Post Office Initiatives for Education and Welfare: A Study

***Amandeep Kaur& **Dr. Parmod Kumar Aggarwal**
*Research scholar, Department of Commerce, Punjabi University, Patiala
**Associate Professor, Department of Economics, Punjabi University, Patiala

Abstract

Education is a prime element for a progressive functioning of any nation. A nation with educated individuals holds the power to transform an economy. Education is more significant to raise in developing countries where still many families are unable to afford the cost of education. Therefore, Indian government has taken serious efforts to extend education in all spheres of country. Apart from the department of education, other public and private sector units also make considerable financial investment in education through their specialized schemes to promote education. Department of Post also recognized this concept and implemented various welfare schemes to provide educational opportunities for wards of postal employees. In this study an effort has been made to understand the schemes and plans launched by department of post to inculcate education in its role of communication. It is presented on the basis of information collected from secondary sources that department of post through its welfare plans, promoting the aspirants for quality education. The study presented six different schemes implemented by post department for promoting basic and higher education. Under these schemes wards of postal employees can avail scholarships for pursuing technical and non-technical education. In financial year of 2021-22, financial assistance of amount twenty lakh has been provided under launched scholarships. These schemes are benefitting number of students to work on their dream projects.

Keywords*: Education, Department of Posts, Financial Assistance and Welfare Schemes.*

Introduction:

Education is a prime element for a progressive functioning of any nation. A nation with educated individuals holds the power to transform an economy. It paves the way for social control and transformation. Government of every country therefore lays stress on initiatives to induce more quality and excellence in education. From time-to-time suitable policies are adopted by government to raise the standard of education because it is significantly affecting the lives of individuals and nation. Implementation of strategic policies in education is need of time in developing countries where still significant number of persons are deprived from basic education. Irrespective of special provision of compulsory education in Indian constitution, still approximately 8.5 Crore children between age of 5-6 years are not able to afford the cost of education and not attending pre-school (The Times of India, 2019). Such challenges highlight the importance of programs and schemes for promotion of education. The central and state governments are taking serious efforts to extend the access of education in all spheres of India. Education department also launches various policies to inculcate the diversity along with inclusivity in education system of India. Apart from department of education and government efforts, the public and private institutions are also making considerable financial investment in

educational projects. Number of self-financing schemes are run by institutions to make education affordable and accessible at last mile.

The Department of Posts also working on plans to deliver quality in education with its wider spread network of 1,56,434 post offices. Among welfare schemes of employees, there are s ome schemes which provide scholarships to wards of postal employees. These schemes are benefitting approximately 300 childrenevery year (India Post, 2021-22). Such educational schemes are provided for non-tech courses pursue by girl child, incentives for excellent results in secondary and senior secondary education, scholarships for handicapped children of postal employees, scholarships for SC/ST employees preparing for higher education courses and departmental examinations. Employee welfare schemes keeps the motivational level of employees high (Tiwari, 2014) and improves the industrial relations (Nanda and Panda, 2013). Also, such welfare schemes impact the performance of employees positively (Waititu, 2017). Such welfare schemes are overseen by Postal Service Staff Welfare Board set up at central level. There are Circle Welfare Boards to oversee the functioning of welfare schemes at circle level. Grants-in-aid for such welfare schemes is provided from Consolidated Fund of India.

Review of Literature:

Singh (2008) observed the relationship between welfare schemes and man power productivity and reported that increased use of welfare schemes improved the productivity and profitability of an organization. Such continuous use of schemes maintained the employee motivation and ultimately boosted the efficiency level of an organization. The research clearly stated that the proper welfare measures not improve motivation and morale of employees but also enhance the efficiency of their organization.

Souza (2009) examined the relationship between labour welfare and job satisfaction in pharmaceutical companies through eight labour dimensions as training, education, medical, recreation subsidized loan, housing, canteen, safety and others. For the purpose of the study responses of 201 employees were collected from pharmaceutical companies in Goa. The researcher analyzed that the eight dimensions were positively and significantly correlated at level 0.01 which further highlighted that an increase in welfare dimension significantly impacts the job satisfaction.

Sailesh (2012) presented that employee welfare measures promote healthy industrial peace and thereby increase the productivity of employees. The schemes were provided to keep the morale of employees high and motivated. The statutory and non-statutory facilities like canteen, clean restrooms, hygiene washrooms, health insurance, regular medical checkups etc. help the employees in maintaining satisfaction. Further grievance handling mechanism, better workplace, assistance programs provide high level of satisfaction to employees. Such welfare measures were policy agenda for business units those want to maintain the satisfactory level of their employees.

Laddha (2012) explained that employee welfare schemes enabled the workers or employees to live a more satisfactory life. It was presented welfare schemes should be designed

to retain and maintain the employees, because these welfare schemes ultimately provide benefits to the organizations, employers, trade unions, government and non-governmental agencies those who contributes towards the benefits of employees. The study reported that although welfare schemes not always provide monetary benefits to employee but such schemes improve motivational wellness of them.

Khademi (2014) checked the of organizational welfare schemes over the organizational performance. In this primary study the researcher analyzed the results using statistical techniques and it was presented in the study that organizational welfare measures or schemes has significant and positive impact over the organizational performance induced by employees. It was reveled in the study that welfare schemes not only impact the organizational performance but also impact the security, job satisfaction, motivation and happiness shared by employees working in the organization.

Chaubey & Rawat (2016) analyzed the impact of labour welfare schemes on their job satisfaction. For the purpose of the study, the researcher collected the responses of 153 employees of Small-Scale Industries in Dehradun. The results were analyzed through SPSS and it was reported in the study that welfare measures significantly impact the job satisfaction. Such measures adopted strengthen the manpower mentally and physically. The study presented clear distinction between statutory and non-statutory schemes. As per researcher facilities like creche, canteen, insurance, clean urinals, safe drinking, proper ventilation, shelter facilities etc, measures improved the satisfaction level of employees.

Kulkarni & Barhate (2017) studied the impact of welfare facilities on employee performance working in big malls. The researcher for analyzing the impact, collected the primary data from 50 respondents using simple random technique. The analysis of data presented that employee welfare facilities have significant impact on employee efficiency and performance. The study reported that eighty-seven per cent of employees were highly satisfied from the welfare measures adopted by the bigger organizations. The study suggested that company provide their own free transport facility to employees.

Aruna & Seetha (2019) presented an overview of employee welfare measures along with their importance and statutory provisions. The study reported that employee's welfare schemes have different aspects in it which include kinds of services, facilities and amenities primarily offered to improve well-being, health and efficiency of employees.

Research Objective:

The present study designed to understand the welfare schemes launched by department of posts for employees which specifically lays emphasis on promoting education among employees and their children either in secondary education or higher education.

The research objective of this study was attempted to achieve through review of literature available on welfare schemes and by collecting data from the accessible secondary sources with the purpose to provide presenting all schemes in proposed study.

Welfare Schemes of Post Offices for Promotion of Education:

Department of Posts has set Staff Welfare Board to provide welfare schemes for promoting sports, cultural and educational activities. At circle levels, Circle Welfare Boards oversee the functioning of the activities promoting Indian culture and education. Under these schemes financial assistance is provided to employees and their wards. The assistance for promoting education among children of employees is provided under following schemes: -

1. Grant of Educational Assistance to the Children of Postal Employees
2. Incentives for Excellence in Academic Achievement for X and XII Class.
3. Scholarship for UPSC Examination
4. Scholarship for SC/ST Employees for Departmental Examination and Higher Education
5. Scholarship for Development of Individual Personality
6. Grant of Scholarship and Transport Charges to Handicapped (Physically Challenged) children of Postal Employees.

1- Grant of Educational Assistance to the Children of Postal Employees

Grant of educational assistance to wards of postal employees is provided as per the provisions of Directorate Letter (20.05.1993) and subsequent amended letters. This scholarship has following features;

- This scheme is provided for pursuing technical education for which minimum 50% marks are required in qualifying examination.
- 60 % marks are required in case of non-technical course.
- Relaxation of 10% marks is allowed to SC/ST students and wards of low paid officials for grant of non-technical course.
- No above said relaxation is allowed for grant of scholarship for technical course.
- Relaxation of 10 % marks for OBCs students is eligible in special cases only.
- Merit lists are prepared at circle level along with common list for scholarship in each category i.e., technical courses, non-technical, school student awards etc.
- Scholarships are given to the extent of grant released.
- To ensure the maximum coverage of employee, at least one scholarship per head is ensured firstly.
- Scholarship granted once remains continue till completion of course.
- Scholarship got ceased on resignation, dismiss, removal, compulsory or voluntary retirement of an employee.
- Pay of parents will be counted for scholarship awarded for technical and non-technical course. In case of school student, pay of only one applicant will be taken into account.
- Scholarships are grants for degree courses only and not allowed for post graduate degrees except in case of BE/B.Tech Courses in Institutes like IISC Bangalore, MIT Chennai.

Following are the pay limits for availing scholarships for different courses

Sr. No.	Education	Pay Limit (per month)	Scholarship Rate
1.	Technical, Non- Technical and Degree Scholarships (including IIT, IIM, AIIMS)	Rs 65,200/-	1. **IIT, IIM, AIMS** Rs. 1000/- p.m. 2. **Medical/Technical/PG**- Degree Rs 800/- p.m. Diploma Rs 300/- p.m. 3. **Non- Technical Degree** 250/- p.m. for girls scored above 60 % in XII 4. **For ITI certificate course** Rs 1400/- p.m.
2.	Scholarships for physically handicapped children	Rs. 77,900/-	Rs. 500/- p.m.

Scholarships are subject to renewal on fulfillment of certain conditions. It can be renewed in every year on approval of Head of Circle.

Separate merit list of scholarship is prepared for reserved groups as per following percentage: -

Sr. No.	Reserved Groups	Technical Scholarship	Non-technical Scholarship
1.	For officials drawing pay up to 23,500/-	15%	20%
2.	Scheduled Castes	15%	15%
3.	Scheduled Tribes	7.5%	7.5%

Out of total amount allotted to circle, 55% is earmarked for educational purpose only. The Head of Circle holds the power to spent additional 5% and reallocates from different categories for allocation of amount on education to cover maximum applicants subject to availability of grant under Circle Welfare Fund.

The allocation of funds for different scholarships is provided as following: -

a.	Scholarships for Tech. Courses (including IIT, AIIMS, IIM, ITI)	67%
b.	Scholarships for non-tech. Courses	20%
c.	School Student Awards including Award for excellence in X & XII Board Exams.	5%
d.	Scholarships for staff for development of personality	5%
e.	Scholarship for Handicapped children	3%

2- Incentives for excellence in academic achievement for X and XII Class

Under this scheme five awards are given to children of postal staff purely on the basis of merit of marks obtained in 10th and 12th standard board exam subject to minimum percentage marks of each category shown below: -

Group	Minimum Percentage of Aggregate Marks
1. 10th Standard 2. 12th Standard- Science Group 3. 12th Standard- Commerce Group 4. 12th Standard- Humanities Group	Minimum Aggregate 90% in all categories

A common merit of all groups is prepared with percentage (up to two Decimals) obtained in state board or CBSE Board. The first five students will be sanctioned with awards. If more than one student obtains same mark on 5thposition, then award is given to all students with same marks. This task is performed by Chief Post Master General. This scheme is for children of post stall only. The amount is paid from Circle Welfare Fund for educational schemes and scholarships. The names of awardees are finalized before 30th September each year. The awards are paid as shown below: -

1st Position in the Circle	Rs. 6000/-
2nd Position in the Circle	Rs. 4800/-
3rd Position in the Circle	Rs. 4200/-
4th Position in the Circle	Rs. 3600/-
5th Position in the Circle	Rs. 3000/-

3- Scholarship for UPSC Examinations

Financial assistance under this scheme is provided to children of postal employees who appear in exams conducted by UPSC on fulfilment of certain conditions.

- Assistance is provided for Rs 2000/- only without any pay limit.
- Assistance under this scheme is provided once to one child means grant shall be admissible for once only whether the child qualify it or not in first attempt.
- It is necessary to score 60% marks in eligible qualification for availing this scholarship.
- In case of civil examination, this amount is provided after clearing preliminary examination.
- An undertaking must be given by wards of employee that they will appear in competitive examination for which scholarship is availed. If he doesn't so, then amount would be refunded.

4- Scholarship for SC/ST Employees for Departmental Examination and Higher Education

This scheme is for SC/ST employees who are appearing in examinations held by department for promotion purpose. The assistance is provided to the extent of fees payable for coaching classes of such examinations. Although, there are certain limits as indicated below: -

a.	Examination for Promotion to the cadre of IRMs/IPOs/Inspector (MMS)/ AAO/JAO Examination and similar cadres	Rs. 1800/-
b.	Examination for promotion to the cadre of UDCs, Junior Accountants in Postal Accounts and other cadres of similar nature	Rs. 1200/-
c.	Examinations for promotion to the posts of Sorting Assistant, Postal Assistants, Sorters and other cadres of similar nature	Rs. 900/-

This amount is made available once in lump sum by Heads of Divisions or Units. It is mandatory to appear in exam and secure 25% marks, otherwise the amount will have to refund back.

Financial assistance is also provided for pursuing higher education without any pay limits. It is mandatory to secure 40% marks in lower pre-requisite examinations. One- time financial assistance of Rs. 1200/- is provided for pursuing diploma or degree course and restricted to Rs. 3000/- subject to renewal after semester and annual examination.

5- Scholarship for development of Individual Personality

This scholarship is provided for getting admission in courses recognized by Government of India and State Government as Public Relations, Personnel and Labour Management, Social Work, Welfare Accounting, Computing Programming, Banking and Industrial Relations. The assistance allowed up to 75% of fees paid and subject to maximum limit of Rs 5000/- per annum. Employees drawing basic salary less than Rs. 16,840/- with age less than 35 years are eligible for this scheme and admissible once for maximum period of 2 years.

6- Grant of Scholarship and transport charges to handicapped (physically challenged) children of Postal Employees.

Under this scheme transport charges, hostel/mess subsidy and scholarships are granted to physically challenged, blind and mentally retarded children of postal employee as per following guidelines: -

- An amount of Rs. 500/- is granted per month for maximum 8 years.
- Scholarship can be renewed after every year for 8 years. Scholarship can't be paid if ward is appearing in same class for two years.
- A physically handicapped child with permanent or partial disability of at least 40% is eligible for this scheme. A child who is fully blind and dumb can avail this scheme without any restriction. Such condition should be certified by Medical Officer.

- Staff with less pay got preference in this scheme over those with higher pay.
- Benefit of transport charges is eligible for two children only.
- The rate of grants for hostel mess and transport charges are as shown below: -

		'A' Class Cities	Other Cities
I	Transport Charges	Rs. 300/-	Rs. 250/-
Ii	Hostel/ Mess subsidy (in lieu of transport charges)	Rs. 300/-	Rs. 250/-

- The transport charges are allowed if children are studying in 1st to 12th standard of recognized school or institution.
- These charges are allowed in year of detain also but not in subsequent years of detain.
- In case child is staying in hostel than hostel/mess is allowed in lieu of transport charges.

Conclusion:

The role of education in progress of an individual is not deniable. Government around the world always lays stress on accessibility of education through their policies. Realizing the importance of it, now other institutions has also launched various schemes for improving the status of quality education. Department of Posts also came with their welfare schemes for promoting education through the welfare funds. In this study the different schemes are analyzed and it is concluded that department of Post is majorly focusing on making education accessible for staff with less pay, reserved categories and physically challenged children which is great effort on part of post offices. Postal department with their little efforts is affecting the lives of more than three hundred wards every year with a significant amount of financial assistance. Such schemes are not only impacting the performance of employees positively but also leads the progress of their wards. So, financial investment of post offices towards educational purpose is appreciable.

References:

Arthi, G., & Srinivasan, P.(2018). The study on impact of employee welfare measures in Automobile Industry. *International Journal of Pure and Applied Mathematics, 118*(20), 889-900.

Aruna, S., & Seetha, V. (2019). Employees welfare measures: Importance, statutory provisions and various agencies protecting the welfare of employees. *Shanlax International Journal of Commerce, 7*(2), 25-30.

Chaubey, D.S. & Rawat, B. (2016). Analysis of labour welfare schemes and its impact on job satisfaction: An empirical study. *Management Covergence,* 7(2), 45-53.

Department of Post office (n.d.). Annual Report of India Post. https://www.indiapost.gov.in/VAS/pages/AboutUs/AnnualReport.aspx

Jegadeesan, G. (2009). *Workforce Welfare.* The ICFAI University Press, 61.

Khademi, T. (2014). Examining the effect of welfare services on organizational commitment of staff at education department in Meymeh? Reef Resources Assessment and Management Technical Paper,40(1).

Kulkarni, M. P. K., & Barhate, M. (n.d.). An analytical study of employee welfare schemes and employee job satisfaction. *Arthavati: An International Journal*, *4*(2), 27-33.

Laddha, R.L. (2012). A study of industrial relations-issue today and tomorrow-A case study of Chnadra Beverages Ltd, Solapur.*India, Review of Research, 1*(6).

Nanda, N., & Panda, J. K. (2013). Challenges and effectiveness of industrial relation environment in Indian Industries study on Rourkela Steel Plant. Raurkela Odisha. India. *International Jour. of Financial Services and management Research,2*(6), 163-174.

Sabarirajan, A., Meharajan, T., & Arun, B. (2010). A Study on the various welfare measures and their impact on QWL Provided by The Textile Mills with Reference to Salem District, Tamil Nadu, India. *Asian Journal of Management Research*, 15-24.

Sindhu, S. (2012). Role of organization in welfare measures for employees. *International Journal of Research in IT and Management (IJRIM), 2*(9), 36-40.

Souza, CAMD.(2009).*Labour welfare and job satisfaction: a comparative study of indian pharmaceutical companies and multinational pharmaceutical companies in Goa.* Department of Economics, Goa University, Goa.

Times of India (13, Jan. 2019). 8 crore Indian children still don't go to school. https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/education/news/8-crore-indian-children-still-dont-go-to-school/amp_articleshow/67515425.cms

Tiwari. U. (2014).A study on employee welfare facilities and its impact on employee's efficiency at Vindha Telelinks Ltd. Rewa (M.P.) India, *Abhinav International Monthly Refereed Journal of Research in Management & Technology,* 3(11), 1-7.

Waititu et. al, (2017). Effect of employee welfare programmes on employee performance: A case study of Kenya Railways Corporation, *International Academic Journal of Human Resource and Business Administration, 2* (3), 611-631.