

Absenteeism in Construction Industry: Causes, Correlation and Remedies

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Abstract – The construction industry in India today is labor oriented i.e. it depends on the human workforce for its working. Today out of the many problems faced by the construction industry in India 'absenteeism' is one of the major problems which directly affect the productivity of any construction site. As more the magnitude of absenteeism more is the loss of productivity on site. The objective of this paper is to identify the causes of absenteeism on various sites in construction industry, their correlation and remedies. No such study has been done till date. The population for the study comprises of semi-skilled and unskilled labours from different types of sites in construction industry which were in progress, the total sample size for this study is of 126 staff (labours) from 8 sites each of various domains in civil engineering industry. The source of data collected was through questionnaire which was a close-ended questionnaire and discussion with workers. Statistical method i.e. Spearman's Rank co-efficient method is used to correlate the data as spearman's rank correlation method is used for analysis of qualitative data.

Index Term – Absenteeism, Construction Industry.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Absenteeism can be defined as the practice or habit of being an absentee and an absentee is one who habitually stays away from work. Absenteeism is a habitual pattern of absence from a duty or obligation. The construction industry in India today also is labor oriented i.e. it depends on the human workforce for its working. Today out of the many problems faced by the construction industry in India „absenteeism“ is one of the major problems which directly affect the productivity of any construction site. More the magnitude of absenteeism; more is the loss of productivity on site. There needs to be a proper study to have a check on absenteeism, its causes, types and remedies. It is often easier for the construction organizations to make arrangement to cover staffs, which are going to be off for long periods. However, employees taking odd days off here which become more problematic and can have an immediate impact. If remain unchecked, this type of absence can send out the wrong signals to colleagues who, in some jobs, are likely to have to cover for those absent. If employers fail to take action, a bugging turn mentality may emerge. Frequent absence may have serious repercussions where staff is employed in customer - facing roles or employed on construction site. The impact of absence may be most directly felt and the need to arrange cover at short notice may be

paramount. This adversely affects the progress of work and loss of resources. Thus, there is a need for such study in construction industry. Till date a lot of study has been done on absenteeism in various fields but the irony is that civil industry being the most labour oriented, no such study has been carried out on absenteeism – its causes, types and remedies. This study focuses on the absenteeism of workforce in the construction industry, along with the different types and different causes of absenteeism. This study also includes seeking out the remedial measure of absenteeism in construction sector.

2. SCOPE OF WORK

This project is about absenteeism of semi-skilled and unskilled labours on site, their causes of absenteeism. The project's focus is on comparing the causes of absenteeism faced by labours on various sites selected, bringing into picture the major causes which play a prominent role in absenteeism of labours on site.

In this project we will focus on establishing the correlation between the causes of absenteeism for the data collected from eight sites in India. Study has been done analytically and recommendations /

remedies are suggested to minimize the quantum of absenteeism.

3. RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

The research objectives of this study are as follows:-

- (i) To identify the causes of absenteeism in construction industry.
- (ii) To identify which causes play a prominent role in absenteeism and which causes are secondary.
- (iii) A comparative analysis of the causes of absenteeism of labours on various sites in civil engineering domain.
- (iv) To suggest remedial measures to reduce the rate of absenteeism in construction industry.

4. LITERATURE REVIEW

From the various literature mainly journal & conference paper studied it can be seen that a major quantum of absenteeism is observed among the semi-skilled and unskilled category of labours. Absenteeism is more prominent in lower sections of the society.

We are going to keep this approach in present project work.

5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The source of data collected was through questionnaire which is close-ended questionnaire and discussion with workers. The close-ended questionnaire was filled up by a 3 point rating system in which a rating of 0 to 3 is given to each cause of absenteeism. The cause which has a high impact on the absenteeism of labour was given 3 points and the one which had low impact was given 1 point whereas the cause which was null and void with respect to that particular labour was awarded 0 point. Statistical method i.e. Spearman's Rank co-efficient method was used to correlate the data as spearman's rank correlation method is used for analysis of qualitative data.

Causes of Absenteeism

The Royal Commission Labour observed that high absenteeism among Indian labour is due to rural orientation and their frequent urge for rural exodus. According to Acharaya "In modern industrial establishment the incidence of industrial fatigue, mal nutrition and bad working conditions aggravate that feeling for change among industrial worker and sometime impel them to visit their village home frequently for rest and relaxation."

From the literature study the general cause of absenteeism may be summarized as below: -

Maladjustment with Site / Factory

In factory the worker finds caught within unfamiliar surroundings or factory walls, he is bewildered by heavy traffic, by strangers speaking different and subjected to strict discipline and is ordered by complete strangers to do things which he cannot understand. As a result he is under constant strain, which cause him serious distress and impairs his efficiency. All these factors tend to persuade him to maintain his contacts with village.

Social and Religious Ceremonies

Social and religious ceremonies divert workers from workers to social activities. In large number of cases incidence of absenteeism due to religious ceremonies is more than due to any other reason.

Housing Conditions

Workers also experience housing difficulties. Around 95% of housing occupied by industrial workers in India is unsatisfactory for healthful habitations. This leads to loss the interest in work.

Work Fatigue

Low wages compel a worker to seek some part time job to earn some side income. This often result inconstant fatigue, which compels to remain absent for next day.

Unhealthy Working Condition

Irritating and intolerable working conditions exist in a factory. Heat, moisture, noise, vibration, bad lighting, dust fumes and overcrowding all these affect the workers' health causing him to remain absent from work a long time.

Absence of Adequate Welfare Activities

High rate absenteeism is also due to lack of adequate welfare facilities Welfare activities include clean drinking water, canteen, room shelter, rest rooms, washing and bathing facilities, first aid appliances etc.

Alcoholism

Some of the habitual drunkards spend whole of the salary during first week of each month for drinking purpose. Therefore 2 or 3 weeks after getting their salary absent themselves from their work.

Indebtness

All those workers who undergo financial hardships usually borrow money lenders at interest rate which are very high, which often cumulates to more than 11 – 12 times their actual salaries. To avoid the moneylenders they usually absent themselves from

work because they are unable to return the money in stipulated time.

Improper & Unrealistic Personnel Policies

Due to favoritism and nepotism which are in the industry the workers generally become frustrated. This also results in low efficiency, low productivity, unfavorable relationship between employee and supervisor, which in turn leads to long period of absenteeism.

Inadequate Leave Facilities

Negligence on part of the employee to provide leave facility compel the worker to fall back on ESI leave. They are entitled to 50 days leave on half on pay. Instead of going without pay the worker avail them of ESI facility.

Effects of Absenteeism on Progress of Civil Industry

It is quite evident that absenteeism is a common feature of industrial labour in India. It hinders industrial growth and its effect in two fold.

Loss to Worker

Firstly due to the habit of being absenting frequently worker's income is reduced to a large extent. It is because there is a general principle of "no work – no pay". Thus the time lost in terms of absenteeism is a loss of income to workers.

Loss to Employers

On other hand, the employer has to suffer a greater loss due to absentees. It disturbs the efficiency and discipline on site consequently, production on site is reduced. In order to meet the emergency and strikes, an additional labour force is also maintain by the industries. On certain occasions, those workers are employed who present themselves at site gates. During strikes they are adjusted in place of absent workers. Their adjustment brings serious complications because such workers do not generally prove themselves up to work. Higher absenteeism is an evil both for workers and the employers and ultimately it adversely affects the production of industries.

Loss to the Country

A major portion of India's economy depends directly and indirectly on construction sector; and construction sector in India depends mainly upon its labours.

Thus, loss to the construction industry due to absenteeism will further result in loss to the country.

6. CORELATION

The correlation was carried out based on the data collected from various sites. The sites are as follows:

- I. Bridge site (Vishwas Infra)
- II. Precast pipes and manhole covers (S S Modelling)
- III. WBM road work (Shraddha Lawns)
- IV. Crusher (Nashik Stone & Metal Supplying Company)
- V. Residential Building Site (Samraat Tropicano)
- VI. Precast Wall Site (Saideep Constructions)
- VII. Flyash Brick Manufacturing Plant (Samarth Bricks)
- VIII. Precast Cement Pole Factory (Subhdeep Cement Products)

Following is a specimen calculation of Spearman's rank co-relation coefficient for the causes of absenteeism between Precast pipes and manhole covers (S S Modelling)& WBM road work (Shraddha Lawns)

Causes	Site	
	II (X)	III (Y)
Health Problems	1.2	1.75
Festivals	2.2	1.7
Work Fatigue	0.85	1.3
Lac of Interest in Work	0.3	1.15
Lac of Interest with Site	0	0.7
Less Wages	0.45	1.25
Inadequate Leaves	0.25	0.45
Others	0.45	1.2

Site X	Site Y	Rank X	Rank y	d	d ²
0	0.7	1	2	1	1
0.25	0.45	2	1	1	1
0.3	1.15	3	3	0	0
0.45	1.2	4	4	0	0
0.45	1.25	5	5	0	0
0.85	1.3	6	6	0	0
1.2	1.75	7	7	1	1
2.2	1.7	8	8	1	1
					Σd ² =4

Spearman's rank co-relation coefficient for the causes of absenteeism between Precast pipes

and manhole covers (S S Modelling) & WBM road work (Shraddha Lawns) is 0.952

7. REMEDIES

- 1) With the knowledge of causes of absenteeism, the absenteeism can be dealt in much more effective way as directly the cause will be treated.
- 2) Absenteeism can be dealt by application of proper personnel policies as the labours directly come under the domain of Human Resource
- 3) Health problems are the major cause of absenteeism among the workers.
- 4) Seasonal and climatic changes are the reason behind the health problems of the labours
- 5) Health problems can be minimized by providing proper medical check-up camps for the labours on regular intervals.
- 6) The employer can at least provide one meal of the day which is a proper balanced meal.
- 7) Along with the weekly off some fix number of holidays can be allotted to the labours on monthly / yearly basis.
- 8) Semi-skilled and unskilled labours impart more absenteeism as compared to the skilled labours.
- 9) Absenteeism is one of the reasons of cost overrun which is rarely taken into account (loss in time and production)
- 10) Increase in productivity with reduction in time will definitely yield more profits.
- 11) Socio-economic conditions of the workers will also rise as they can have better quality of life through increased income.

CONCLUSION

This study will prove to be very useful for the construction industry in order to improve its productivity through reduction in the magnitude of absenteeism. As no such study has been done earlier in construction sector, this study can be very beneficial. The benefits gained by the companies will be in terms of increased productivity leading to increased profits. The additional expenses suffered by the construction companies in order to cover up for the absent work-force can be clearly seen by the companies and right remedial measures on time can be taken. A large amount of delay experienced by the construction companies to finish a particular work due to absenteeism of work force will be reduced as this

study will be a remedial measure for absenteeism amongst the work force.

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