

Problems of Contract Labourers in Health care Sector- An Outlook

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Abstract

Contract labour is a significant and growing form of employment. The practice of employing contract labour is observed all over the world and has been in operation since ages. This paper focuses on the study which was conducted on the problems faced by the contract labourers working in the government civil hospital of Maharashtra State in Ahmednagar District. The study was mainly carried out with the objectives to know about the working and service conditions and understanding the various aspects of contract labourers such as availability of social security schemes, welfare measures and health and safety. This paper reflects on the major findings of the study in the concerned area.

Keywords: *Contract Labour, Health Care Industry, Civil Hospital, working and service conditions, social security schemes, welfare measures, health and safety*

1. Introduction

Contract labour is a significant and growing form of

employment. The practice of employing contract labour is observed all over the world and has been in operation since ages. Contract labour generally refers to “Workers employed by or through an intermediary on work of any establishment”. Such labour can be distinguished from the direct workers in terms of employee-employer relationship and the method of wage payment. The contract workers do not have any direct relationship with the principal employer. It has a distinct way of working unlike in any other classes of labour like permanent, temporary, casual, etc. The contract system is based on triangular relationship between the user enterprises, the contractors including the sub –contractors and the worker. The establishment providing work to the contractor has no direct responsibility towards the workers appointed by the contractors. The origin of Contract labour can be traced back to the emergence of the small scale industries which found it economically unfeasible or unviable to undertake all activities of the production process themselves and therefore got some part of work done on workers hired on contract basis. In

Colonial Times, the British employers and their representatives depended on the middlemen who helped them in recruitment and control of labour mainly because they found it ribosome to deal with the diversity of cultural issues like castes/religions taboos, languages, lack of mobility etc. These middlemen and contractors were known by different names in different part of the country. The system is more prevalent in almost all types of activities in industry, agriculture and allied activities, and service sectors.

Contract Labour in India

Contract Labour has its root from time immemorial but the size of contract labour in India has significantly expanded in the post-independence period with the expansion of construction activity following substantial investment in the Plans. During the early period of industrialization, the industrial establishments were always faced with the problems of labour recruitment. Low status of factory workers, lack of labour mobility, caste and religious taboo, language, etc., were some of the problems with which most of the employers in general and British Employers or their representatives, in particular were not familiar. They were unable to solve these problems. Therefore, they had to depend on middlemen who helped them in recruitment and control of labour. These middle men or contractors were known by different names in various parts of the country.

Contract Labourers were considered as exploited section of the working class mainly due to lack of organisation on their part. Due to this, the Whitley

Commission (1860) recommended the abolition of contract labour by implication. Before 1860, in addition to the many disadvantages suffered by the contract labour, the Workman's Breach of Contract Act 1859 operated in holding them criminally responsible in the event of a breach of contract service.

Use of Contract Labour in Health Care Industry:

The health care industry is significantly different from its manufacturing counterparts. Hospital organization presents a number of unique human resources management challenges. Human resource management contributes to the creation of sound organizational climate characterized by opportunities for growth, fair distribution of work, reward and harmonious relationship. Quality care begins with HRM. Customer satisfaction is the key to retain customers likewise job satisfaction is important for keeping staff nurses on the job. Job satisfaction in staff nurses should be of great concern to any health services organization.

Recruiting and retaining the right mix of qualified personnel have always been challenges for hospitals, and these tasks have become even more difficult in recent years for a number of reasons. For one, the available workforce is shrinking as experienced workers age and as fewer young people enter health careers. The result is considerable competition for qualified nurses and other clinical professionals. This study focuses on the problems faced by the contract

labourers working in civil hospital Ahmednagar.

Findings

The purpose and incentive of any study or research is to bring out certain major findings and suggestions based on the data collected from respondents by the researcher. The present study was done to know about the problems faced by the contract labours working in civil hospital. In order to know these and to draw some findings and suggestions, the researcher had formulated few objectives.

Large numbers of families are depending on only one single person as their income source. It shows that Indian society has still been not able to improve its economic condition.

The majority of the respondents that is counselors and program coordinator are graduates in social work. This means that in the field of social work the recruitment takes place mostly on contract basis.

Residence of the respondents and their workplace is far away, so the respondents have faced problems while travelling and transportation, and in terms of exertion physically & mentally making a great impact on the work performance of the employee.

The majority of the respondents (43.3%) are working on contract since more than five years, which is a very long period for anybody to work without any job security.

91.7 % of respondents are not satisfied from their wages which they get. This shows that though they get their regular payment but the money they get is insufficient.

Not a single respondent, out of the total respondents are insured by the principle employer. This shows that, government does not provide any facility of insurance to the contract workers. Not a single respondent has been provided with the compensation. This shows that the contract workers are working under high risk, but knowing the fact still, the government is not giving them the benefit of compensation, though these workers require those benefits.

The majority of the respondents' that is 46 (76.7%) work is hazardous. Out of 60 respondents, 27(45%) of them wants to become permanent after one year itself, to get the job security. All the respondents wanted to have the provident fund facility for them. The majority of the respondents that is 32 (53.3%) of them agreed for all those facilities mentioned i.e Security, Insurance, P.F, Pension, Gratuity, Loan, society, bonus. 43 (71.7%) of the respondents were stressed during the performance appraisal. 39 (65%) of the respondents were not satisfied by their present job status. Respondents who are not satisfied with their present job status; gave the respected reasons. Among them, 18(30%) respondents said it was because of "NO JOB SECURITY". 52(86%) majority of them do not have any chance of promotion. 46(76.7%) respondents get stressed while working which is a matter of concern and The majority of the respondents 30(50%) have given the

reason that because of “Heavy Work Load” the respondents get stressed on work.

According to the contract labours; they get more stressed while working as compared to the permanent employees.

The answers given by the respondents state that, government as a principal employer appoints employees on contract than on permanent directly because Government gets more number of workers in less money, as the contract labors get less salary than the permanent employees. The majority of the respondents 46 (76.7%) of them were not aware about the rights of a contract labors. Respondents were not aware about their rights likewise they are also not aware about the labor laws. Poor implementation of the labour laws depriving the contract labours their legitimate rights.

These were some of the major findings of the research. The study on the problems faced by the contract labourers; working in Civil Hospital Ahmednagar, district of Maharashtra State was carried out with 60 respondents as samples among the 240 Contract labours. The study was mainly carried out with the objectives to know the social-economic, working and service conditions, understanding the various aspects of contract labours such as availability of social security schemes, welfare measures and health & safety, the job satisfaction & job security, studying the awareness among the labours regarding the unionization and Legislation. For most of the respondents working on the contract basis was very difficult to work as they were on the same position since many years. They were not given many facilities which were supposed to be their

rights. Workers therefore, were not satisfied and were not willing to work properly. With the help of the Union they tried to raise their voices against the government by frequent implementation of strikes. The researcher has tried her level best to catch through the problems and suggestions of the contract labours, in front of the government as this was a very ambitious project of the researcher. However, efforts can be made to explore more, on this subject by detail study. There is a need for government to come forward and work for the welfare and betterment of the contract labours.

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