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## **EMPLOYEE ABSENTEEISM CONCEPT, CAUSES, CONSEQUENCES AND MANAGEMENT INTERVENTIONS**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Any enterprise needs committed work force to achieve the targets and accomplish its very purpose of establishment. If the workers are happy and satisfied with their management they will yield better performance, on the contrary dissatisfied and inactive work force can force the enterprise into an awful situation. Absenteeism of employees not only affects the company adversely but it also influences employees and the consumer. That ultimately led to social and economic stagnation of the society. There are many socio-cultural and economic reasons of absenteeism that must be acknowledged while infer any conclusion on the subject. The problem of absenteeism is also a psycho social problem therefore; management must use human relation skill to change the nature of employees.

**Keywords:** Absenteeism, Authorized absence, Unauthorized absence

**Concept of Absenteeism:** Absenteeism is the term generally used to refer to unscheduled employee absences from the workplace. Many causes of absenteeism are legitimate, for example personal liabilities of employees, but absenteeism also can often be due to other reasons such as a unhealthy work environment or workers who are not dedicated to their jobs. If such absences become habit of employees, employers can have a seriously adverse impact on a business's operations and, ultimately, its profitability.

The Ministry of Labor Welfare in India defined the absenteeism rate as the total man-shifts lost because of absences as a percentage of the total number of man-shifts scheduled. So for calculation of the rate of the absenteeism we require the number of persons scheduled to work and the number actually present.

**Authorized and Unauthorized Absences:** Authorized absences are those about which the employer has knowledge in advance and can thus plan their production during the unavailability of the worker. Unauthorized absence is those about which the employer has no advance

information and therefore unable to plan his production during the period of unauthorized absence. Authorized absences are termed as permitted vacations, sickness, accident privilege, casual leave. Ex post facto regularized overstays and any other absence condoned by the management prior to after the occurrence are also regarded as authorized absence. Unauthorized absences means all those cases where work is available, the worker also knows about it, but he fails to report himself for the duty and the employer has no prior information of the workers failure.

### **Measurement of Absenteeism**

When absenteeism is considered as the sum total of time loss because of all authorized and unauthorized leaves, it can be measured as under:

$$\frac{\text{No. of authorized absences} + \text{No. of unauthorized absences}}{\text{Total days scheduled to work}} \times 100$$

Total days scheduled to work

(This is known as absent rate)

**When absenteeism comprises only unauthorized absence it can be measured as:**

$$\frac{\text{No. of unauthorized absences}}{\text{Total days scheduled to work}} \times 100$$

Total days scheduled to work

(This is known as absenteeism rate)

### **Causes of the absenteeism:**

The absenteeism rate in the Indian industries is very high and cannot be ignored. It is observed that the basic reason of absenteeism in India is that worker working in industries is still part-time peasant/farmer. Therefore, the workers go to find jobs at cities after the harvesting their crops. It means that when the transplanting season comes they will go to get their work done in the village. These workers also consider to the modern industrial sector as insecure. Thus, affect to high rate of the absenteeism in the industrial sector.

According to the Labour Investigation Committee (1946), there were many factors that caused the absenteeism of the industrial workers. The Commission discovered many factors which affects the absenteeism in Indian industries. These factors are:

- **Sickness and low vitality:** The committee revealed that sickness/illness is most significant reason for absenteeism in majority of the Industry. Epidemics and endemics like diarrhea, tuberculosis, typhoid and malaria always break out in severe form in most industrial areas. The poor health condition of the Indian workers makes them vulnerable

to all such diseases and poor housing and unsanitary conditions of living increase the problem. Though, the Commission has been observed that the rate of absenteeism among the female workers is higher than their male counterparts.

- **Means of Transport:** The Commission has revealed that the transportation facility also play pivotal contribute the absenteeism of the employees in the establishments. It has been expressed that, the rate of absenteeism is much higher in the factories where facilities of transportation are not easily available in contrast to those where such facilities are easily available.
- **Hours of work:** The lengthy hours of job and performance also affect the workers' capacity and consequently their illness and absenteeism rate are increased.
- **Nightshift:** It has also been revealed that there is a higher percentage of absenteeism during the third shift (nightshift) than in the first or second (day shifts), due to the higher displeasure of work during the night-time.
- **Rural exodus:** The committee also revealed that probably the most dominating reason of absenteeism is the constant urge of rural exodus. It has been observed that the employees go back to their native place at the time of harvesting and sowing the crops. It enhance the percentage of absenteeism in industries.
- **Accident:** Accidents in factories depends upon the type of work/activities to be done by the employee and his capacity for performing that work. In the matter of hazardous type of work, the accidents occur more regularly which lead to greater rate of absenteeism.
- **Social and religious Function:** It has been observed that employees become absent from their job on occasions of religious and social functions. As the employees like to be with their families on such programs and occasions, they go back to their native place to join for short periods.
- **Drinking Alcohol and amusement:** The Labor Investigation committee mentioned that drinking alcohol and entertainment/amusements are also reasons for absenteeism. As drinking alcohol and amusements in the late night hours make it difficult for the employee to reach in time on their duties. They like to remain absent rather than reaching late since they know that *badli* workers will be replaced for them, if they are late.
- **After Pay-Day:** The Labor Investigation committee reported that the rate of absenteeism is relatively higher immediately after the pay-day because they get their money, they think like having a great time or back to their native to make shopping for the family members and to meet them, so the absenteeism is greater after they got paid.
- **Nature of work:** the absenteeism percent or rate is also troubled by the nature of work. Prof. William explained that absenteeism happens because employees are not use to the factory environment and factory discipline or work culture. In different words, absenteeism happens due to the nature of work in factories is distinct from that for which

the worker is accustomed. Therefore, when they come to work in the industry, they feel different, this new circumstances make them uncomfortable and uneasy, so lead to greater percentage of absenteeism of the workers of industry.

- **Other causes:** The above mentioned reasons which aggravate the absenteeism in the factories are pointed out in a nutshell by the Labor Commission. Though, there can be other factors which influence the rate of absenteeism in industrial sector. These factors are: a) personal Factors and b) workplace factors.

**Personal factor:** The personal factor can be divided into other sub-factors, these are:

- **Personal Attitude:** Every employee has a unique and different attitude. The worker with strong workplace ethics and commitment will obey and respect their assignment and recognize the contribution they make to their factory. This kind of employees will not involve themselves in taking unauthorized leave. On the other hand, workers with minimum or no work ethics are undisciplined and have lot of behavioral problems. Because, they feel no responsibility towards the enterprise, the habit of absenteeism inculcates easily to them.
- **Age:** Younger employees are generally restless and like to shoulder responsibilities. They wish to spend quality time with their friends and enjoy the work, rather than being confine with work responsibility. This habit of not taking responsibilities often leads them to take unauthorized leave, as they are not enjoying their time at office. With the increase in age, people gain knowledge, experience, wisdom and maturity, which make them focused and responsible. But the monotony in work often leads them to a boring situation result in absenteeism.
- **Seniority:** Workers, who have been working with the industry for a long duration of time are accommodated with the working environment and with the work, therefore, they find no factor to be absent without permission. On the contrary, new employees are more prone to taking leaves to refresh themselves.
- **Gender:** Generally Women do a balancing act by shuffling their time between work life and family life. Family, being their highest priority, they don't think a single time before taking a step towards absenteeism.

### **Workplace Factors**

- **Stress:** The work pressure most of the times make the employees life difficult. This converted in increased levels of tension and stress. The employees then find the peace of mind by staying away from work.

- **Work Routine:** Doing the same work over a long period of time can make a person monotonous. The employees find the work they are performing as boring. They therefore, choose off from the work to do something interesting other than the routine work.
- **Job Satisfaction:** If workers do not find their work worth full and challenging, dissatisfaction arises in. That increases more absenteeism in the workplace.

### **Effect of Absenteeism:**

The impact of remaining absent of the workers from the work place negatively effect to the employers, the production cost of the factory is enhanced due to the absent of the employees by employing extra casual workers in order to mitigate the absence of absentee.

The impact of absenteeism in the workplace is directly related to decreased productivity. The industry, than try to cover up the cost of absenteeism by employing temporary employees and by paying overtime. Therefore, the cost of the production of the industry is increased as the result they hike the price of the commodity, so the customers and consumers have to pay more price for the products. Though, the employees themselves are also affected by the absenteeism because their earnings is reduced according to the principle of “no work no pay”, their standard of living decreased. Thus, the problem of absenteeism negatively affects the employers and the employees both, and consumers as well. Ultimately, it can be adverse affect to the growth and progress of the economy in the country. Thus, all these give rises to many industrial labor and social problems.

### **Management Intervention in the Absenteeism of Employee:**

On the basis of the above analysis, it can be concluded that absenteeism of employees in the company adversely affect the employer, employees and the consumer. That ultimately led to social and economic stagnation of the society. Professional managers with their expertise in dealing with such situation can play very important role in reducing absenteeism in the industry. Following social work approaches can be effectively used in industries for improving the working condition in the factory -

- Using case work method for habitual absentees
- Using group work method and make the group of absentees to work for them
- Home Visit to the employees
- Providing adequate wages
- Protection from accident and sickness
- Providing facilities for obtaining leave for rest
- Suitable housing facilities

- Creating a sense of responsibility in workers towards industry
- Workers participation in the management of industry
- Providing incentives and linking wages with the performance
- Provide adequate transportation facilities
- Empathetic attitude towards absentees
- Besides, an affectionate and mild behaviour (Human Touch) of the employer will be helpful in reducing the rate of absenteeism.

**Conclusion-** If the above provision are provided to employees, the absenteeism of the workers will be decreased and in return the standard of living of the workers is increased and in return the productivity efficiency of the workers also increase, in contrast the cost of the production is decreased. So the employers can earn maximum profits and the industrial peace and industrial harmony take place in the industry.

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