



EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME

in

INDUSTRIAL ORGANISATIONS

Social Work Concepts and Practices

Abraham P. Francis

**Employee Assistance Programme
in
Industrial Organisations
Social Work Concepts and Practices**

Employee Assistance Programme
in
Industrial Organisations
Social Work Concepts and Practices

Abraham P. Francis



AUTHORSPRESS

Worldwide Circulation through Authorspress Global Network
First Published 2012
by
Authorspress

Editorial
Q-2A Hauz Khas Enclave
New Delhi-110 016

Marketing
E-35/103, Jawahar Park
Laxmi Nagar, Delhi-110 092

e-mails: authorspress@rediffmail.com; authorspress@hotmail.com
Website: www.authorspressbooks.com

Copyright © 2012 Author

Employee Assistance Programme in Industrial Organisations:
Social Work Concepts and Practices
ISBN 978-81-7273-634-7

DISCLAIMER

This book is based on the doctoral research work carried out during 2000-2004 and the intention behind publication of this work is to share the idea with social work students and practitioners, to enable them to think creatively and to take this agenda forward in the Indian context. I have not changed much of the data, but have limited the use of quantitative data in the discussion. In documenting the discussions, I have also tried to maintain confidentiality of the responses from various sources and the industries associated with this. However, some information provided in the book may have changed and many new initiatives may have occurred in the field about which you may find no reference. Please be mindful of such developments in the field, omissions that may have occurred and treat the book as a reference point. Every effort has been made to trace and acknowledge the sources. However, should any errors have occurred, I tender my sincere apologies.

Printed in India at Tarun Offset, Delhi.

Acknowledgement

It is a long cherished dream that has come true. It was in 1994 when I first thought of doing a PhD in social work but circumstances did not allow me to do so. It took me long years of waiting to register for PhD in social work. Meanwhile, I was also in search of a topic, which was new and could be applicable in the field. This search for the subject found its culmination when I had an interaction with Prof. Sanjai Bhatt in 1999 with whom I shared my interest in pursuing a PhD programme. With his guidance the subject matter for the study was finalised.

The subject has been very challenging and I enjoyed doing this work. I received extensive encouragement and support from different quarters, during the course of my study, and I would like to express my sincere gratitude towards all of them. First of all, I thank God for showering His choicest blessings on me without Whose providential hand it would not have been possible to bring out this book.

In fact, I find no words to express my gratitude to my research guide and mentor, Prof. Sanjai Bhatt, who inspired me to work on this subject. He has been more than a Supervisor, for his enlightened guidance, wise counsel and constant encouragement brought this work to fruition. I thank him for his academic blessings and timely guidance in pursuing this study.

I would like to thank very specially Dr. Ashwini Kumar, Director, Santulan EAP, Delhi for his unending encouragement and support in my undertaking this study; he has been instrumental in giving me an orientation about the EAP

concept and its applicability in the Indian situation. The team from Santulan, especially Mr. S. L. Manga, helped me locate national providers and review the existing literature on the subject.

I thank all the industrial organisations and the various agencies for their wholehearted support in the data collection and for sharing information related to the topic. I would like to place on record the support provided by Ms. Sanyogita Raina, Senior Manager Welfare L&T, Mumbai for her valuable suggestions and support in the data collection. Special thanks are due to Mr. Kalpak Huddar, Personal Officer, HAL, Mr. Batcha of Orchid Chemicals, Madras, Mr. Wilson Joseph, Personal Officer, GTN Textiles, Kerala, and Ms. Herlin Sachdeva, Deputy Manager Policy Group, NTPC for providing me inputs on industrial counselling in the organizations. I would also like to thank Ms. Sadhana Khurana, HR Executive, Cisco, Bangalore for giving me insights into the international providers in India. Special thanks are due to Dr. Manoj Rai Mehta, Escorts, and Mr. Padro, Personnel Manager, Escorts for their valuable support.

I also thank all my respondents, the providers, programme promoters, the beneficiaries and the organisational representatives for their valuable comments, suggestions and information without whose support this book would not have been possible.

I thank the EAPA (Employee Assistance Professional Associations—USA) for giving me a membership and for providing me the latest publications of the programme. I also thank *University of South Australia* for allowing me to access their libraries.

I express my deep sense of gratitude to Dr. Akash Gulaiia who has always encouraged me and offered many commendable remarks and suggestions. I thank Mr. Rajesh Joseph, Mr. Shaji P.C. and Mr. Biju T.V. for their friendly support in giving a final shape to this study. It is in fact a very difficult task for me to name all those who shared their valuable inputs with me on the subject. I remember and express my gratitude

to all of them who have in one way or another helped me in completing this work.

Finally, I thank my wife Mini for her understanding, encouragement and patience with my busy schedule. I thank my children Abhijith and Alka for their silent approval of my long hours of work and who patiently longed for my care.

— **Abraham P. Francis**

Preface

Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) is an established field of practice in the West where social work professionals are also one of the stakeholders. EAP has had its origin in the US where the industrial workers were faced with the problems of alcoholism. The rationale for conducting this study is that EAP as a subject is an unexplored area of social work practice in India. Since the industrial scenario in India has been rapidly changing, it has its consequential affects on work patterns, work life and workforce composition and characteristics. As more and more employees are facing intra-personal and inter-personal problems at home and at workplace, the industrial organizations are challenged to encounter employees' personal as well as work-related problems in a systematic and scientific manner. This new situation requires professional intervention and support at the workplace. As it is a new concept in Indian organisations, the subject matter has not been studied in detail. There is also paucity of literature on this subject in the Indian context as well.

This book attempts to understand various aspects of Employee Assistance Programmes in industrial organizations in India, to trace the historical context and perspectives of social work in industry, to study EAP concept, modus operandi of EAP, historical development in west and India, to study the changing pattern of needs and problems of workforce requiring EAP/social work intervention and to find out the impact of EAP programme on workers' lifestyle and behavioral changes at their workplace. The book also explores the need, relevance and scope of occupational social work as a field of practice as well

as suggested a model of EAP suited to Indian industrial environment. Besides, the book defines key concepts and explains the methodology used to gather data. It also discusses the views of EA service providers, EA programme promoters, EAP beneficiaries and organizational representatives, belonging to large industrial organizations located across the country. The mental well being of employees is a subject of fundamental importance to all businesses, companies and public services. Leading organisations have become increasingly more aware that mental illness, substance abuse and other employee behaviour problems have a negative impact on the corporate self-interest. The response by many companies both here and overseas has been to initiate employee mental “wellness” programs. One such service, now commonly referred to as an “Employee Assistance Program”, (EAP) has proven to be one of the most successful approaches in assisting troubled employees

The book introduces the concept of EAP and explains EAP’s history, philosophy, core-technology, international scenario, models and other issues, besides, studies on EAP in Western countries and in India. Since EAP has been operational in the West for many decades, there are a number of studies on varied aspects of EAP like psychiatric intervention at workplace, behavioural modification, mental health, benefits of EAP, efficacy of services, cost benefit analysis of EAP, technological assistance and its impact etc. Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) literature calls for an increase in the quantum of research dedicated to demonstrate programme effectiveness. Specifically, EAPs need to demonstrate their ability to improve client health, increase productivity, and reduce healthcare costs. Much of the existing EAP outcome research is built upon customer satisfaction data. In the Indian context there are not many empirical studies on various aspects of EAP. In fact there is only one empirical study directly on EAP by Manga and Kumar (1999) whereas there are a few research papers and articles written by researchers (2000 onwards).

This book is based on some aspects of the doctoral research work carried out by the author and efforts have been made to

use only such information that are required for discussing the subject which would lead to further researches and studies. The intention here is to discuss the need for such services in India and the scope for social work practice. The author has not presented all the quantitative data collected for the purpose of doctoral research. However, I have tried to incorporate major points that emerged from both the quantitative and qualitative analysis for consideration in the book.

Employee Assistance Programme basically recognises the worth and dignity of individuals, believes in involvement of affected persons, caters to incomplete needs and problems. It is more akin to social work profession. Like professional social work, EAP also provides preventive therapeutic and developmental services. Both the professions are human service-oriented based on humanitarian rights, welfare and justice and democratic values framework. Since the tenets of EAP are quite similar and close to social work profession, both can reinforce and complement each other.

Industries have witnessed drastic changes in the past one decade especially after the adoption of the new economic policy in 1991. Some of the salient features of the industrial policy are (i) to maintain a sustained growth in productivity (ii) to enhance gainful employment (iii) to achieve optimal utilization of human resources (iv) to attain international competitiveness and (v) to transform India into a major partner and player in the global arena. This policy framework is focused is on: (i) Deregulating Indian industry (ii) Allowing the freedom and flexibility in responding to market forces and (iii) Providing a policy regime that facilitates and fosters the growth of Indian industry. Besides, pharma, cement, steel, textile, chemical, IT industry and IT-enabled services are rapidly growing offer opportunities for FDI.

India has emerged as an important venue for the services sector including financial accounting, call centres, and business process outsourcing. The travel and tourism industry has grown to a size of US\$ 32 billion. On the other hand about 7 per cent to 8 per cent of the workforce in the organized sector is protected while 92 per cent to 93 per cent is unprotected,

unorganized and vulnerable. There is a trend of growth in casualisation of labour in the total workforce over the years.

EAP has enormous scope as a business and greater challenges to respond as human service profession in India. Thus, EAP is a natural outcome arising out of the need and demand from both the organisations as well as employees. The organisations included in the study are from different sectors like engineering, computer and software, pharmaceuticals, automobiles and textiles. All these organizations can be put in the category of manufacturing industries, partially belonging to the service sector.

With respect to vision of these organizations, though it is difficult to sum up in one line yet the common elements are total commitment in terms of product innovation with entrepreneurial zeal and customer satisfaction. Similarly these organizations have high regard for human values. Most of the organizations have adopted the following as core values: belief in people's capacity, dignity and worth, willingness to learn and experiment, accountability, transparency and openness. All organisations have designed the best HR policies and system based on scientific and philosophical tenets. These organizations do provide and care for their both personal and professional life. Therefore they have interwoven training, education and development for skill upgradation creativity, innovation and achievements in the policies and programmes, which creates a solid foundation for accepting EAP.

There is no specific curriculum or training in India, which leads to nationally recognized qualification as an EA professional. There are a good number of social workers working as EA service providers, which is a positive direction for social work profession in India. Both types of EAP programme providers (external or internal) exist and it is very difficult at this stage to state the preferred type of EAP services providers as the concept itself is in the initial stages of evolution.

The study has come up with some interesting facts related to the concept of EAP in India. In India, the situation differs substantially in the concept as well as in the application of the

EAP. The misconceptions about the terminology/ concept among various stakeholders have been noticed. It was treated just as another welfare programme or management tool to address labour issues. EAP was literally understood as a programme that supports the employers, without understanding the essence of the programme. In all the organizations it is found that one or more than one component of EAP was already in existence. The different opinions expressed by trade union leaders, organizational representatives, employees, providers and promoters are discussed very elaborately in this book. It is found that there are still misconceptions among various partners in the implementation of EA programme. It also highlights some of the major challenges for EAP in India. The biggest challenge for the EA profession is now to develop an EAP model suitable for Indian workforce and work organisations, to create trained manpower and to replicate this model for the unorganized sector of the workforce where the majority of the Indian workforce is employed. This transition from the organized sector to the unorganized sector will be a major challenge that will invite the intervention of the social workers as well.

Another major fact, which emerges out of the study, is that EAP is now becoming an integral part of the promising organizations in India. Many international providers have started providing EA services to their clients in India. Social workers do have a wider scope to enter into this profession as counsellors, EA service providers or programme promoters. It is evidently clear that EAPs acceptable to workforce, unions and management irrespective of the approach chosen, scope and technology used, the type of programmes covered and the nature of industries because EA programmes are need-based, demand-driven, time-saving and cost effective. Most of the EAP beneficiaries come to know about EAP through their own organizations as they have not heard about it earlier. Most of them are initially not able to differentiate EAP from their existing programmes. They consider EAP as a new gimmick of management but they find these programmes more appropriate and better than their welfare programmes. They are satisfied with the services. Most of the employees perceive

EA as an essential requisite for their workplace. They do not know much about EA providers and their background but there is a general awareness about EAP among employees and they are happy with the new approach of personal care. The employees agree that emotional problems do affect their work and there is a need to seek professional help. EAP has also been misunderstood by the trade union leaders as well as employees a management tool to reduce the manpower. Most of the employees are unaware of the scheme under which they have availed services. Some of them consider EAP as another form of welfare service. As far as impact is concerned, a majority of EAP beneficiaries accept that EAP knowledge and training has a positive and definite impact on their life and work life. Those beneficiaries who have availed personal services like counselling, de-addiction therapy or stress/anger workshops are all praise for its impact. There is growing demand by employees to provide services for managing stress, substance abuse, alcoholism treatment, family counselling, social gathering, mental health and health treatment.

The book concludes with some suggestions for improvement and EAP model suited for the Indian industrial environment. The three distinct sets of suggestions are for industrial organizations, EA providers and programme promoters and social work institutions. It is relevant from the details that there can be no better solution than EAP to respond to complex and divergent needs of employees at their workplace. Social workers in the industries support the introduction of EAP and is engaged in new experiments and innovations linked to providing EA services. But there is a lack of trained workforce in India now. Thus Industrial organisations heavily depend on external providers. So there is a scope for the social workers to explore this unexplored area of occupational social work. Because EAP is a very specialized field of services, it has the potential to grow as an area of occupational social work. It is high time for social work institutions to initiate new courses on occupational social work, employees assistance programme as a specialized long and short-term course in India. Based on the understanding of the subject, it is argued that Western models of EAP have some limitations and can only be successful

if it is locally designed to meet the needs of the workforce because these practice models of EAP grew in different socioeconomic background, political context, cultural mooring, work culture and ethico-religious paradigm. While organisational approaches towards work, workers and workplace are significantly different, moral, legal and socio-political responses to their needs, demands and problems also vary. In Western thinking, EAP approaches are person-centred, whereas Indian setting appreciates a person more as a social entity rather than merely as an individual. Therefore, the EAP model for the Indian industrial environment will work only if it is based on realistic understanding of persons (workers) of work, and workplaces within the socio-cultural legal, political systems.

This book is an attempt to create more discussions in the academic circle and to encourage many more to undertake researches in this important area of social work practice in India. I hope by sharing these ideas that emerged from my studies will provide some direction to the future researches. I am indebted and thankful to the many researchers, academics and practitioners who have directly or indirectly supported this work and from whose works I have drawn on. I am thankful to Sudarshan Kcherry and the entire team of Authorspress, New Delhi, for giving this volume a pleasant shape. I do not claim to know all about EAP, but it is only an effort to view it from social work practice context and how it can be made use in the Indian contexts based on the evidences that are available through the literature and practice.

— Abraham P. Francis

Contents

| | |
|---|------------|
| Acknowledgement | v |
| Preface | ix |
| 1. Employee Assistance Programme (EAP): An Overview | 1 |
| 2. Worldwide Applications and Global Perspectives | 48 |
| 3. EAP: The Indian Scenario | 72 |
| 4. EAP: Technology and Mechanism | 84 |
| 5. EAP: Models, Strategies and Ways Forward | 88 |
| 6. EAP and Social Work Practice in the Industry | 110 |
| 7. EAP and Occupational Social Work | 135 |
| 8. EAP Services in India: Responses from Stakeholders and Lessons from the Field | 152 |
| 9. An EAP Model for Indian Context | 208 |
| Bibliography | 230 |
| Index | 265 |