordination between different government agencies and departments. And not to forget, we have to fight on or we have to act on a holistic approach to which will address social issues holistically rather than through isolated programs. So please note an integrated social security system can significantly improve the delivery of social protection, ensuring that all individuals have access to the support they need when they need it.

So we have tried to cover in this module the detailed process, uh social welfare measures what our country is having we have understood the need we have discovered the evolution we have traced the timeline we have looked into different schemes almost all the schemes we have looked into we have looked into the issues concerning the scheme we have looked into the bottlenecks we have looked into the suggestions or recommendations but please note All these welfare measures are for two significant factors. One is uplifting the morale of the worker. And second and the most important thing is poverty alleviation.

And in fact, the second first is the consequence of the second. So if you cannot. or target the second cause, which is the most important cause, if these schemes are not hitting the target, is not able to alleviate poverty, is not able to control poverty, then there is absolutely redundancy that is coming in and all these schemes, the the entire, the intention of creating these schemes becomes a failure. So this is where we have to think on what are the lacunae, what are the bottlenecks, how we can actually come up or reduce the barriers and make these schemes more efficient without compromising on the efficiency of the production unit, efficiency of the top line and efficiency of the bottom line. On that note, I'll end this module. We'll see with greater details in an upcoming module. Till then, take care. Bye-bye.

Thank you.