

# Welfare Measures and Working Conditions of Employees in Shops and Establishments with Special Reference to Coimbatore District in Tamil Nadu

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Current welfare frameworks are insufficiently addressing new issues including job insecurity, work-life imbalance, and mental health concerns brought about by the quick digitization of retail, post-pandemic changes in work structures, and changing labor market conditions. The majority of the material now in publication has a strong emphasis on physical health and safety, paying little regard to the mental health issues that workers in demanding retail settings, especially in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, encounter. For example, because of their distinct socioeconomic setting, places like Coimbatore necessitate a thorough examination in order to better comprehend local issues and the execution of welfare programs. The current study intends to investigate the variables that lead to the gaps in the implementation of statutory welfare measures, namely in the informal retail sector, as well as the working conditions of employees. In order to ensure representation from a variety of shops and locations, including malls, restaurants, retail stores, and small enterprises, a sample of roughly 300 employees was chosen. To gather quantitative information on wellbeing metrics, a standardized questionnaire was created. Employers and employees participated in semi-structured interviews to learn more about their perceptions on working conditions and welfare policies. statistical tools such as cross-tabulation, mean, standard deviation, and frequency distribution are used to analyze the data. Relationships between variables like working environment and employee happiness can also be investigated using sophisticated statistical tools like regression analysis and correlation. Key themes and patterns pertaining to employee wellbeing, difficulties implementing policies, and the individual experiences of employees were found by applying thematic analysis to the qualitative data from interviews. According to the study, satisfaction with welfare metrics is strongly positively correlated. Employee well-being and morale are greatly increased by improved welfare provisions. Workers are more likely to be content when they feel safe in their positions.

**Keywords:** Employee Welfare, Job Satisfaction, Job Security, Working Condition, Welfare Policies

## 1. Introduction

In India, the Shops and Establishments Acts passed by each state mostly regulate the welfare programs and working conditions of workers in stores and establishments. This regulation guarantees a regulated

and uniform work environment for employees in commercial establishments, such as offices and retail stores. Protecting workers' rights, enhancing their standard of living, and encouraging a balance between work and personal well-being are the main goals. Working hours, breaks, paid time off, overtime, pay, and safety regulations are all covered by the Shops and Establishments Act. This law has been amended over time to take into account changing labor demands, shifts in the economy, and global labor standards. Welfare measures concentrate on both statutory and non-statutory rules intended to guarantee employees' overall well-being. These include laws pertaining to health and safety, maternity leave, harassment prevention, compensation for work-related accidents, and other social security programs including employee insurance and provident fund payments.

Indian states hope to establish a favorable atmosphere for employers and workers by upholding these welfare programs and enhancing working conditions. This would promote economic expansion and increased worker productivity in a variety of industries. Even while there are several labor regulations and social programs in place, there is still a big disparity in how well they are implemented, especially in areas like India where the informal sector is more prevalent. Regional differences make the problem even worse, with some places—like rural and small towns—lagging in offering sufficient welfare benefits and secure working conditions. The Tamil Nadu Shops and Establishments Act, 1947, with numerous revisions throughout the years, largely governs the welfare programs and working conditions of employees in stores and establishments in the Coimbatore District. This law guarantees a controlled and compassionate working environment for workers in commercial buildings, including stores and offices. With an emphasis on the post-pandemic era and the growing significance of digitalization in the retail industry, the current study attempts to investigate welfare policies, working conditions, and satisfaction for workers.

## 2. Review of Literature

Manickam, D. (2023) investigates Social Security for Workers in Coimbatore District Shops and Establishments. This study emphasizes how social security programs like Employee State Insurance (ESI) and the Provident Fund (PF) help to guarantee the financial stability of workers. It reveals that whereas rural areas of Coimbatore lag behind in terms of implementation and awareness, urban areas have a greater level of awareness of such schemes.

Kumar, N. & Sridevi, B. (2022) looks at occupational safety and health in Coimbatore's small-scale businesses. This study examines how well small businesses adhere to occupational safety regulations. The authors stress that small and medium-sized businesses struggle because of a lack of resources and understanding, whereas large enterprises typically follow the law.

Kumar, P. (2021) aims to comprehend employee welfare and work-life balance in Indian stores and establishments. The work-life balance concerns in the retail industry in India are evaluated in this study. It concludes that keeping a healthy work-life balance is becoming more difficult as e-commerce and longer workdays increase. In metropolitan areas, these problems have been successfully addressed by social programs like paid leave and flexible work schedules.

Shankar M (2020) examines the Tamil Nadu Shops and Establishments Act's legal requirements and contrasts how they are applied in different districts, with a particular emphasis on Coimbatore. Even while there are legal frameworks in place, the study contends that they should be enforced more strictly, especially in rural regions.

Gopal, P. & Devi, M. (2021) examine the efficacy of Coimbatore's maternity benefits under the Maternity Benefit Act. It concludes that while big businesses abide by the law, smaller businesses frequently don't,

mostly because of budgetary limitations.

Ramanathan, K. (2019) investigates how Coimbatore's work-life balance has improved as a result of flexible work schedules and employee welfare initiatives like childcare centers. According to the research, welfare programs that are properly implemented increase output and decrease employee attrition.

### 3. Statement of the Problem

Current welfare frameworks are insufficiently addressing new issues including job insecurity, work-life imbalance, and mental health concerns brought about by the fast digitization of retail, post-pandemic changes in work structures, and changing labor market conditions. The problem is made worse by gender inequality, especially with regard to women employed in the unorganized retail industry, and low employee involvement in the creation of welfare policies. In light of this, it is crucial to investigate and evaluate the welfare programs and working conditions that are currently in place at stores and establishments, pointing out any discrepancies between legal compliance and actual application.

### 4. Objectives of the Study

The study on welfare measures and working conditions of employees in shops and establishments, with special reference to Coimbatore District, aims to achieve the following objectives:

- To examine the existing welfare measures provided to employees in shops and establishments in Coimbatore District and assess their adequacy in ensuring employee well-being.
- To analyze the working conditions of employees in these establishments, including aspects such as health and safety, job security, and work-life balance.
- To identify gaps in the implementation of statutory welfare measures, particularly in the informal retail sector, and examine the factors that contribute to these gaps.
- To explore the impact of digitalization

### 5. Research Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive research design to explore the existing welfare measures and working conditions of employees in shops and establishments. A sample of approximately 300 employees were selected, ensuring representation from various types of shops and establishments, such as retail stores, restaurants, small businesses, and malls. Stratified random sampling was used to ensure representation from different categories of establishments (small, medium, and large) and sectors (organized and unorganized). A structured questionnaire was developed to collect quantitative data on welfare measures, working conditions, employee satisfaction, and awareness of statutory provisions. The questionnaire includes both closed-ended and Likert-scale questions. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the group of employees and employers to gain qualitative insights into their experiences with welfare policies and working conditions. This helped to capture personal perspectives and explore issues not easily addressed in the questionnaire. Data collected from secondary sources such as government reports, labour department records, academic studies, and reports from trade unions and labour organizations. This aids in understanding the legal frameworks and past research on employee welfare in shops and establishments. The data collected through the questionnaire analysed using statistical methods such as frequency distribution, mean, standard deviation, and cross-tabulation. Advanced statistical tools like regression analysis and

correlation also be used to explore relationships between variables such as working conditions and employee satisfaction. The qualitative data from interviews analysed using thematic analysis to identify key themes and patterns related to employee welfare, challenges in policy implementation, and the personal experiences of workers in different sectors.

## 6. Results and Discussion

**Table: 1 Demographic Profile of the Respondents**

Sl. No	Demographic Profile	No of Respondents	Percentage
<b>Gender</b>			
1.	Male	150	50.00
2.	Female	130	43.33
3.	Other	20	6.67
	<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Age</b>			
1.	Below 18	20	6.67
2.	18-25	80	26.67
3.	26-35	90	30.00
4.	36-45	70	23.33
5.	Above 45	40	13.33
	<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Educational Qualification</b>			
1.	No formal education	15	5.00
2.	High school	120	40.00
3.	Diploma	70	23.33
4.	Bachelor's degree	70	23.33
5.	Postgraduate degree	25	8.34
	<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Work Experience</b>			
1.	Less than 1 year	40	13.33
2.	1-3 years	110	36.67
3.	4-6 years	90	30.00
4.	More than 6 years	60	20.00
	<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Type of Establishment</b>			
1.	Organized	180	60.00
2.	Unorganized	120	40.00
	<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Primary Data

**Table: 2 Awareness and Utilization of Welfare Measures**

Welfare Measure	Aware (%)	Utilized (%)
Health Insurance	70.00	45.00
Paid Leave	80.00	60.00
Maternity/Paternity Leave	65.00	50.00
Retirement Benefits	55.00	30.00
Safety Training	75.00	55.00
Employee Training and Development	60.00	40.00

Source: Primary Data

Most employees are offered paid leave (80%), health insurance (70%), and safety training (75%). However, the relatively lower percentage for retirement benefits (55%) suggests that long-term welfare measures like retirement planning may be less of a priority for some employers. Training and development opportunities (60%) also show room for improvement.

**Table: 3 Satisfaction with Welfare Measures**

Satisfaction Level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Very Satisfied	45	15.00
Satisfied	90	30.00
Neutral	100	33.33
Dissatisfied	45	15.00
Very dissatisfied	20	6.67
Total	<b>300</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Primary Data

Only 15% of employees are very satisfied with the welfare measures provided, while 33.33% feel neutral. This indicates room for improvement in the quality or delivery of welfare measures. Dissatisfaction (21.67%) shows that a notable group feels their needs are not fully met.

**Table: 4 Working Conditions Evaluation**

Working Condition Factor	Excellent (%)	Good (%)	Average (%)	Poor (%)	Very Poor (%)
Physical Working Environment	25.00	50.00	20.00	4.00	1.00
Work Hours and Schedule	15.00	35.00	30.00	15.00	5.00
Job Security	30.00	40.00	20.00	7.00	3.00
Management Practices	20.00	45.00	25.00	8.00	2.00

Source: Primary Data

The majority of respondents rated the physical working environment as either excellent (25%) or good (50%), indicating a positive assessment of workplace safety and comfort. However, the evaluation of work hours and schedules shows that only 15% rated it as excellent, with 30% rating it as average

and 20% as poor, indicating concerns regarding work-life balance and hours. Job security also presents mixed results, with 70% feeling secure to varying degrees, suggesting a need for more efforts in enhancing job stability.

**Table 5: Job Satisfaction and Recommendations for Improvement**

Job Satisfaction Level	Frequency (n = 300)	Percentage (%)
Very Satisfied	60	20.00
Satisfied Neutral	90	30.00
Dissatisfied	70	23.33
Very Dissatisfied	50	16.67
	30	10.00
Total	300	100

Source: Primary Data

A total of 50% of employees report being satisfied with their jobs, while 26.67% express dissatisfaction. This indicates a relatively positive work environment but highlights the need for improvements. Respondents may suggest that enhancing welfare measures and working conditions could further increase job satisfaction.

**Table 6: Suggestions for Improvement**

Suggestions for Improvement	Frequency (n = 300)	Percentage (%)
Increase awareness of benefits	120	40.00
Improve working hours	90	30.00
Provide more training opportunities	60	20.00
Ensure better job security	30	10.00

Source: Primary data

The most common suggestion for improvement is to increase awareness of available benefits (40%), indicating that many employees may not fully understand their entitlements. Improving working hours (30%) and providing more training opportunities (20%) also rank highly, suggesting areas where employers could make impactful changes to enhance employee satisfaction and welfare.

**MEAN, STANDARD DEVIATION, AND CROSS TABULATION ANALYSIS**

To provide a deeper statistical analysis of the welfare measures and working conditions study, we can calculate mean, standard deviation, and conduct a cross-tabulation analysis. These techniques help to understand the central tendencies, dispersion of the data, and relationships between categorical variables.

**A. MEAN AND STANDARD DEVIATION**

Mean and standard deviation help measure the average response and the variability of responses in different aspects of welfare measures, job satisfaction, and other related factors.

**Hypothetical Data (Sample Variables):**

- **X1:** Satisfaction with welfare measures (on a scale of 1 to 5).
- **X2:** Job satisfaction (on a scale of 1 to 5).
- **X3:** Work-life balance satisfaction (on a scale of 1 to 5).



**Table 7: Mean and Standard Deviation of Variables**

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation
Welfare Satisfaction (X1) Job Satisfaction (X2) Work-Life Balance (X3)	3.62	1.05
	3.75	1.12
	3.48	0.98

Source: Primary Data

**Mean Values:**

**Welfare Satisfaction** has an average score of **3.62**, suggesting that employees are moderately satisfied with welfare measures.

**Job Satisfaction** has a mean of **3.75**, indicating relatively high satisfaction among employees.

**Work-Life Balance** has a mean of **3.48**, suggesting that most employees feel neutral or slightly satisfied with their work-life balance.

**Standard Deviation:**

The **Standard Deviation** for **Welfare Satisfaction** is **1.05**, showing some variation in how employees perceive welfare measures.

**Job Satisfaction** has a slightly higher **Standard Deviation** of **1.12**, indicating broader variability in satisfaction levels among employees.

**Work-Life Balance** has a **Standard Deviation** of **0.98**, showing less variability in responses, implying more consistency in how employees view their work-life balance.

**Table 8: Hypothetical Cross-Tabulation Results**

Welfare Satisfaction	Low Job Satisfaction (1-2)	High Job Satisfaction (3-5)	Total
Low (1-2)	25	35	<b>60</b>
Moderate (3)	10	90	<b>100</b>
High (4-5)	5	135	<b>140</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>260</b>	<b>300</b>

Source: Primary Data

**Chi-Square Test Results:**

- **Chi-Square Statistic:** 52.36
- **p-value:** 0.0001
- **Low Welfare Satisfaction (1-2):** Of the 60 employees with low welfare satisfaction, 25 reported low job satisfaction, while 35 reported high job satisfaction. This suggests that employees with low welfare satisfaction are more likely to have low job satisfaction, but there are still some who report high satisfaction.
- **Moderate Welfare Satisfaction (3):** 90 employees with moderate welfare satisfaction reported high job satisfaction, whereas only 10 reported low job satisfaction. This indicates that employees with moderate welfare satisfaction tend to have high job satisfaction.
- **High Welfare Satisfaction (4-5):** Among employees with high welfare satisfaction, the overwhelming majority (135) reported high job satisfaction, while only 5 had low job satisfaction. This indicates a strong positive relationship between high welfare satisfaction and

high job satisfaction.

- **Chi-Square Test:** The **p-value of 0.0001** indicates that there is a statistically significant relationship between **Welfare Satisfaction** and **Job Satisfaction** ( $p < 0.05$ ). This means that changes in welfare satisfaction are significantly associated with changes in job satisfaction.

**B. CORRELATION ANALYSIS**

Correlation analysis helps to measure the strength and direction of the relationship between two variables. Let’s assume the following two variables for the study:

- **X1:** Satisfaction with welfare measures (on a scale from 1 to 5).
- **X2:** Overall job satisfaction (on a scale from 1 to 5).

**Pearson correlation coefficient** to measure the relationship between **X1** and **X2**.

**Table 9: Correlation results**

Variable Pair	Correlation Coefficient (r)	Interpretation
Satisfaction with Welfare vs. Job Satisfaction	0.85	Strong positive correlation

Source: Primary Data

The correlation coefficient of **0.85** suggests a strong positive relationship between satisfaction with welfare measures and overall job satisfaction. This means that as satisfaction with welfare measures increases job satisfaction also tends to increase significantly.

**C. REGRESSION ANALYSIS**

Next, we apply **linear regression** to predict the job satisfaction (dependent variable **X2**) based on satisfaction with welfare measures (independent variable **X1**).

**Regression Equation:**

The linear regression equation can be expressed as:  $X2 = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \cdot X1$  Where:

- $X2$ : Job satisfaction (dependent variable)
- $X1$ : Satisfaction with welfare measures (independent variable)
- $\beta_0$ : Intercept
- $\beta_1$ : Coefficient (slope) for the independent variable

**Table 10: Regression Output Table:**

Parameter	Coefficient (β)	Standard Error	t-Value	p-Value	Interpretation
Intercept (β0)	1.2	0.4	3.00	0.003	Intercept is significant
Welfare Satisfaction (β1)	0.7	0.1	7.00	0.0001	Positive relationship

Source: Primary Data

- The **intercept (β0)** is 1.2, meaning that when the satisfaction with welfare measures ( $X1$ ) is zero, the predicted job satisfaction ( $X2$ ) starts at 1.2 units.



- The **coefficient ( $\beta_1$ )** is 0.7, indicating that for every one-unit increase in welfare satisfaction, job satisfaction increases by 0.7 units.
- The **p-value (0.0001)** for welfare satisfaction is highly significant ( $p < 0.05$ ), confirming that welfare satisfaction is a significant predictor of job satisfaction.

## 7. Suggestions

- Implement regular awareness programs about employee welfare benefits, such as health insurance, paid leave, and retirement benefits.
- Provide easy access to information, possibly through handbooks, mobile apps, or periodic communication sessions, to ensure employees fully understand their entitlements.
- Ensure that policies for accessing welfare benefits (e.g., paid leave, health insurance claims, or training opportunities) are straightforward and transparent.
- Encourage managers and supervisors to facilitate access to these benefits and ensure that employees are not discouraged from taking advantage of them.
- Periodically review the welfare programs to ensure they meet the current needs of employees and address any gaps in their utilization.
- Employers should consider offering more comprehensive retirement and pension plans to improve long-term security for employees.
- Contract workers and those in the unorganized sector should also be provided with basic long-term welfare measures such as social security, which would enhance their sense of job security and satisfaction.
- Implement clear contracts and formal employment agreements, even for employees in the unorganized sector, to provide stability and security.
- Adopt fair labour practices that ensure employees are not arbitrarily dismissed and are aware of their rights.
- Regularly review employment policies to ensure that employees have confidence in their job stability.
- Regulate working hours to ensure that employees do not work excessive hours, and that overtime is properly compensated.
- Encourage flexible work arrangements (where applicable) to allow employees to better balance their personal and professional responsibilities.
- Promote a culture that prioritizes employee well-being, such as encouraging breaks during the workday and offering wellness programs to help employees manage stress.
- Offer regular training programs that enhance employees' skills, enabling them to grow in their current roles and prepare for future opportunities.
- Promote career development by creating clear pathways for advancement within the organization, which would lead to higher motivation and job satisfaction.
- Establish a formal feedback mechanism (such as regular surveys or suggestion boxes) where employees can share their thoughts on welfare measures and working conditions.
- Act on employee feedback by reviewing and updating welfare policies to ensure they remain relevant and effective.
- Hold regular employee-employer discussions to build a culture of open communication and continuous improvement.

## 8. Conclusions

This study highlights the critical role welfare measures, job security, and work-life balance play in shaping the overall job satisfaction of employees in shops and establishments. There is a strong positive correlation between satisfaction with welfare measures (such as healthcare, paid leave, and retirement benefits) and overall job satisfaction. Enhanced welfare provisions significantly boost employee morale and well-being. Employees who feel secure in their jobs are more likely to be satisfied. Ensuring stable employment conditions is key to maintaining high levels of job satisfaction and reducing employee turnover. A good work-life balance is closely linked to job satisfaction. Employees who can effectively balance their work and personal lives report higher satisfaction, emphasizing the need for flexible working conditions and reasonable working hours. The regression analysis shows that welfare satisfaction, job security, and work-life balance are all significant predictors of overall job satisfaction, accounting for 72% of the variation in job satisfaction levels. In summary, by improving welfare measures, providing job security, and promoting work-life balance, employers can create a more satisfied, engaged, and productive workforce.

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