



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF RESEARCH IN COMMERCE AND MANAGEMENT

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A STUDY ON ABSENTEEISM OF EMPLOYEES IN RETAILING INDUSTRY

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ABSTRACT

The term absenteeism refers to the failure to attend to work. It is one of the major problems faced by companies across the globe today. High rate of absenteeism is neither desirable to employers nor good for the employees. In majority of organizations, high rate of absenteeism has an adverse effect on quality and quantity of production, efficiency of workers and organization, organizational discipline and more importantly on the organization's intention to fulfill the new market demands. Unscheduled absenteeism badly hurts the progress of an organization resulting in loss of productivity, increased costs in hiring additional staff and low morale among the workers. It is high time that employers address this problem on a priority basis. A sales professional cites some other reasons like workplace politics, long commute, strained relationship with the immediate supervisor and lack of belongingness towards the organization as reasons for being absent from work. Whatever be the reason absenteeism is not at all a healthy practice and steps should be taken to manage it effectively. In this paper a study has been conducted among the sales people working in a retailing shop. The main objective is to find out the level of absenteeism among the workers in the Organization, to find out the various causes for absenteeism, to study the relationship between the employees satisfaction level and absenteeism and to finally suggest the possible remedial measures to reduce and control the absenteeism rate. The study concludes that absenteeism can be reduced to a great extent if the management takes initiative in making the workers feel responsible towards their job by introducing various motivational schemes.

KEYWORDS

Absenteeism, Job Satisfaction, Productivity, Motivation, Stress.

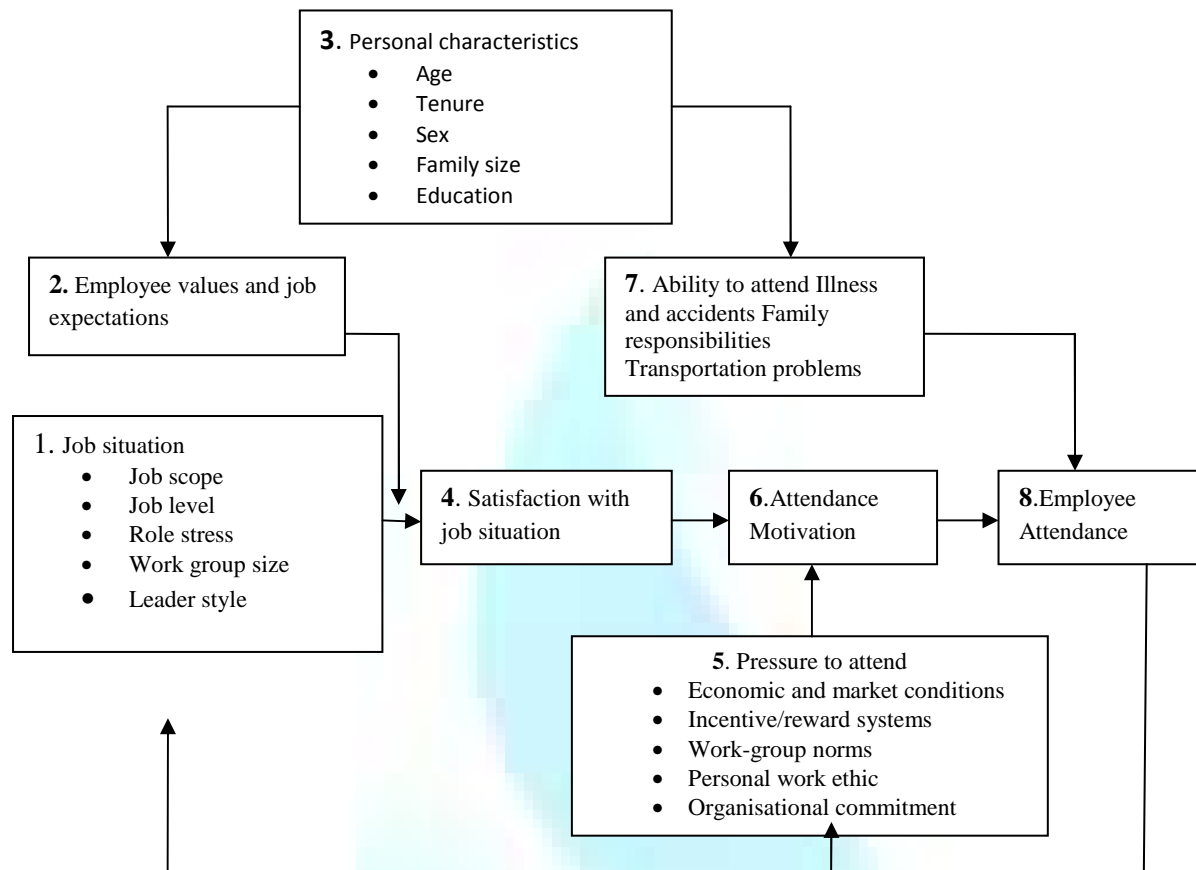
INTRODUCTION

Healthier employees mean happier employees. There's less absenteeism, improved productivity and lowered health care premium costs- Jim Link
Failure to attend or appear when expected. In another words, the absence means the state of being away or not being present. According to "Webster's Encyclopaedia unabridged dictionary", absence means, "not in a certain place at a given time". The Law Lexicon defined absent literally as "etymologically it means not present. According to **European foundation** Absenteeism is "Temporary, extended or permanent incapacity for work as a result of sickness or infirmity". Temporary work incapacity refers to the first period of absenteeism; in most countries limited to the first 52 weeks of disability. Extended or permanent disability relates to arrangements after the first period of absenteeism, in most countries the first 52 weeks of incapacity of work. (Source: Official publications of the European community's)

In the words of Johns, in 2007 "Absenteeism is failing to report for scheduled work. As such, it is the violation of a social obligation to be in a particular place at a particular time. Traditionally, absenteeism was viewed as an indicator of poor individual performance and a breach of an implicit contract between employee and employer. Thus, it was seen as a management problem and framed in economic or quasi-economic terms. Indeed, economists most frequently view absenteeism in labor supply terms. More recently, absenteeism has increasingly been viewed as an indicator of psychological, medical, or social adjustment to work." According to Goff, Mount, & Jamison, in 1990 "Employee absences due to personal illness, personal business and absence without leave, as measured in number of hours. (Source: G. Ritzer Ed., Blackwell Encyclopedia of sociology, Blackwell Publishing.) Van der Merwe and Miller (1988) classify absenteeism into three broad categories that help to understand the nature of this phenomenon. They are Sickness absence, Authorized absence/absence with permission and Unexcused absence/ absence without leave.

MODEL OF ABSENTEEISM

Heuristic framework on the various factors influencing employee attendance



Source: Rhodes & Steers 1990 University of the Western Cape

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The study on employees absenteeism conducted by a number of researchers has been gathered in order to analyse the previous findings in accordance to the present scenario.

The Business Roundtable Report C-6 (June 1982 Reprinted Sept. 1989) "Absenteeism and Turnover a Construction Industry Cost Effectiveness project report"

Based on the findings reflecting the workers' views, reasons for absenteeism and turnover fall into two broad categories: 1. Controllable 2. Uncontrollable. The controllable reasons for absenteeism and turnover involve the ingredients of the environment of a construction site. In addition, each ingredient is important in its own right, quite apart from its effect on absenteeism and turnover. Careful attention to planning, safety, interpersonal relationships, and other management fundamentals will not only reduce absenteeism and turnover, but will have other positive effects on job costs and schedules. A relatively small portion of the work force is causing most of the absenteeism and turnover. Eighty-six percent of the workers surveyed reported quitting fewer than three jobs in the last two years. Similarly, 67% of the work force reported missing work fewer than five days per year. This reinforces a conclusion that prompts management action with respect to chronic offenders can be very effective. The size of the work force does not appear to be a significant factor since about half of the workers stated preferences for jobs with less than 500 workers while the other half preferred jobs with a work force of 500 - 1000. **AN FOUNDATION**

The European foundation for the improvement of living and working conditions, (1997) "Study on absenteeism and ill health and preventing absenteeism at the workplace" Four types of interventions can be distinguished, which address different elements in this framework. The first kinds of intervention are procedural measures, which are aimed at raising the absenteeism barrier; these are measures for the monitoring and control of absenteeism. 1. Preventive work-oriented measures aim to reduce the discrepancy between workload and capacity by reducing the workload. This is done by removing the work-related causes of the problems in the area of safety, health and well-being. 2. Preventive person-oriented measures are those in which employees are supported to work (and live) in a safe and healthy way. These person-oriented measures aim to improve the balance between workload and capacity by increasing the capacity of individuals. 3. The last types of intervention aimed at reducing workplace absenteeism are reintegration measures. These reintegration measures aim to lower the reintegration barrier and to accelerate the return to work of sick employees.

R. BRIAN HAYNES, DAVID L. SACKETT, D. WAYNE TAYLOR, EDWARD S. GIBSON, AND ARNOLD L. JOHNSON, (October 5 2000), The new england journal of medicine "Increased Absenteeism from Work after Detection and Labeling of Hypertensive Patients". A study of hypertension in an industrial setting allowed us to confirm and explore an earlier retrospective finding that the labeling of patients as hypertensive resulted in increased absenteeism from work. After screening and referral, we found that 80 % of people have work pressure and tension that leads to absenteeism in the general employee population during this period. This hypertension is affecting the health of the employees which is unknown to them.

PAUL M. MUCHINSKY (27 July 2004) "Employee absenteeism at Iowa State University, USA". The purpose of this paper is to review the literature on employee absenteeism as a form of withdrawal behaviour apart from turnover. Studies examining the psychometric properties of absence measures are reviewed, along with the relationship between absenteeism and personal, attitudinal, and organizational variables. Studies exploring the relationship between absenteeism and turnover are examined according to the unit of analysis studied in the research. Programmatic efforts to reduce employee absenteeism are also reviewed. Throughout the paper emphasis is placed on the indices used by investigators to measure absenteeism, and the problems that have arisen in the literature through the use of multiple indicators of absenteeism. The review concludes with suggestions for research that are of both theoretical and practical concern.

MOHAN LAL, JAYDEB BISWAS, (2004-06) Journal of the Academy of Hospital Administration, "A Study of Absenteeism among Class-D Employees" Absenteeism is a major factor affecting work productivity and closely related to worker's health as well as personal, domestic and social life. It is a useful index to assess the state of health of workers and their physical, mental and social well-being in an organization. Absenteeism is absence from a work by a work during

working hours. Voluntary absence is that which he or she could not have avoided due to such reasons beyond his or her control, as sickness or accident etc.⁵ No health care activity can be carried out without the deployment of health staff. Employees working at lower at lower level in health care institutions are also important member of each team in the institution. Absence of these employees is an important problem in health care institution. It may seriously affect the sensitive service organization like hospital. Absenteeism also affects the working and reputation of health care institution

Faculty of economic and management sciences Department of industrial psychology of The university of the western cape, (November 2005) "The relationship between job satisfaction and absenteeism in a selected field services section within an electricity utility in the western cape". Absenteeism - employees not showing up for work when scheduled - can be a major problem for organizations. As pressures increase on the budgets and competitiveness of companies, more attention is being given to reduce workplace absenteeism and its cost. Most research has concluded that absence is a complex variable and that it is influenced by multiple causes, both personal and organizational. Job satisfaction has been noted as one of the factors influencing an employee's motivation to attend. Studies on the relationship between absenteeism and job satisfaction seem to be inconsistent. Some research has found no correlation between these two variables whereas other studies indicate a weak to moderate relationship between these two variables.

A.SUKUMAR, (2005) "A study on Labour Absenteeism in Ammaru foundries Coimbatore" says that Labour absenteeism is harmful to both the employers and the workers as follows: Normal work-flow in the factory is disturbed; Overall production in the factory goes down, Difficulty is faced in executing the orders in time and Casual workers may have to be employed to meet production schedules. Such workers are not trained properly.

K. RAVIPRAKASH, (2007) The Employee Absenteeism Survey in "Ekansh Motors Maruti Udyog Ltd" Kaithal. The purpose of this study is to find out the various causes of absenteeism in automobile sector. Main reason for absenteeism is health & sickness and family problems. Out of total percentage of absenteeism, percentage due to health & sickness is quite high. Temporary associates take less holiday because they want to become permanent. In case of staffs the main reasons were work overload and conflicting demand. Here absenteeism is mainly occurring due to not completing their work on target time and they used to do that work by taking holidays.

Academy of management studies, Dehradun (2007) "Absenteeism of Employee in hospital sectors of Mumbai" in this study they found some reasons for absenteeism which are as follows: Temperature problem is more acute in some areas which make the employees feel tiring and unenthusiastic. Unhygienic washroom problem is very critical. Quality of food is very poor and unhygienic food problem is very acute. Overcrowd transport problem. No recognition of qualification and lack of Learning and development.

The CBS interactive network, (May 2, 2007) "Reducing and Managing Workplace Absenteeism", Productivity loss due to absenteeism is a serious and growing challenge. In the United States, the annual cost to employers for time lost due to accidents is almost \$100 billion, and other unscheduled worker absences costs even more. Absence management is a growing body of knowledge and experience that managers apply to the control and reduction of these costs.

LYMAN W. PORTER AND RICHARD M. STEERS, JOURNAL (22 May 2007) "Organizational, work, and personal factors in employee turnover and absenteeism", Oakland University, School of Economics & Management Critically examines research over the past 10-12 yrs concerning factors related to turnover and absenteeism in work situations. On a general level, overall job satisfaction was consistently and inversely related to turnover. In an effort to break down the global concept of job satisfaction, various factors in the work situation were analyzed as they related to withdrawal behavior. 4 categories of factors, each representing 1 "level" in the organization, were utilized: organization-wide factors, immediate work environment factors, job-related factors, and personal factors. Several variables in each of the 4 categories were found to be related fairly consistently to 1 or both forms of withdrawal. An attempt is made to put the diverse findings into a conceptual framework centering on the role of met expectations.

WILLIAM H. HENDRIX, BARBARA A. SPENCER AND GAIL S. GIBSON, Journal of business and psychology volume 9 reprinted (2009) "Organizational and extra organizational factors affecting stress, employee well-being, and absenteeism for males and females". The purpose of this research is to examine separately for males and females, the effects of different sources of job and life stress on the emotional and physical well-being of those individuals, and in turn on absenteeism. Results using experienced higher levels of job stress, absenteeism, and poorer emotional well-being. Patterns of relationships for males and females were similar; however, the data suggest that sex moderates the effects of different sources of stress on emotional and physical well-being and absenteeism. The model developed as a part of this research was more complicated for females than for males.

PICOARS AND PAYERS, (10/14/2009) ,"A research study on absenteeism of employees in industrial sector" According to Picoars and Payers 'unexpected absence disturbs the efficiency of the group as the jobs are inter-connected, if one single man remains absent without prior notice the whole operation process is distributed. This absenteeism results in production losses because, due to absenteeism, workers cost increases and thus efficiency of operations is affected.' Absenteeism rate can be calculated for different employees and for different time periods like month & year. The frequency rate reflects the incidence of absence and is usually expressed as the no of separate absence in a given period, irrespective of absence. The frequency rate represents the average no of absence per worker in a given period.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

According to the most recent CCH Unscheduled Absence Survey, employers are losing ground when it comes to keeping workers on the job. Unscheduled absenteeism rates have risen to their highest level since 1999. What continues to be of most concern is that almost two out of three employees who don't show up for work aren't physically ill. Absenteeism is a serious problem for a management because it involves heavy expenses. Retail employees do not usually ask for leave in advance or even give notice during their absence as to how long they would be away. The management is generally uncertain about the duration of employees' absence and cannot take appropriate measures to fill the job. Absenteeism rate is a yardstick to find out the employees attitude towards his work and the organization. They may not like the work, have some personal work or suffer from stress and body pain as in a retail store the employees have to stand throughout the day for attending the customer. So an attempt was made through this study to find out the actual cause.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To find out the level of absenteeism among the workers in the Organization.
- To find out the various causes for absenteeism.
- To study the relationship between the employees satisfaction level and absenteeism.
- To suggest the possible remedial measures to reduce and control the absenteeism rate.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research design adopted in this study is Descriptive research. The researcher has used both the primary as well as secondary data. The primary data was collected using a structured questionnaire and secondary data from financial websites, business magazines, newspapers, journals, attendance record, employee's handbook, HR handbook and policies, and from company website. The sample size was 75 and the sampling techniques adopted were simple random sampling. Scoring scheme was evolved to quantify the data. The data was analyzed using Percentage analysis, weighted average, Chi square test and One way ANOVA.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

- Out of 75 employees 43% of them, are of the age ranges between 25-35 and in which 67% are married and 33% of are unmarried. 33% of employees have more than 4 family members. 63% of employee takes less than ½ hr to reach the organisation. Majority of the employee (41%) are having an experience of 5-10 years.

- 59% of employee comes to the job on time but at the same time around 57% of them take leave without intimation. 32% of employees avail leave even when the application is not sanctioned by the superior. 44% of employees take leave due to family or personnel problems and 41% of them take leave due to health issues.
- 27% of the employees agree that stress adds to their absenteeism, 28% of the employees disagree that they are healthy and energetic, 16% of the employees agree that they suffer from specific illness, 49% of the employees are highly satisfied with working condition & norms of the company, 49% of the employees are satisfied with the relationship with the supervisor and his behaviour towards grievance handling procedure and 48% of the employees are satisfied with the level of freedom in the organisation.
- From the analysis made using chi-square reveals that there is no significant difference between age of the employees and reason for absenteeism, number of family members and leave taken by the employees in a month, experience of the employees and kind of leave taken by them and finally age of the employees and reason for taking long leave.
- One way ANOVA shows that there is a significant difference between the employees satisfaction level with the rate of absenteeism.

ABSENTEEISM AND WORK REGULARITY OF EMPLOYEES

Attributes	W. Avg (3)	Rank
The regularity of the employees coming for work at correct time	2.25	1
Leave taken by the employees without any information	2.11	5
Possibility of getting leave whenever it is required	2.20	2
Leave taken by the employees even though the leave application is not sanctioned	2.19	3
Tiredness of work to the employees	2.13	4

WORKING ENVIRONMENT

Attributes	AVG(5)	RANK
Awareness of the employees about the availability of various leave facilities	4.44	1
Rate of employees informing the supervisor through phone	3.39	4
Level of balance between personal life with that of work life	3.47	3
Rate of employees says that stress leads to absenteeism	2.73	5
Rate of employees who are healthy & energetic	3.95	2
Rate of employees who suffers from specific illness	2.44	6

INTER PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP

Attributes	AVG (5)	RANK
Work, working condition & norms of the company	4.11	2
Relationship with the supervisor and his behaviour towards grievance handling procedure	3.89	4
Relationship with the co-workers	4.28	1
Level of freedom in the organisation	3.92	3

CHI SQUARE CALCULATIONS**1) Relationship between age of the employees and reason for absenteeism**

NULL HYPOTHESIS HO: There is no significant difference between age of the employees and reason for absenteeism.

df = (c-1) (r-1); df-9 and Table value is 16.919@5% significance level. Since the calculated value is less than the table value, we accept the Ho at 5% significant level. So there is no significant difference between age of the employees and reason for absenteeism.

2) Relationship between number of family members and leave taken by the employees in a month

NULL HYPOTHESIS Ho: There is no significant difference between number of family members and leave taken by the employees in a month.

df = (c-1) (r-1); df-9 and Table value is 16.919@5% significance level

Inference: Since the calculated value is less than the table value, we accept the Ho at 5% significant level. So there is no significant difference between number of family members and leave taken by the employees in a month.

3) Relationship between experience of the employees and kind of leave taken by them

NULL HYPOTHESIS Ho: There is no significant difference between experience of the employees and kind of leave taken by them

O	E	$(O - E)^2$	$\frac{(O - E)^2}{E}$
0	2.05	4.2025	2.05
2	1.17	0.6889	0.59
5	3.22	3.1684	0.98
4	4.54	0.2916	0.06
6	3.92	4.3264	1.10
1	2.24	1.5376	0.69
5	6.16	1.3456	0.22
9	8.68	0.1024	0.01
7	5.79	1.4641	0.25
1	3.31	5.3361	1.61
10	9.09	0.8281	0.09
13	12.81	0.0361	0.0028
1	2.24	1.5376	0.69
4	1.28	7.3984	5.78
2	3.52	2.3104	0.66
5	4.96	0.0016	0.00032
TOTAL			14.783

df = (c-1) (r-1); df-9 and Table value is 16.919@5% significance level

Inference: Since the calculated value is less than the table value, we accept the H_0 at 5% significant level. So there is no significant difference between experience of the employees and kind of leave taken by them.

4) Relationship between age of the employees and reason for taking long leave

REASONS FOR LONG LEAVE AGE	Family Matter	Health issues	Religious Matter	None of the above	RT
<25	3	4	3	1	11
25-35	8	7	7	2	24
36-45	3	8	3	2	16
>45	0	5	1	1	7
CT	14	24	14	6	58

NULL HYPOTHESIS H_0 : There is no significant difference between age of the employees and reason for taking long leave.

ALTERNATIVE HYPOTHESIS H_1 : There is a significant difference between age of the employees and reason for taking long leave.

O	E	$(O - E)^2$	$\frac{(O - E)^2}{E}$
3	2.05	0.9025	0.44
4	3.52	0.2304	0.065
3	2.05	0.9025	0.44
1	0.88	0.0144	0.016
8	4.48	12.3904	2.77
7	7.68	0.4624	0.06
7	4.48	6.3504	1.42
2	1.92	0.0064	0.003
3	2.99	0.0001	0.00003
8	5.12	8.2944	1.62
3	2.99	0.0001	0.00003
2	1.28	0.5184	0.405
0	1.31	1.7161	1.31
5	2.24	7.6161	3.400
1	1.31	0.0961	0.073
1	0.56	0.1936	0.346
TOTAL			12.368

df = (c-1) (r-1); df-9 and Table value is 16.919@5% significance level

Inference: Since the calculated value is less than the table value, we accept the H_0 at 5% significant level. So there is no significant difference between age of the employees and reason for taking long leave.

ONE WAY ANOVA

5) Showing the attributes that satisfies the employees in relation to their level of absenteeism.

Attributes	HS	S	N	D	HD	Row total
Work, working condition & norms of the company	37	20	11	3	4	75
Relationship with the supervisor	19	37	14	2	3	75
Relationship with the co-workers	41	18	12	4	0	75
Level of freedom in the organisation	20	36	12	7	0	75
Column total	1117	1111	449	116	77	300

NULL HYPOTHESIS H_0 : There is no significant difference between the employees satisfaction level with the rate of absenteeism

	X1	X2	X3	X4	X5	Total	$X1^2$	$X2^2$	$X3^2$	$X4^2$	$X5^2$
Y1	37	20	11	3	4	75	1369	400	121	9	16
Y2	19	37	14	2	3	75	361	1369	196	4	9
Y3	41	18	12	4	0	75	1681	324	144	16	0
Y4	20	36	12	7	0	75	400	1296	144	49	0
Total	1117	1111	449	116	77	300	3811	3389	605	78	25

ONE WAY ANOVA TABLE

SOURCES OF VARIANCES	SUM OF SQUARES	DEGREES OF FREEDOM	MEAN SQUARE	F-RATIO	5% TABLE VALUE
Between columns	2679	(c-1)4	669.75	F=14.70	F(4,16) 3.01
With in rows	729	(n-c)16	45.56		
TOTAL	3408	20			

Calculated value=14.70, Table value=3.01

Inference: Since the calculated value is greater than table value. So we reject the H_0 at 5% significant level. There is a significant difference between the employees satisfaction level with the rate of absenteeism.

SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Absenteeism is a serious problem for management because it involves heavy additional expenses. The management should take the following measures to reduce the rate of absenteeism:

- **The Return-to-Work Interview-** The training of supervisors in how to best manage absenteeism should include instruction on how to conduct effective and fair return-to-work interviews. Recent national surveys indicate that these interviews are regarded as one of the most effective tools for managing short-term absenteeism.
- **Employee Assistance Program-** Employees become frequently absent from work due to personal problems so the company can take initiative by providing employee assistance programs.
- **Sickness Reporting** – Tell employees that they must phone in as early as possible to advise why they are unable to make it to work and when they expect to return.
- **Return to Work Interview-** When an employee returns to work then ensure that they have a 'return to work interview' and routine enquiry must be done.
- **Medical care program** - The management can provide advanced medical care program at least twice in a year for the health care of the workers.
- **Attendance incentives** - The attendance incentives may be raised a little to motivate the employees regularity.
- **Induction programme for the family members** – The family members of the worker should also clearly inform about the loss the worker incurs due to his frequent absence for work. The management can also make the family members to actively co-operate in making the worker attend work regularly. This can be done by introducing a scheme which provides every year gifts, some home appliances, or some valuable things, for every worker's family, who attend for work for a specified number of days in a year.
- **Disciplinary action** - Some strict action could be taken on those workers who avail more than 2 days leave without any justifiable reasons.
- **Motivation programmes-** conducting some games for the employees once in a month or taking the employees for some entertainment trip will help in motivating and retaining the employees. This will also help in reducing the stress level of the employees.

CONCLUSION

Absenteeism has become a major problem in most of the Retail Industries. The absenteeism is mainly due to the poor educational background of the workers, backwardness of the society. The workers are not as committed as Japanese workers but for this worker class alone cannot be blamed but the employer's are also equally responsible. The management should provide good working environment which would create a feeling of job satisfaction. Absenteeism can be reduced to a great extent if the management takes initiative in making the workers feel responsible towards their job by introducing various motivational schemes. Absenteeism is the universal problem and every organization should strive to tackle the problem for future development. Establishing a good communication channel would reduce the gap between employer and employees, which brings in positive attitude, co-operation and good understanding towards each other.

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