

A Critical Appraisal of Absenteeism in an Organisation (A Case Study of Sriram Pistons and Rings Ltd., Meerut)

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Abstract

Workers who are away from work on recognized holidays, vacations, approved leaves of absence or leaves of absence allowed for under the collective agreement provisions would not be included in absenteeism. It is unauthorized, unexplained, avoidable and willful absence from work. Absence can also be defined as- “The temporary cassation of work for not less than one whole working day, on the initiative of the worker when his presence is expected”. Thus, an employee who reports for duty even for a past of the day or shift is not treated as an absence. Many absenteeism strategies ignore the impact of illness and disease on the workplace and its major role in determining work attendance. Therefore, it has been supposed to take an inner view of the real position of the Absenteeism, the need of the workers and the effects on the company. So, this study “A Critical Appraisal of Absenteeism in an Organisation (A Case Study of Sriram Pistons and Rings Ltd., Meerut) is proposed to know the role of absenteeism and their effective stage wise eradication. The location of the proposed study is Sriram Pistons and Rings Ltd., Meerut. The workers serving in production process in the company constitute the universe of the study. The research design of the proposed study is exploratory in nature and data is collected by administering a questionnaire to the selected respondents. The questionnaire is pre tested before administering it to the selected respondents. All the selected workers are personally interviewed to have first hand information.

Key Words : *Absenteeism, Industrial Worker, Employee retention, Employee satisfaction.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Absenteeism is referred to here in as failure of workers to report for work when they are scheduled to work. Workers who are away from work on recognized holidays, vacations, approved leaves of absence or leaves of absence allowed

under the collective agreement provisions would not be included in absenteeism. It is unauthorized, unexplained, avoidable and willful absence from work. Absence can also be defined as- “The temporary cassation of work for not less than one whole working day, on the initiative of the worker when his presence is expected”. Thus, an employee who reports for duty even for a past of the day or shift is not treated as an absence.

Thus, it can be said that an employee is considered as scheduled to work when the employee has work available for him and the employee has no reason to exert, well in advance

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that the employee will not be available for work at the specified time. For calculating the rate of absenteeism, two facts are required :

- (i) The number of person scheduled to work.
- (ii) The number actually present.

2. OBSERVATIONAL ASPECTS OF ABSENTEEISM

On the basis of micro studies undertaken in different parts of country, certain observations are as follows :

- (a) The rate of absenteeism is the lowest on pay day, it increases considerably on the day following the payment of wages & bonus.
- (b) Immediately after pay by day, when workers either feel like having good time, or in some other cases return home to their village to make purchases for the family and to meet them.
- (c) Absenteeism is generally high among workers below 25 years of age & those above 40. The younger workers are not regular and punctual while the older workers are not able to withstand the strenuous nature of work.
- (d) The percentage of absenteeism is generally higher in the night shift than in day shift. This is so because workers in night shift experience greater discomfort and uneasiness in the course of their work than they do during day time.
- (e) The percentage of absenteeism is much higher in coal and mica mining industries than the organized industries.
- (f) The rate of absenteeism varies from department to department with an organization. Generally, it is high in production department.
- (g) The percentage of absenteeism is usually high in festival days.
- (h) Women are absent more frequently than men.
- (i) Single workers are absent more frequently than married workers.

3. ABSENTEEISM : A MANAGEMENT PROBLEM

Absenteeism is becoming more a major management problem that needs continuing and better attention because absenteeism is the major cause of low productivity.

When employee attendance drops, the quality and quantity of products fall. Among some employees/workers that are unorganised as well as those who are union free, there is a general feeling that union could care less about employee's absenteeism as a problem. They feel that most unions look upon absenteeism as a problem only for employer has the right to be absent from work for number of reasons.

The unique feature is the provision for a study of the feasibility of switching from a five day, 40 hours week to four-day, 40-hour week.

It is generally felt that immediate supervisor as the key towards improving employee's attendance and controlling absenteeism, despite all the pros and cons we hear about disciplinary policies and incentive work programmes to improve attendance and control absenteeism, the most positive management tool for keeping employee attendance at acceptable level is the daily attitude of the immediate supervisor. It is widely acceptable opinion that poor supervision affects an employee absenteeism rate in negative way. There is very strong condition between an employee's attitude about this immediate supervisor & his attendance records on job.

Here, the above discussion permits to establish that absenteeism is more an attitudinal problem at the end of management rather than at the end of workers.

4. NEED OF THE STUDY

The common responses to absenteeism are to tighten up certification requirements, restrict access to sick leave, discipline offenders or censure doctors issuing the certificates. These approaches neglect to focus on the opportunity to explore

structural and policy factors, which contribute to absenteeism. Ignoring the situation, whereby it may be the culture of an organization that is a strong determinant of absence behaviour, may reduce the opportunity for effective intervention based upon effective policies and communication, development of supervisory skills and procedures.

Many absenteeism strategies ignore the impact of illness and disease on the workplace and its major role in determining work attendance.

Therefore, it has been supposed to take an inner view of the real position of the Absenteeism, the need of the workers and the effects on the company. So, this study "A Critical Appraisal of Absenteeism in an Organisation (A Case Study of Sriram Pistons and Rings Ltd., Meerut) is proposed to know the role of absenteeism and their effective stage wise eradication.

5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The location of the proposed study is Sriram Pistons and Rings Ltd., Meerut. The workers serving in production process in the company constitute the universe of the study. The research design of the proposed study is exploratory in nature and data is collected by administering a questionnaire to the selected respondents. The questionnaire is pre tested before administering it to the selected respondents. All the selected workers are personally interviewed to have first hand information. The data collected through questionnaire is processed through computer, whereas the information collected through informal interviews with the workers will be manually handled.

(a) Research Objectives

- (i) To survey the effects and magnitude of Absenteeism in an organisation;
- (ii) To know the reasons of Absenteeism:
- (iii) To make a study on the Absenteeism in Sriram Pistons and Rings Ltd., Meerut plant.
- (iv) To give some suggestions to washout the practice of Absenteeism.

(b) Sample size

For the purpose of sampling, 50 workers serving in this company are randomly selected for this study. The research tool is Questionnaire.

(c) Limitations of the Study

The main limitation of the study is that the company in question has provided no data and workers were not ready to give answer as they feel that this would adversely affect their job.

6. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The regularity & stability of labour force plays an important role in the prosperity and development of industrial unit but an unfortunate feature in the industrial life of our country is high rate of absenteeism. Statistical data have proved that the loss on account of absenteeism is more serious threat than any other industrial problem. Work space unoccupied & consequently, it directly & indirectly reduce the amount of production. The loss of production is the loss of the community at large.

It has been observed that the phenomenon of absenteeism does not exist only in Indian industries, it is universal fact and the difference is only in term of magnitude. The rate of absenteeism ranges from 4.3 per cent, in some occupations, it has risen to the abnormal level of 40 per cent in some reason. The absence from job may be both authorized & unauthorized. The extent of absenteeism may differ from industry to industry, place to place & occupation to occupation. It may also differ according to the makeup of the workforce. Absenteeism may be extensive in a particular department of an industry or a concern. There have been many systematic studies of the absenteeism in western industrialized countries. For example, it has been observed that absenteeism among the younger workman is extensive on Mondays after weekend. It is the lowest on pay day. In the USA, it has been observed that older workers, greater among women than men. Young men are generally found to absent for a variety of reasons, including restlessness and a sense of irresponsibility.

In some cases, absenteeism of a particular worker is due to reason connected with the job. For example a worker may be absent because he does not like his job for some reason or because he has unsatisfactory relation with his supervisor or with co-workers.

There has been a phenomenal rising absenteeism in some industries. In the cotton textile industry in Madras, it shoots up from 8.9 per cent in 2000, 16 per cent in 2015. It increased from 12.7 per cent to 22 per cent in Bombay, 8.3 per cent to 14.9 per cent in Ahmedabad & 12 per cent to 24.8 per cent in Kanpur. In the engineering industry, it increased from 13.9 per cent to 19.1 per cent in Maharashtra. In West Bengal, from 10.1 per cent to 17.3 per cent and in Karnataka from 9.7 per cent to 15.7 per cent during the same period. A similar trend was noticed in the woolen industry where in the same period. The percentage of absenteeism went up from 10.6 per cent to 18.8 per cent in Dhariwal in gold mining in Karnataka from 10.2 per cent to 18 per cent in the plantation industry. In Karnataka from 18.3 per cent to 20.7 per cent in the coalmines, the increases range between 13.5 per cent to 20.4 per cent.

Table 1
Absenteeism (2015-16) State-wise

STATE	No. of Working Factories	No. of Reporting Factories	Absenteeism Rate (%)
Andhra	4911	4696	8.6
Bihar	1710	1599	15.6
Gujarat	2081	1999	11.3
Karnataka	1414	1372	12.6
M.P.	1349	1296	14.7
Maharashtra	3646	3410	17.5
Punjab	1096	1017	17.3
Rajasthan	1167	1087	16.1
Tamil Nadu	2326	2210	12.0
Kerala	1213	1119	10.9
U.P.	3628	3146	11.5

Source : Indian Journal of Labour Absence and Tardiness.

Figure 1
Absenteeism Matrix

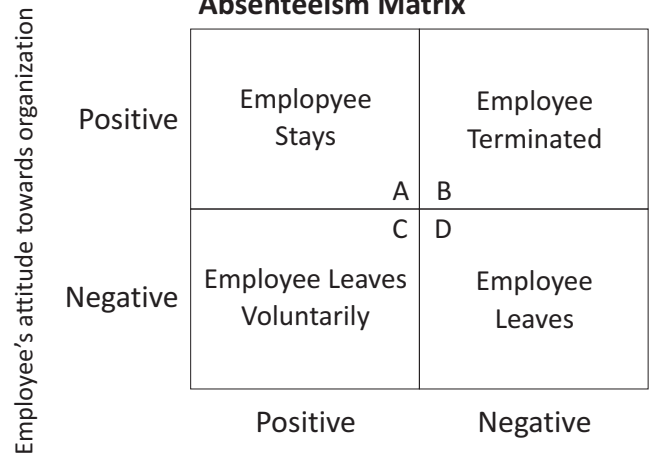
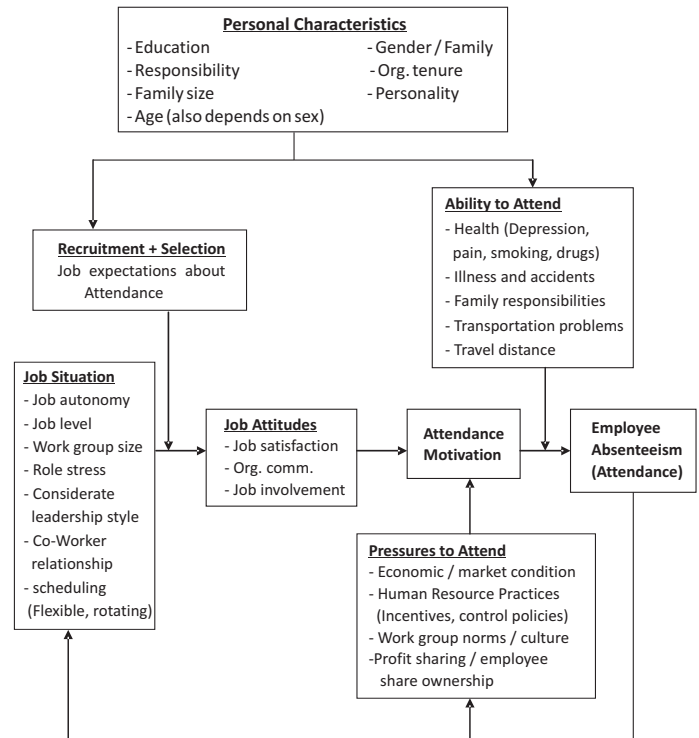


Figure 2
Model of Employee Absenteeism



7. COMPANY PROFILE

Shriram Pistons and Rings Ltd. (SPR) has been bringing the best to the industry since 1972. By joining hands with the Industry's biggest and experienced, it created a firm that promised reliability and strength with every product. It strives for quality that's unmatched by any other.

Shriram Pistons & Rings (SPR) has an

exceptional lineage of the Shriram Group, one of India's oldest and most reputed industrial houses. SPR is recognized by almost all Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEMs) in India and several OEMs in Europe and Asia, as a dependable partner for supply of Euro III, IV & V Pistons, Pins, Piston Rings and Engine Valves.

The Company has the capability to Design, Develop, Validate and Manufacture finished products for OEMs in India at its Tech Centre with 50+ Design and Engineering Professionals trained by its technology partners in Concept Design, FEA, Simulation, Rig Testing, Prototype Development, Engine Testing & Analysis. This is supplemented with continuous technology and application engineering support from the technology partners including in advanced engineering and manufacturing processes.

Development and manufacture of latest technology products for OEMs in Europe, USA, etc. challenges the enterprise to hone its manufacturing processes, technology and quality to global standards. Not surprisingly, SPR is the largest exporter of Pistons and Rings from India to discerning customers, including Ford, Honda, Kia, Renault, WABCO and has the 'Trading House' status from Government of India. SPR and USHA are also amongst the best recognized brand names in the aftermarket abroad.

Total Customer Satisfaction through Quality Management and Continuous Improvement has seen SPR grow from strength to strength. Building long-term relationships through excellent products, constant attention to their requirements and anticipating their needs even before they articulate them, have won SPR many accolades and consistent business. It's products form an integral part of the portfolio of all leading OEMs in India and abroad, including for Euro IV and V engines.

SPR adopts global technology leaders who share its commitment to product quality, performance and customer centricity. SPR has technical collaboration with Kolbenschmidt,

Germany & Honda Foundry, Japan for Pistons, Riken Corporation, Japan for Rings and Fuji Oozx, Japan for Engine Valves.

SPR is the first Piston, Ring and Engine Valve manufacturer in India to receive the coveted TPM Excellence Award in 2004 and TPM Special Award in 2007 from JIPM, Japan. SPR has received awards from OEMs for Excellence in Technology, Manufacturing Excellence, Quality, Exports and Overall Performance. SPR is Ford Q1 Quality Certified and has Direct on Line (DoL) status with most OEMs.

The Company deploys most modern manufacturing equipment and processes, using state-of-the-art technology from four global leaders. SPR has evolved into a centre of manufacturing excellence, employing over 5000 motivated and multi-skilled workers. The annual turnover is US\$ 200 million. The Company is the largest manufacturer and the largest exporter of Pistons and Rings from India and the largest supplier of Engine Valves to OEMs in India. Its products are marketed to OEMs and Aftermarket under the brands SPR and USHA, names that are synonymous with Quality and Reliability.

8. RESULTS DRAWN FROM THE QUESTIONNAIRE

50 respondents (workers at Sriram Pistons and Rings Ltd., Meerut) have been surveyed about Absenteeism with a pre-tested questionnaire. The questions have been explained to them in the Hindi.

As per survey, general rate of absenteeism is as low as 1 per cent per month for 71 per cent workers, 25 per cent workers take 2-3 days leave. 84 per cent workers say that they beforehand inform their supervisor about their leave.

Most of the workers i.e. 91 per cent think that they take leave only when it is very necessary. 74 per cent workers say that they are absent mostly due to the problems in their family. 72 per cent workers feel exhausting work conditions, 68 per

cent feel uncertain job responsibilities, 65 per cent say routine job, 62 per cent says Monotonous, 61 per cent says repetitive and 53 per cent measure their job as Risky job. Only 61 per cent workers say that they take leave to fulfill their social obligations.

74 per cent workers feel full job satisfaction and 26 per cent workers don't get full job satisfaction. Only 34 per cent workers are absent due to their health problems. 45 per cent workers are absent sometime when there is jam or Traffic problems in their way. 79 per cent workers feel that regular health camps for them & their family can reduce absenteeism. Result shows that 66 per cent workers doesn't clearly communicate their reason of their absence with their supervisor. Result shows that 73 per cent workers don't communicate their reason of absence with supervisor because they think that supervisor cannot help them in this matter. Result shows that 34 per cent workers don't feel comfortable with their Authoritarian kind of managers. Result shows that cash incentives for unused leaves and perfect attendance can definitely help in reducing absenteeism. Result shows that 18 per cent of workers feel that their relations are not healthy with their co-workers, who on linking found to be on higher rate of absenteeism. 74 per cent workers feel that if company takes preventive measures then rate of absenteeism can definitely reduce. 82 per cent workers feel that flexible job hours can help them to manage their other works without being absent from the job. 81 per cent workers feel that no control over time or quantity is other major factor for absenteeism. 68 per cent says increased workloads, 54 per cent says poor training, 51 per cent says inadequate supervisors, 42 per cent says under utilization of skills and 31 per cent says job security as the other major cause of absenteeism.

9. MAJOR FINDINGS & CONCLUSION

For management, absenteeism is an important concern from the viewpoints of service delivery, efficacy and a concern for their workers. Absenteeism is also an important and legitimate

concern of trade unions in their role of supporting measures that alleviate the causes of absenteeism including counseling programmes, "wellness programmes" and enhancement of co-worker and supervisor support and the construction of better working arrangements that suit the needs of both employer and employee. To be effective strategies will need to focus on areas of common concern to workers, management and unions, and will require the co-operation of these parties.

Absenteeism is a very complex subject which is shown by the enormous number of factors believed to contribute to it, and the mostly ineffectual methods that have been traditionally used in attempts to reduce it. Approaches to workplace attendance need to take into account the complexity of humanity-its behaviour and needs- and not merely consider the matter in terms of money saved or work to be performed. Absenteeism can only be modified but not eliminated when it is excessive.

In order to identify the causes and extent of absenteeism, proper records should be kept in every department for various causes of absenteeism by such division as age, gender, days of the week and classes of jobs. It should be noted that it is almost impossible to give a list of exact reasons and their percentage. The evaluator of the personnel programme should classify the date relating to absenteeism and try to analyse the various causes of absenteeism. The worker remain absent for various reasons of which some may be genuine but other are not so. The following findings have come forth through the present study :

(a) Nature of work

The rate of absenteeism is also affected by the nature of work. Absenteeism is prevalent due to, difficulties working out a new routine in unfamiliar employment, perhaps out so well situated in relation to their homes. When work is tough and monotonous in nature the worker tired physically and mentally. So he frequently remains absent without information to the employment.

(b) Poor Working Condition

Poor working conditions affect the worker's health adversely. He became tired physically and mentally. So, he frequently remains absent without information.

(c) Absence of Regular Leave Arrangement

Every worker requires a sufficient leave in a year for their personal work. It depends on the nature of industry. The employer should arrange for such leave to all workers. However in many factories, workers are not given leave as and when required naturally, workers remain absent without any intimation to the employer. Thus, absence of regular leave arrangement leads to labor absenteeism.

(d) Accidents

Industrial accidents and occupational diseases bring about absenteeism depending upon the nature of the process and machinery used. Accidents make the workers incapable of work for some days. They also create mental problems.

(e) Poor Control

Poor production and material control can result in absenteeism. Unless the flow of work between departments is balanced and condition, workers may stay away from their interest in the work and also lose the feeling of the importance dependable.

(f) Absence of Transport Facilities

Many factories are located away from the city limits, naturally, workers have to travel long distance. In case of any disturbance in the transport system, workers are unable to reach their place of work at proper time and they have to remain absent. Thus transport difficulties lead to labor absenteeism.

(g) Attraction to Village Life

Majority of Indian workers come from village to towns for employment physically, they are in towns but mentally they are in villages. Their relatives and family members are in the villages and naturally they feel like visiting their villages often. This leads to labour absenteeism. In addition, workers have to go to their native places due to illness of family members, court

matters, agriculture operations etc. such causes leads to high labour absenteeism.

(h) Cause of Religious Festivals

Religious festivals effect on the workers. Workers go to their home cause festivals. It is also seen that the absenteeism rate in the month of festival is higher than other months.

(i) Industrial Fatigue

Low wages compel a worker to seek some part time job to earn some side income. But this often results in constant fatigue, which compels him to remain absent for the next day & if fatigue affects him seriously, his absence may continue for quite some time.

(j) Miscellaneous Causes

A miscellaneous group of causes include such factor as bad weather, another job, personal business, friends visiting from distance location absence of strict discipline, willful disregard rules etc.

In a study undertaken on behalf of the national productivity council, Dr. Bhutan arrived at these causes:

- ◇ 5 per cent to 7 per cent of account of genuine personal sickness.
- ◇ 5 per cent to 7 per cent of account of genuine family sickness.
- ◇ 1 per cent to 2 per cent of account of bonafide relaxation needed because of overtime work.
- ◇ 5 per cent due to bonafide emergencies.
- ◇ 5 per cent due to social obligations.
- ◇ 15 per cent to 20 per cent of account of long term holidays.
- ◇ 5 per cent of account of distance from factories.
- ◇ 5 per cent to 10 per cent of account of earning higher wages in side jobs.
- ◇ 5 per cent to 10 per cent of account of maneuvering for overtime.
- ◇ 15 per cent to 20 per cent of account of drunken ness.
- ◇ 1 per cent to 2 per cent of account of disharmony with foreman etc.

10. SUGGESTIONS

For a programme to be effective an organisation must benefit from it in terms of decreased costs and from the production of a work force with a higher level of morale and commitment.

Simple prescriptive solutions are suggested such as the use of reward, lotteries or progressive discipline to solve absence problems in the work place without any consideration of the underlying causes of the problem. This probably explains the wide variation in success rates of various absence control measures. The following are some suggestions which can be put forth as given below :

(a) Clear Attendance Policy

An organisational policy on attendance provides a clear statement of the objectives and principles by which attendance will be promoted within an organisation. The policy statement is an important communication tool to assist managers, supervisors and workers to understand their roles and responsibilities.

(b) Sick Leave Pools

Sick leave pool arrangements, where workers contribute leave to a pool accessible by workers who suffer long-term illness or injuries. This type of system can assist with creating a positive absence culture where the pool is owned by the work force as an "insurance" against ill health.

(c) Absence Monitoring System

The measurement of absence is fundamental to identifying problems, developing solutions and monitoring the success of absence control strategies. Computer based absence reporting systems can provide data so that absence rates can be measured on an ongoing basis as an important indicator of overall human resource performance.

(d) Employee Assistance Programme

Employee Assistance Programmes usually offer counseling to assist with a wide range of problems including :

- (i) Workplace problems: including harassment, violence, conflict and re- structuring

- (ii) problems at home: including relationship problems, illness and drug/ alcohol problems.

(e) Reward, Incentives & Penalties

Rewards, penalties and incentives have an important role in absence management and the creation of an attendance culture. Such devices can vary from unambiguous rewards such as financial gain, through to clear penalties such as dismissal or even prosecution for fraud. There is a tendency to underestimate the importance of acknowledgment and public recognition as a form of reward and the use of relative disincentives including requirements to account for leave and provide direct information to supervisors of leave taken. These positive and negative incentives form elements in many programmes that seek to develop an attendance culture.

(f) Workplace Stress Strategies

Effective and simple strategies exist to assess workplace stress as a component of absence management practices. Whilst they do not represent a primary strategy, they may be important in environments where there is high absenteeism, high turnover, low morale, reduced productivity and frequent episodes of occupational stress. In a review of academic methods and practical managerial procedures, various techniques are discussed in terms of cost and accuracy.

(g) Flexible Working Arrangements

Flexible work arrangements have an attractive and popular appeal. They would be expected to exert an effect by allowing workers to schedule work around external factors such as childcare and medical appointments, but also by increasing job satisfaction through increased control, autonomy and responsibility.

Absenteeism is really a big problem for the industries as it increases turnover. Industries can not take up new orders, new process properly. The workers alone are not the culprits. This problem mainly persists where there is a temporary and contractual workforce.

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