

Modern hygienic industrial canteen amenity: A change factor for healthy physical work environment of the work force in Indian industrial units

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ABSTRACT

Physical Working environment influences to a greater extent of the health of the workers. Hygienic environment is an important requisite for the maintenance of good health. The term ‘hygiene’ includes not only the material environment but also personal hygiene. The importance of the personal hygiene should continually be brought home to the industrial workers. The pre-employment interview with the doctor, nurse or welfare officer gives an opportunity for hints on personal hygiene. All the employees in a factory should become health-minded as Human Resources (HR) Capital plays a very crucial role in the growth and prosperity of any industry. The fundamental conditions of a healthy working environment must be maintained in every factory. In this connection good canteen assumes an importance, in keeping the air fresh and free from germs. The main purpose of this study is to study work environment of the workforce and its impact on the employees’ hygiene and to know the modern hygienic canteen facility as welfare amenity being provided by selected Indian Industrial Units. The study may help to the policy makers like management, trade unions, Government to improve the existing state of affairs mainly by emphasizing on the amenities and welfare of the employees in corporate sectors.

Key words: Hygiene, Workforce, Work Environment, Motivation, Canteen.

INTRODUCTION

Human Resources (H R) Capital plays a very crucial role in the growth and prosperity of any industry. The workers can be motivated and their productivity can be increased only when a conducive and hygienic physical work environment is created and adequate Canteen facility is provided by the management irrespective of the sector. The subject of Canteen facility is thus fairly wide and is not limited to any one country, one region, on sector, one industry or occupation. Its scope has been described by different writers in different perspectives. But the common objective of canteen facility is to provide quality food stuff at reasonable price to the workers.

Canteen provision is neither philanthropy nor charity. It is a method of creating more satisfactory working conditions for men and women employed in an industry. It is quoted that by Narayana Murty (2000) in his work Labour Welfare Measures in Indian Industrial Organizations that the welfare measure would greatly reduce turnover and absenteeism among workers and improves workers efficiency to a greater extent and also create a permanent settled labor force by making service attractive to the labor. A canteen can help in improving the morale of the workers further, the availability of food stuff within the factory areas reduces the botheration and saves time of the workers. (Report of the Bombay Textiles Labor Enquiry Committee, 1953, P: 166).

The high rate of absenteeism and turnover in Indian Industries is indicative of the lack of commitment on the part of the workers, for they want to escape from their environment whenever possible. Bigger undertakings like private and public sectors have provided modern and hygienic canteens as compared with co-operative sector. But in some organizations the management passes on the responsibility of running the canteens to the contractors. Similarly the managements of public and private sector units feel that the Labor Welfare is their social responsibility. So, the representatives of the both workers and management make the canteen facility more attractive to the workers.

Objectives of the Study

1. To Study work environment of the workforce and its impact on the employees’ hygiene,
2. To Know the modern hygienic canteen facility as welfare amenity being provided by selected Indian Industrial Units, and
3. To make appropriate suggestions to policy makers for the improvement of hygienic canteen facility in order to maintain healthy work environment of workforce in selected Indian Industrial Units.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Canteen is a very important facility for the workers through which a better standard of food and refreshments can be obtained, when compare to the

make shift hotels that spring up around factories. Moreover, through these canteens wholesome food and refreshments can be provided to the workers at reasonable prices so as to make available to them a balanced and hygienic food. This is likely to improve their health and efficiency. Canteens also serve as places where workers can meet informally and refresh themselves by a relaxing conversation. The canteens are also instruments of social change, as the workers belonging to different religions and castes will have to sit at the same tables and take their food. Thus, a canteen can help in improving the morale of the employees. Further, the availability of the food stuffs within the factory area reduces botheration and saves time of the workers; otherwise they will have to go out of the factory. The review of the literature has been done in order to assess the extent and quality of Hygienic Canteen facility to employees provided by various organizations in various industries. There have been a number of studies conducted so far in this area. However, a few studies of importance have been presented here.

1. Rizwana Ansari (2011) found out in her study physical environment and employee industrial safety, a remarkable improvement of employee performance. It is found that one fourth of the employees in public sector units are dissatisfied with the provision of safety, health amenities and canteen facilities to the workforce.
2. Maja Djikic (2008) in his study on physical environment an expanded model of job satisfaction concludes with positive correlation. The purpose of the study was to examine the effect of perceived physical work environment on job satisfaction.
3. Kudchedkar (2008) differentiates between the labour welfare activities and the personnel functions and gives some suggestions for better working and living standards.
4. Morris (2008) describes industrial history of Bombay and gives the growth of labour force, work regulation, wages, discipline, trade unions and arbitration between 1854 to 1917 in the Cotton Mills of Bombay (India). It is found that the Bombay Mills Association Voluntarily appointed personal officers to look into the matters on safety, welfare, canteen, health and other personnel functions.
5. Saxena (2000) gives socio-economic background of workers in the five selected units in Meerut district and discussed promotion policies, training, transfers, welfare measures, bonus, remuneration and the functioning of the

trade unions. It is found that the personnel policies on promotion, training, internal mobility, wage and welfare includes canteen are created healthy work environment in the units in Meerut (India).

6. Narayana Murty (2000) has studied socio-economic profile of the workforce and employee welfare activities in Indian Industrial Organizations. It is found that majority of the Employees in Co-operate Sector Units are satisfied with the existing welfare, canteen, and health facilities.

All these studies help the management, unions and governments to improve the existing state of affairs mainly by emphasizing on functional areas of Human Resources Management and existing welfare amenities in a single unit or two units or more with a comparative study in the same sector like private or public or co-operative. There have been very few comprehensive studies in the field of work environment and less concentration on the provision of welfare facilities and amenities provided by the Government and the managements of the undertakings as well. However, surprisingly, very few attempts have been made by the researchers to study the extent of Canteen facility to the employees of any unit. The study shows the gap and also furnishes the reasons between the practice and precept.

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

The Coastal Districts of Andhra Pradesh, India have been deliberately chosen in data collection and also to obtain meaningful insights. The provision of Canteen laid down in the Factories Act, 1948 are common to all the public, private and co-operative sectors. The public sector undertakings will think to implement them seriously as they are bound by it. The private sector seeks to implement the measures up to the level as exactly how they are incorporated in laws. They do not beyond what the enactment provide for. Finally the co-operative sector seeks to implement the provisions at a minimum level thinking that the burden of implementation falls on both the management and the workers. Keeping these in view, some industrial units in Andhra Pradesh, India are selected for field study.

The study is conducted by using both analytical and descriptive type of methodology. The study depends on primary and secondary data. By using Pilot Study, the filled up Questionnaires are collected from 290 (130 in Private Sector Unit and 160 in Public Sector Unit) respondents. Based on the pilot study, the questionnaire is modified suitably to elicit response from the sample group. Primary data were

collected on the basis of stratified random sample survey of employees. The views of the workers are elicited by way of well-structured Questionnaire, Interviews, Discussions, and Observations. The Secondary data were collected from Journals, Magazines, Publications, Reports, Books, Dailies, Periodicals, Articles, Research Papers, Websites, Company Publications, Manuals and Booklets. The processing, classification, tabulation and interpretation and analysis of data are done with the help of Statistical and Mathematical Techniques. These have been employed depending on the nature of the data collected from the respondents.

Modern Hygienic Canteen Facility- An Analysis:

The canteens are also instruments of social change, as the workers belonging to different religions and castes will have to sit at the same tables and take their food. In this context the Bombay Textiles Labor Enquiry Committee observed. "Besides good lighting and ventilation, adequate dining accommodation is also an essential requirement for the workers. It is necessary that such accommodation should be more ample for night workers than for day workers because it is usually not possible at night to go outside the company premises for that purpose."

The view of ILO in this connection is that the "Canteen movement must be accepted by the State as a definite changes and running of canteens must be accepted by the employers as a national investment. The object of the canteen was laid down very clearly by the Labor Investigation Committee in its report when it said "to introduce an element of nutritional balance into the otherwise deficient unbalanced dietary of the workers, to provide cheap and clean food and an opportunity to relax in comfort near the place of work, to save time and trouble to workers on account of exhausting journey to end from work after long hours in factory and to enable them to surmount the difficulties experienced in obtaining meals of foodstuffs are imperative of factory management."

Section 46(1) of the Factories Act, 1948, provides that the "The State Government may make rules requiring that in any specified factory wherein more than 250 workers are ordinarily employed, a canteen or canteens will be provided and maintained by the occupier for the use of the workers." Sub section (2) of the same section also empowers the State Government to provide for the standards in respect of construction, accommodation, furniture and other equipment of the canteen and the food stuffs to be served therein and the charges which may be made thereof".

DISCUSSIONS AND RESULTS

Public Sector Unit provided a full pledged canteen with all modern facilities like proper ventilation, adequate number of fans, neatness and cleanliness. The canteen is run on 'no profit no loss' basis. The cost of power, fuel, furniture utensils are borne by the management of Public Sector Unit. This canteen will cater to the needs of the employees in each shift. The canteen is working under the supervision of Personnel Officer (Welfare- Canteen) and a canteen committee comprising of the representatives of workmen nominated by the management of Public Sector Unit. The rates of the items in the canteen have been fixed by the management in consultation with the trade union leaders. The Personnel officer (Welfare – Canteen) sells the tokens to the workers from first to tenth of every month and there is also a credit facility available to the workers.

Price level of items in modern hygienic canteens:

The canteens are located in the midst at the yard of the factory with an easy access to all workmen. And there is a separated canteen also available to the supervisors, officers and managers of Public Sector Unit. It is observed that all the canteens in Public Sector Unit look very neat at all times. Breakfast and Lunch are served at the canteen for 'A' (6 am to 2 pm) and 'G' (8 am to 4 pm) shift employees, dinner is served for 'B'(2 pm to 10 pm) shift employees. Tea is also served twice during the shift time at the respective working spots. For 'B' shift employees along with tea, snacks are also supplied at subsidized price. The management of Private Sector Unit is spending huge amount per year for the running of the canteen. Canteen is supervised by an Assistant Welfare Officer and Canteen Manager.

The list of items which are available in canteen with price are placed in the canteen and have been fixed by the management in consultation with the office bearers of the recognized union. The canteen also provides meal consist of cooked rice, vegetable curry, sambar, rasam, pickles, (Chutney), dall and curd. In addition to the canteen there is also one tea stall, which works round the clock to supply tea and snacks.

Besides, the various stated purposes of the canteen provision, the objective of the industrial canteen is to provide food to the employees at minimum Price. The Indian worker still belongs to the low income group and cannot afford to spend much on his food in the canteen through his/her position is gradually improving, and in not distant future, the skilled worker at least would be classified

as belonging to middle class if not to the upper middle class.

Frequency of visit to modern hygienic canteens by the workers: Table 1 shows the data on the extent to which the workers are utilizing the canteen facilities available in the selected units. It is evident from the information that in these units, about half of the

workers are frequent visitors to the canteen. However, it is obvious that 44.14 percent of the workers are not motivated to visit the canteen frequently. They are going to the canteen only now and then and only a small and negligible portion of the workers (2.41 percent) never visited the canteen for utilizing canteen facility in their organizations.

Table.1.Frequency of visits to canteen in selected units

Opinion		Frequently	Sometimes	Never	Total	
Public Sector Unit	Service Wise (Years)	1-10	22 (44.00)	26 (52.00)	02 (4.00)	50 (100.00)
		11-20	33 (44.00)	39 (52.00)	03 (4.00)	75 (100.00)
		Above 20	14 (42.86)	18 (51.43)	02 (5.71)	35 (100.00)
	Native Background	Rural	39 (43.33)	47 (52.22)	04(4.45)	90 (100.00)
		Urban	31 (44.28)	26 (37.14)	03 (4.28)	70 (100.00)
	Type of Employee	Skilled	49 (43.75)	58 (51.79)	05 (4.46)	112 (100.00)
		Unskilled	21 (43.75)	25 (52.08)	02 (4.17)	48 (100.00)
Total		70 (43.75)	83 (51.88)	07 (4.37)	160 (100.00)	
Private Sector Unit	Service Wise (Years)	1-10	18 (66.67)	09 (33.33)	-	27 (100.00)
		11-20	45 (65.20)	24 (34.80)	-	69 (100.00)
		Above 20	22 (64.70)	12 (35.30)	-	34 (100.00)
	Native Background	Rural	78 (65.00)	42 (35.00)	-	120 (100.00)
		Urban	07 (70.00)	03 (30.00)	-	10 (100.00)
	Type of Employee	Skilled	39 (65.00)	21 (35.00)	-	60 (100.00)
		Unskilled	46 (65.70)	24 (34.30)	-	70 (100.00)
Total		85 (65.38)	45 (34.62)	-	130 (100.00)	

Note: Figures in parentheses are Percentages

Unit wise analysis shows that in case of Public Sector Unit, 43.75 percent of the workers are frequent visitors to the canteen, about half of the workers are not visit the canteen frequently. When we observe the service wise and native background wise data, it is clear from the table that the workers in the service group of 1-20 years and urban background and making best utilization of the canteen facility, while the workers with more than 20 years of service and rural background were making less utilization of the canteen. And a negligible percentage of the workers never visited the canteen in Public Sector Unit.

In Private Sector Unit, about two-third of the workers are frequent visitors to the canteen and the rest of the workers are not habituated to visit the canteen frequently. They are going to the canteen only now and then. When we make service-wise analysis, it can be observed from the table that the workers in the service-group of 11-20 years are making best use of the canteen. It is also evident that the urban workers are more frequent visitors of the canteen in Private Sector Unit.

It is found from the foregoing discussion that an overwhelming majority of the respondents are frequent visitors to the canteen in Private Sector Unit than that of the Public Sector Unit. It is interesting to note that the workers in the service of 11-20 years are making best utilization of the canteen facility, while

the workers with more than 20 years of service were making less visits of the canteen and the urban workers are more frequent visitors of the canteen in the selected units of the study.

Quality of Items in the Modern Hygienic Canteens: Table2 gives the information on the opinion of the respondents on the quality of items in canteen in the selected units. It is obvious from the information that half of the workers in the selected units of the study felt that the quality of the items in their canteen was good and 42.90 percent of them in these units felt satisfactory about the quality of the items in their canteens.

Unit wise data shows that in case of in Public Sector Unit 43.75 percent of the workers expressed good opinion and 48.12 percent of the workers felt that the quality of items in the canteen was satisfactory. However, 4.38 percent of them did not say anything and 3.57 percent of them expressed their opinion on the quality of items in canteen was poor. When we make service – wise analysis it is clear from the data that 44 percent of the workers in the service group of 1-20 years and 42.86 percent of the workers in the service group of above 20 years had expressed good opinion on the quality of items of canteen.

In Private Sector Unit 57.69 percent of the workers felt that the quality of the items in canteen was good. It is obvious from the data that 36.15

percent of the workers felt that the quality of the items in the canteen was satisfactory and the negligible percentage of them had negative opinion on the quality of items in modern Canteen in Private Sector Unit. On the whole, it is found that the majority of the workers in the service group of 1-10 years, 11-20

years and urban background had positive opinion on the quality of items which are available in their respective canteens. It is very interesting to note that on the whole or individual unit-wise less than 4.83 percent of the workers felt that the quality of items in their canteen was poor.

Table.2.Respondents’ opinion on quality of items in canteen in selected units

Opinion		Good	Satisfactory	Poor	Not Aware	Total	
Public Sector Unit	Service Wise (Years)	1-10	22 (44.00)	24(48.00)	02 (4.00)	02 (4.00)	50(100.00)
		11-20	33 (44.00)	36 (48.00)	03 (4.00)	03 (4.00)	75 (100.00)
		Above 20	14 (42.86)	17 (48.57)	01 (2.86)	02 (5.71)	35 (100.00)
	Native Background	Rural	39 (43.33)	43 (47.77)	04 (4.45)	04 (4.45)	90 (100.00)
		Urban	31 (44.28)	34 (48.57)	02 (2.86)	03 (4.29)	70 (100.00)
	Type of Employee	Skilled	49 (43.75)	54 (48.21)	04 (3.57)	05 (4.47)	112 (100.00)
		Unskilled	21 (43.75)	23 (47.91)	02 (4.17)	02 (4.17)	48 (100.00)
	Total		70 (43.75)	77 (48.12)	06 (3.75)	07 (4.38)	160 (100.00)
	Private Sector Unit	Service Wise (Years)	1-10	16 (59.25)	10 (37.00)	01(3.75)	-
11-20			40 (58.00)	25 (36.25)	04(5.75)	-	69(100.00)
Above 20			19 (55.90)	12 (35.30)	03 (8.80)	-	34(100.00)
Native Background		Rural	69 (57.50)	43 (35.85)	08 (6.65)	-	120 (100.00)
		Urban	06 (60.00)	04 (40.00)	-	-	10 (100.00)
Type of Employee		Skilled	35 (58.35)	22 (36.65)	03 (5.00)	-	60 (100.00)
		Unskilled	40 (57.15)	25 (35.70)	05 (7.15)	-	70 (100.00)
Total		75 (57.69)	47 (36.15)	08 (06.16)	-	130 (100.00)	

Note: Figures in parentheses are Percentages

Quality of services in the modern hygienic canteens: Quick supply refers to speediness of service. The worker normally would like to take his lunch in about 15 minutes and rest for some time before he resumes work for the second half of his shift. Speedy meal and service depend on the type of the canteen services practiced, the number of staff in the canteen, the equipment available and other

resources. Table3 shows the data on the workers’ opinion on the supply of items in the canteen of the selected units for the study. It is evident from the Table that on the whole about half-of the workers felt that the service in the canteen was satisfactory. However, it is also clear from the data that 4.83 percent of the workers felt that the service in their canteens was poor.

Table 3: Respondents’ opinion on services in canteen in selected units

Opinion		Good	Satisfactory	Poor	Not Aware	Total	
Public Sector Unit	Service Wise (Years)	1-10	22 (44.00)	24 (48.00)	02 (4.00)	02 (4.00)	50 (100.00)
		11-20	33 (44.00)	36 (48.00)	03 (4.00)	03 (4.00)	75 (100.00)
		Above 20	14 (42.86)	17 (48.57)	01 (2.86)	02 (5.71)	35 (100.00)
	Native Background	Rural	39 (43.33)	43 (47.77)	04 (4.45)	04 (4.45)	90 (100.00)
		Urban	31 (44.28)	34 (48.57)	02 (2.86)	03 (4.29)	70 (100.00)
	Type of Employee	Skilled	49 (43.75)	54 (48.21)	04 (3.57)	05 (4.47)	112 (100.00)
		Unskilled	21 (43.75)	23 (47.91)	02 (4.17)	02 (4.17)	48 (100.00)
	Total		70 (43.75)	77 (48.12)	06 (3.75)	07 (4.38)	160 (100.00)
	Private Sector Unit	Service Wise (Years)	1-10	11 (40.75)	15 (55.55)	01(03.70)	-
11-20			27 (39.15)	37 (53.60)	05(07.25)	-	69 (100.00)
Above 20			14 (41.20)	18 (52.95)	02(05.85)	-	34 (100.00)
Native Background		Rural	48 (40.00)	65 (54.15)	07(05.85)	-	120(100.00)
		Urban	04(40.00)	05(50.00)	01(10.00)	-	10(100.00)
Type of Employee		Skilled	24(40.00)	32(53.35)	04(06.65)	-	60(100.00)
		Unskilled	28(40.00)	38(54.30)	04(05.70)	-	70(100.00)
Total		52 (40.00)	70(53.84)	08 (6.16)	-	130(100.00)	

Note: Figures in parentheses are Percentages

The analysis on unit-wise indicates that in case of Public Sector Unit 43.75 percent of the workers had good opinion, 48.12 percentage of them satisfied with

the service available in canteen and a very low percent of the workers viewed on the services available in canteen was poor and only 4.38 percent of them did

not say anything on the service in the Canteen. In Private Sector Unit, about more than half-of the workers felt that the service in the canteen was satisfactory, whereas 6.16 percent of the workers felt that the service in the canteen was poor.

It is found that more than 93 percent of the workers in the Selected Industrial units were satisfied with the quality of canteen services. It is observed that the services in Private Sector Unit canteen as controlled by canteen committee and labor officer, and Public Sector Unit canteen was controlled by the Canteen Committee and Senior Personnel officer.

Cleanliness in modern hygienic canteens: The canteen should be installed in a clean and hygienic place and its kitchen, counter as well as the dining rooms. The canteen area should be maintained in clean and health conditions, free from the files, dust and dirt. The Computed Data shows the information on workers' opinion on the sanitation and cleanliness in their respective canteens of the selected units. It is evident from the data that 63.45 percent of the workers on an average in the industrial units, felt that the cleanliness in their canteens was good, about 30.68 percent of the workers opined that the cleanliness in their canteens was satisfactory and only less than 3.79 percent of them felt dissatisfied with the cleanliness in the canteens of the selected units for the study.

Unit-wise data reveals that in case of Public Sector Unit 48.12 percent of the workers felt that the cleanliness and sanitation in canteen was good, about 43.75 percent of them had expressed satisfactory opinion and 3.75 percent of the workers in did not say anything about the sanitation conditions in their canteen. However, a very low percentage of the workers felt dissatisfied with the cleanliness in the Public Sector Unit canteen. In Private Sector Unit about four fifths of the workers felt that the cleanliness in Private Sector Unit canteen was good. It is also interesting to note that only an insignificant portion of the workers felt dissatisfied with the cleanliness in the canteen.

Major Findings of the Study

1. It is found that the bigger organization in the private sector and public sector units are financially sound and they are able to provide the clean and hygienic food items to their worker at minimum price in the Canteens in Indian Industrial Organizations.
2. It is found that the Indian workers in the selected units expressed their satisfaction and

the prices are reasonably charged in the hygienic canteens.

3. It is found that an overwhelming majority of the respondents are frequent visitors to their hygienic canteen in Private Sector Unit than that of the Public Sector Unit.
4. It is found from the foregoing analysis that half-of the workers in the selected unit felt that the quality of items in the canteen was good. It is also found that an insignificant percentage of the respondents had poor opinion on the quality of items in their canteen.
5. It is found that an average earning in Indian Industrial worker is not in a position to take his/her food items with quality in his house as compared with the items in their canteens at their work spots.
6. It is found that more than 93 percent of the Indian Industrial workers in were satisfied with the service in the canteen.
7. It is also found that the majority of the Indian Industrial workers were satisfied with the cleanliness and sanitation in their canteens.

Suggestions for the improvement of Canteen for Healthy Physical Work Environment of the Workforce:

1. It is suggested that the management of private and public sector units can provide the clean and hygienic food items to their worker at minimum price in their canteens and to mitigate the dissatisfied workers in Indian Industrial Units.
2. It is suggested that the management of private and public sector units may maintain the same price for food items in the Canteen in future also through subsidy created by the management of Industrial units.
3. It is suggested that the management of private and public sector units may create the habit of visits in the minds of employees to visit canteen and to take their food in the canteen in order to save their productivity time on the work-spot and to get some relax.
4. It is suggested that the management of private and public sector units may take steps to improve the services in their canteen in speedy and quick manner.
5. It is suggested that management of Public Sector Unit should maintain cleanliness and to establish good sanitation at the canteen as a part of the welfare and health of workmen in India.

6. It is suggested that the managements of Indian Industrial Units should maintain high quality of items and to mitigate the rest of the dissatisfied workers also.

Scope for Further Research

The study can be extended to the related business Information Technology Export Services (ITES) and Business Process Outsourcing industry (BPO). Leadership and administration styles are to be studied as the employees are lagging behind in these qualities in India and similar studies can be conducted on other type of industries. Society comprises of the workers, management, Government and general public. The present study is of much relevance from the point of view of the society. The Central and State Government are enabling several labor legislations and adopted a policy to create better working of industrial canteen to the workers.

CONCLUSION

On the basis of the results obtained in the study, it is observed that the canteen in the units prevailing have deep impact on workers psychology and the presence of such factors always motivate the workers towards their job in a laudable manner. Hence, it is concluded that the workers employed are satisfied with their job and their positive approach towards the management has been responsible for the overall growth of in the Indian corporate sector. Besides, it has also been found that the concept of canteen facility assumes immense importance in the present business scenario which requires highly skilled and competent human resources for the transformation of traditional economies into the modern and industrial economies.

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