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**“A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF VARIOUS WELFARE  
PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES ORGANIZED BY  
MAHARASHTRA LABOUR WELFARE BOARD”**

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# “A Critical Analysis of Various Welfare Programs and Activities Organized By Maharashtra Labour Welfare Board”

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**Abstract –***Maharashtra State is a leading state in India, which is implementing the Labour Welfare Scheme, out of the workplace for the benefit of workers and their families.*

*In 1938 then Mumbai State Government started a first Labour Welfare Centre at Delisle Road, presently known as N. M. Joshi Marg. The welfare facilities were made available in the locality where the workers were residing in majority, with an aim to motivate workers to desist from the addictions like alcohol, tobacco and gambling. It was also aimed at to encourage spending their leisure time in a proper manner and in a constructive way. It was also intended that workers shall avail an opportunity to develop themselves socially and culturally. These Welfare Centres were intended to start libraries, indoor and outdoor games and entertainment programs.*

**Keywords:** Welfare Programmes, Government, Labour

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## INTRODUCTION

In 1946, the Mumbai State Government announced that, the efforts for all round development should not be restricted to government. The trade unions, employers and local organizations should also take up this cause. The government further stated that the nation would progress with the citizens' enriched character, continuous struggle and desire to sacrifice. The legislations enacted by the government will help this progress but there is no alternative for the development through self-dependency.

In June 1953, Mumbai Labour Welfare Act was enacted and the Mumbai labour welfare board with a view to initiate an idea of composite labour welfare was established. The labour welfare fund was also established as per the Mumbai Labour Welfare Fund Act, 1953. Initially this act was restricted to important labour colonies.

The board commissioned the Labour Welfare Scheme, outside the work places for the workers and their families. Mumbai Labour Welfare Board was renamed as Maharashtra Labour Welfare Board after the formation of Maharashtra State on 1st May 1960. The government had already handed over the 54 Labour

Welfare Centres to the independent statutory board. i.e. Mumbai Labour Welfare Board.

The Government enacted Mumbai Labour Welfare Fund Act 1953 a first important act related to labour welfare in June 1953. The Responsibility was entrusted to autonomous board (then Mumbai labour welfare board) of workers employers and government i.e. to present Maharashtra Labour Welfare Board.

The State Government appoints the representatives of employees, employers and women and independent members on this board. The board consists of 26 members including a chairman. The members include 6 representatives and 8 independent representatives and 8 independent representatives. The tenure of the board is of 3 years. The board meets at least once in three months. The chairman of the board presides over the meetings.

The government of Maharashtra has appointed principal secretary of finance department or his representative and principal secretary of labour department or his representative as the ex-officio members on the board by government resolution of

7<sup>th</sup> January 2002 of its industries, energy and labour department.

Mumbai, Thane, Pune, Nasik, Aurangabad, Akola and Nagpur are the 7 divisions created under the Mumbai Central office. The board administration effectively functions by these divisions.

Welfare commissioner is the chief executive officer of the board and he discharges the responsibility of implementing the various welfare programs of the board. The welfare commissioner implements all the administrative and financial decisions of the boards.

At the central office level, the work has been divided as per administrative convenience as program planning department, general administration department, accounts and auditing department, funds collection department, construction department, secretarial department, publicity and public relations department.

A senior official has been appointed for each of these departments. For every division level have been appointed under the central office to suit the administrative convenience 2 or 3 group officers are under the jurisdiction of each division and total of 18 group offices fall under the jurisdiction of this 7 divisional offices. Under the preview of each group office 12 to 18 labour welfare centres have been included and various welfare programs are being implemented by this welfare centres.

Hutatma Babu Genu Mumbai Girni Kamgar Kreedha Bhavan at Mumbai and Kamgar Kalyan Bhavan, Raje Raghuji Nagar, Nagpur are two important multipurpose projects at the board. Newly started Kamgar Kalyan Bhavan, Sahakar Nagar Pune is also included in multipurpose projects of the board.

The labour welfare centres are open from 8.00am to 8.30pm. The hours between mornings 11.00am to evening 5.00pm are reserved for the programs only for women and children. The centre is open for all besides these hours. The centres are closed on public holidays, 2nd and 4th Saturdays and Sundays.

A Centre Program Advisory Committee is appointed for the period of 2 years for each labour welfare centre. This committee includes respectable persons like the Legal Professionals, Doctors, Teachers, the Active Social Workers and Sports Activists, the best workers and women, from the vicinity of the centres.

Labour Welfare Officer as a ex-officer, chairman and centre officer as secretary looks after the functions of this advisory committee. Once in every three months, the meeting is organized in the presence of concerned labour welfare officer to decide about the welfare activities and programs to be organized in the centre as per the rules and regulation of the board.

## **STATE AND DIVISION LEVEL PROGRAMMES**

- State level of Drama competition for Industrial and occupational workers.
- Divisional Drama/Acting training workshop and camps for Industrial and occupational workers.
- Felicitation of Industrial and occupational workers drama artists on the occasion of International Drama Day.
- State level Sahitya Sammelan (literature gathering) for Industrial and occupational workers.
- Literature competition for Industrial and occupational workers.
- Felicitation of Industrial and occupational workers couples who have undertaken family planning.
- State level Bhajan competition for Industrial and occupational workers.
- State level residential Bhajan training camp for Industrial and occupational workers.

## **EVALUATION OF PERFORMANCE OF MLWB**

Over the period of more than 60 years since its inception, constituted under 'Bombay Labour Welfare Fund Act, 1953 which was passed in June 1953, Maharashtra Labour Welfare Board, has very successfully achieved objective of promoting social and cultural enrichment and enlightenment of the workers and thereby achieving overall development of the workers. However, formally only organized sector workers could be beneficiaries of the welfare activities and programs, being the contributory members of Labour Welfare Fund.

Maharashtra Labour Welfare Board programmes provided opportunities to workers to develop their skills and talents in various fields such as sports, drama, Music, literature etc. Career Guidance, Investment guidance programs helped workers to plan their and their families' life.

The assistance provided to workers for the education of the children of workers and arrangements of study centres, proved helpful for the children of workers to pursue their education. The family members including wives and daughter of workers could avail the benefit of 'Sewing Classes', 'Beauty parlour Training', 'Librarian Course' etc., being run by the MLWB at the welfare centres.

The various programmes organized by MLWB in the memory of great national leaders also instilled in the workers, spirit of patriotism and sense of social

responsibility. The 'Best Worker Award' (Gunwant Kamgar

Puraskar Yojana) and 'Ideal Worker Award' (Kamgar Bhushan Puraskar) schemes achieved great success in motivating workers to lead their life as responsible citizens.

The drama festivals organized by MLWB, is a noteworthy contribution of MLWB to Drama theatre, which provided great Drama and Film artists to Marathi drama and theatre. Ms. Rohini Hattangadi, Ms. Nirmali Sawant, Ms. Amita Khopkar, Mr. Mohan Joshi, Mr. Ramesh Bhatkar, Mr. Ganesh Solanki are the renowned artists, who have progressed from Drama activities of MLWB.

In the field of sports, Mr. Mahendra Chiplunkar – Table Tennis, Mr. Sadanand Shetye – Kabaddi, Mr. Jaya Shetty – Kabaddi, Mr. Madhu Patil- Kabaddi, Mr. Arun Kedar and Ms. Sangita Chandorkar – Carrom, Mr. Ramnath Parkar and Mr. Chandrakant Pandit – Cricket, Mr. Nagesh Poojari and Mr. Madhukar Darekar – Power Lifting, Mr. Taranath Shenoy – Swimming are few among the numerous great personalities and well-known Sportsmen who are indebted to MLWB for providing opportunity to build their career in sports and reach heights where they are today.

The Maharashtra Labour Welfare Board has also provided platform to many budding social workers and political leaders, who proved their mettle and occupied respectable political positions, such as late Dattaji Salvi, founder President of Bharatiya Kamgar Sena, Mr. Bala Nandgaokar, MLA and the major name in the list is of course present Home Minister of India Mr. Sushilkumar Shinde.

In the field of Marathi Literature, Many including Dr. Hari Narke, Mr. Datta Halsagikar, Mr. Manohar Dhote are few names which have been associated with MLWB activities due to which they have been able to reach a prestigious position.

This is the great achievement of MLWB's welfare activities and programs due to which the workers could make their life dignified and the standard of living has also been raised. Thus, the Maharashtra Labour Welfare Board's Welfare programs and activities had tremendous impact on the life of workers, in regard to social, cultural and economic development.

### **CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF PRESENT STATUS**

Maharashtra Labour welfare Board did exemplary contribution in the field of Labour welfare and the other states in the country followed the suit. The illustrative welfare activities and programs of MLWB were being appreciated until year 2000. However, post 2000, the

participation of workers started declining as the number of workers in organized sector continued to fall down since the textile mills and other industries started closing down or adopted to modernization, thereby reducing the manpower, as an aftermath of globalization and liberalization policy at central level.

Consequently, the number of contributory member workers gradually declined as also the number of participant workers in the various programs and activities. This affected the enthusiasm of the employees of MLWB, who were conducting the welfare programs. Simultaneously, the exchequer of the board also suffered due to increasing salaries of employees causing financial burden to the board.

The board also failed to provide required training to the newly recruited employees and to motivate them to undertake the responsibility of welfare programs and activities, with a commitment towards wellbeing of the workers. The board while recruiting the staff did not emphasized the need of having formal education for them, in Labour welfare.

Although, the State run 'Late N.M. Lokhande Maharashtra Institute of Labour Studies conducts the diploma and post-graduation courses in Labour Welfare. The hundreds of students possess this qualification in Labour welfare and still rendered unemployed for long time for the want of jobs. The board turned blind eye to this source to procure the qualified and trained personnel. The MLWB could have in coordination with late N. M. Lokhande Maharashtra Institute of Labour Studies, organized training and development programs to provide required training to its staff, which the board did not.

Although the board has been spending major amounts on the capital expenditure and constructions and development for last more than 10 years, the plight of the many of welfare centres is poor and lack basic amenities such as proper sitting arrangements, sufficient lighting and ventilation.

Very old premises and structures with very badly painted walls give a lacklustre look thereby fail to attract workers. The lack of motivation and commitment on the part of the employees, employed on fixed honorarium basis, do not enthusiastically try to reach out to the workers and hence Welfare centres very often carry out programs just to complete a formality. These are the observations made by the researcher and even some of the workers have also brought this to the notice of researcher.

Even the media also has been pointing to this situation very often. Hence face lifting of the welfare centres too is needed to attract the workers. In near past MLWB resorted to privatization, and entrusted

many activities such as Swimming Pool, Gymnasiums, Various training programs, to private organizations to manage, which have been trying to exploit them commercially and opened the doors to those who are not the members of the board and not the workers themselves, by charging exorbitantly.

As a result the workers are being neglected which has caused dissatisfaction among the worker members. The board's auditoriums at various places are being given on rent to private parties for functions like marriages, which have also lost cultural importance of these auditoriums. Insufficient staff at the centres has also affected the programs at the centers.

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