An accepted definition is a basic necessity for a proper study of any piece of work. The more so in case of a research work. The importance of a definition lies in making a clear cut distinction between the object and other pseudo-objects. It circumscribes boundary line of the subject concerned. "Definition", Lionel Robbins said "is like a wall of a city that circumscribes everything in it". Or knowing language is the basic difference between men and animals. Definitions therefore, assist us in comprehending the objects correctly.

Definition is seldom static in nature. It is ever changing. Definitions change with the passage of time. Words change their connotations from time to time. Therefore, it is very difficult to define a moving object. For example, till recently economists pinned their faith in the scarcity definition of economics given by L. Robbins. Now-a-days the faith is shaken. The scarcity oriented definition is replaced by growth oriented definition. Such a drift towards new definition occurs because the contours of object under study are rapidly expanding. Therefore likening of a definition to a wall of city is dangerous. New building may spring up outside the wall. They constitute new areas for further probe.
Nothing remains constant under the sun. Everything is subject to change. So is the case with the definition on absenteeism. Prior to World War I the word absenteeism was associated with absentee land lords. Today absenteeism refers to absentee workers in the factories. There is a lack of uniform definition on absenteeism. Different authors have defined absenteeism in different ways. Labour Investigation Committee emphasises greatly the need for a uniform definition on absenteeism. Or else absenteeism may give different meanings to different people. For example in calculating rate of absenteeism cotton mills in Bombay and Ahmedabad exclude the substitute workers. In Empress Mill, Nagapur substitute workers are included in computing the rate of absenteeism. This means that the rate of absenteeism is shown high in the former than in the latter. But this is an unrealistic view. If the substitute workers are included in quantifying rate of absenteeism it is but natural that rate of absenteeism may be nil if substitutes are found for all the absentee workers. This reinforces the dire need for a uniform definition on absenteeism.

Concept of Absenteeism:

The word absenteeism is defined in a variety of ways. To begin with, the Encyclopaedia of Social
Sciences defines absenteeism as, "time lost in industrial establishments by avoidable or unavoidable absence of employees". This is an unsatisfactory definition for the following reasons.

1) The line of distinction between avoidable and unavoidable absence is very thin. Absence due to accidents or sickness is supposed to be unavoidable. But this is an incorrect view. This may be avoided or reduced by improving safety methods or medical facilities in factories. Absence due to attending social or religious function may be considered avoidable. It is also an illconceived notion. In a society dominated by social, cultural and religious factors, all these absence become unavoidable.

11) At some occasions workers are precluded from attending to work e.g. if strikes occur or lock-out is declared. Is the inability of workers to report for work to be considered avoidable or unavoidable absence?

111) The definition is silent on the types of absence - unauthorised absence and authorised absence. The former absence is inadmissible and is unpaid whereas the latter absence is permissible and is paid.

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English Oxford Dictionary\(^2\) defines absenteeism as follows: "Absenteeism is the practice of being an absentee or of absenting oneself from duty or station". This is not at all a definition of absenteeism. It simply tells that 'missing work' amounts to absenteeism. This is an abstract idea. We do not learn from it whether missing work is allowed or not.

Watkin and Dobb\(^3\) hold the view that "Absenteeism refers to the workers' absence from the regular work, no matter what they cause". This definition suffers from the following drawbacks.

1) Workers can avoid 'regular work' directly by availing of permitted leave such as Casual Leave and Sickness Leave. Does it to be considered as absenteeism?

ii) Indirectly workers avoid 'regular work' owing to outbreak of strike or lockout. Should it be considered absenteeism?

K.G. Desai\(^4\) views absenteeism in the following manner: "When a worker fails to report for duty when he is expected

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2. English Oxford Dictionary
3. Watkin and Dobb – The Management Labour Relations
to report, he may be regarded as absent". The learned professor gives an improved version of absenteeism but there is one flaw in his expression. The definition ignores certain happenings which inhibit attendance of workers. Strike and lockouts deter workers from attending work. Should the failure of workers to report for duty during strikes or lockouts be regarded as absence?

K.J. Jucius\(^5\) holds the following view on absenteeism. "Absenteeism is the failure of the workers to report on the job when they are scheduled to work". The term 'scheduled to work' is vague and ambiguous. What type of time-off is included in scheduled to work and what are the time-offs excluded from the term scheduled to work. Should the absence of workers on permitted vacations be considered as scheduled to work? Do we consider absence of workers due to strike or lockout as scheduled to work?

K.G. Pendleton\(^6\) describes absenteeism as "absence from work when work is available". Ankalikar\(^7\) defines it as "unauthorised absence of the worker from his job". These

\(^7\) S.M. Ankalikar - Labour Management, Bombay, New Book Company, 1945.
definitions are inadequate to explain the idea of absenteeism. Penelon's definition ignores that a worker may be prevented from attending work due to strike. This doesn't amount to absence from work. His definition is neutral on the type of time-off. If the worker is away from work on permitted vacations or produces a sickness certificate from the doctor of Employees' State Insurance he should not be treated as absent from work. Further, the definition does not tell us whether the worker is aware of the availability of work. If often happens that the employer allots work to the employee on the spot.

Ankalikar's definition is also not free from criticism. Unauthorized absence may be so interpreted as to favour one's stand. For example, the employer may consider the inability of worker to go over to the place of work due to strike as unauthorized absence. The unions may hold the opposite view.

Dr. Moorthy8 puts absenteeism in the following way, "Absenteeism is used to describe the situation where the worker or employee is not present on his job for 8 hours or any other length of time accepted to be normal working day, when he is expected to be on the job". Dr. Moorthy's definition, undoubtedly, is superior to other definitions quoted above.

Still his is not a complete definition on absenteeism. It is an improvement in the sense absenteeism according to him occurs if the worker remains absent for the whole working day. If a worker remains absent for less than a normal working day, his absence does not cause absenteeism. It is an incomplete definition because it ignores unexpected situations such as strike when the workers may be obstructed from joining work although workers are expected to be present for the job.

J.D. Backet describes absenteeism as a temporary cessation of work for not less than one whole working day on the initiative of the worker when his presence is expected by the employer. This definition contains the following points:

1. Work stoppage is non-permanent
2. Absence should not be for less than one whole working day.
3. The worker takes decision on stay away.
4. The definition suggests available work.
5. The employer expects the worker to turn up for job.

With the help of this definition one can isolate absenteeism proper from improper or feign absenteeism. For example, the workers are not expected to work on public

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holidays. Hence, failure to attend work on these days need not be treated as absenteeism. Suspension, lay-off, discharge and lockout are initiated by employers. Therefore, they are to be excluded from absenteeism. If a strike is in progress, workers on strike should not be treated as absentee since the decision on strike is taken by the trade union. Further lateness must not be confused with absenteeism since workers stay away from work for less than a whole working day does not constitute absenteeism.

J.D. Hacket vividly explains the above idea with the help of the following chart.

**Nature, character, duration and causes of lost time**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nature</th>
<th>Character</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Initiative of-</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lateness</td>
<td>temporary</td>
<td>less than whole day</td>
<td>worker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Absence</td>
<td>-do-</td>
<td>one whole working day or more</td>
<td>worker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suspension</td>
<td>-do-</td>
<td>variable</td>
<td>employer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i) Quit</td>
<td>permanent</td>
<td>worker</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ii) Lay-off</td>
<td>temporary</td>
<td>intermediate</td>
<td>employer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iii) Discharge</td>
<td>permanent</td>
<td>employer</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Vacation</td>
<td>temporary</td>
<td>one whole working day or more</td>
<td>employer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lockout</td>
<td>temporary</td>
<td>intermediate</td>
<td>employer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strike</td>
<td>temporary</td>
<td>intermediate</td>
<td>worker</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
K.O. Seal\textsuperscript{10} gives the following definition of absenteeism. "A worker who reports for any part of a shift is treated as present. A worker is considered scheduled to work when the employer has work available and the employee is aware of it and when employer has no reason to expect well in advance, that the employee will not be available for work at the specified time. Thus, an employee on a regularly scheduled vacation is not considered as scheduled to work or absent. The same is the case during an employer ordered lay-off. On the other hand, an employee who requests for a few days off from time to time at other than a regular vacation period is considered as absent from scheduled work until he returns or until it is determined that the absence will be of such a duration that his name is removed from the list of active employees. After this date he is considered as neither scheduled to work nor absent. Similarly an employee who quits without notice is considered as absent from scheduled to work until his name is dropped from the active list. If a strike is in progress workers on strike are considered as neither scheduled to work nor absent".

Annual Survey of Industries defines absenteeism in the following words, "Absence is the failure of a worker to

\textsuperscript{10} K.O. Seal - Survey of Absenteeism. ( Mimeographed)
A worker is to be considered as scheduled to work when the employer has work available for him and the worker is aware of it. A worker is to be treated as absent for purposes of these absenteeism statistics even when he does not turn up for work after obtaining permission. Any worker who reports for duty even for part of the day or shift should not be counted among absentees. Absence of a worker on account of strike or lockout or lay-off is not to be considered as absence for purposes of these absenteeism statistics.

Both definitions are very comprehensive and give the same view on absenteeism except the fact that the former definition does not include absence of workers on privilege leave but it includes other types of leave like casual leave. Sick leave etc. the latter includes all absences including privilege leave.

The foregoing analysis of definitions on absenteeism helps us to distinguish absenteeism from other similar terms as tardiness, strike, absence and absentism.

Absence and Absenteeism:

For a layman the words absence and absenteeism may appear interchangeable, but for experts they are not. The
two words have independent entity. K.N. Vaid1 has made a
distinction between absence and absenteeism. "The term
absence refers to all stay-aways from work whether unauthorised
or authorised. Absenteeism refers to only unauthorised
absences." Absence in other words connotes aggregate,
macro or total picture whereas absenteeism is specific,
micro concept pertaining to unauthorised absences only.

This is a distinction with a purpose. The reasons
are two fold. Firstly, unauthorised absence constitutes
the real absenteeism. If the purpose of any research study
is to control high level of absenteeism in an industry,
greater attention needs to be focussed on unauthorised
absence and not on authorised absences which are permissible
and beyond the control of management. Secondly, unauthorised
absence is the major source of trouble. If the absence
of a worker is not informing well in advance, the work
schedule prepared by the management gets disturbed. This
is not true with authorised absence. Work-schedule can be
realigned by finding substitute for the absentee worker.

Absence and absenteeism:

In common parlance the two words are used as synonymous
although their spellings differ. However, Dr. Moorthy is

11. K.N. Vaid, Papers on Absenteeism, Asia Publishing House,
1967.
not prepared to accept their as twins. He finds a qualitative difference in the words. In his view absenteeism refers to incidence, reasons and effects of absence. Absentism, therefore, indicates the occurrence of absence. Absenteeism, on the other hand, refers to the habit of a worker remaining absent from work. This word highlights the behavioural pattern of worker towards work. The object of absenteeism study is to probe into the causes leading to absence of workers from work and to find out remedy to reduce absenteeism.

This is an hairsplitting distinction with much less practical significance. Absentism is the American way of pronunciation whereas absenteeism is the British way of expression. Absentism and absenteeism are the two sides of the same coin.

\[ \text{Strike and absenteeism} \]

Strike and absenteeism have common effects on output, discipline and moral of workers. Strike which implies cessation of work by workers leads to loss in output on an unprecedented scale. Workers resort to violence leading to indiscipline on the part of workers. Absenteeism also adversely affects the output. The management becomes impotent to control discipline and moral of workers in the factories.
At the same time the two exhibit many die-similarities. Absenteeism is a continuous and regular phenomenon in industries faced by the management. Strike, on the other hand, is a temporary phenomenon or adhoc occurrence. Absenteeism suggests propensity to irregular work by a worker or group of workers for socio-economic reasons. Strike is waged by a group of workers with a view to secure economic concessions from the management.

**Tardiness and Absenteeism**

Tardiness is different from absenteeism. Absenteeism refers to absence of worker from work for the whole working day. Tardiness is the habit of workers, reporting late to work than prescribed time. Tardiness if continued for the whole working day becomes absenteeism.

The idea of tardiness is unpractical. Tardiness may play some role in the determination of piece rate wages. At the same time it is very difficult to calculate one hour latenesses as absence. Absenteeism is generally for long hours say 8 hours or more. Tardiness is for short spells of time say an hour, half-an-hour or fifteen minutes. Tardiness is many-a-time double or fourfold of absenteeism. For example, eight latenesses of one hour each or 32 latenesses of fifteen minutes each will be equivalent to one day’s absence.
Types of absenteeism:

Generally absenteeism is divided into two types – authorised absenteeism and unauthorised absenteeism. Authorised absence includes all permissible reasons such as Sundays, public holidays, casual leave, sick leave, etc. Authorised absence is not injurious to output and discipline of workers in industries. An employer is aware of the absence of a worker. He makes an alternative arrangement without much loss to output. What is required is the rearrangement of the work process. A substitute will be posted in place of absentee worker. Authorised absence aids in maintaining discipline in the industry. If the worker remains absent from work with due information to his employer, the employer faces no difficulty in finding substitute for him. It is an indication of responsible behaviour on the part of workers.

Unauthorised absences include all absences by workers without obtaining the permission of the employer. This type of absenteeism is harmful to output and discipline of workers in industries. Here the employer is unaware of the absence of the worker. He waits for the worker for some time expecting him to turn up for work. When the worker actually fails to turn up, he is upset and runs for
a substitute. Therefore uninformed absences lead to distortions in work-schedule prepared by the management. Unauthorized absences reflect the callous or indifferent attitude of workers towards work and the management.

Absenteeism is also classified into voluntary and involuntary or avoidable and unavoidable. Voluntary absenteeism takes place if the worker opts for rest due to personal or domestic reasons. The worker is the initiator of absenteeism. Involuntary absenteeism occurs if a worker meets with an accident or falls ill. Absenteeism in this case is caused by external factor.

The division of absenteeism into voluntary and involuntary is arbitrary and not rigid. In actual practice unavoidable absenteeism depends upon several other factors besides accident and illness. It is found that unavoidable absenteeism varies greatly with such factors as the age and sex of the workers, earnings, length of working day, customs and traditions and the distance between the factory and houses of the workers.

Effects of Absenteeism:

On output: Low or high rate of absenteeism retards output in various ways. Firstly, a substitute worker is
not as efficient as a regular one. He is untrained and new to the machine. He takes time to understand the handling of the machine. Lot of time is wasted as he knows very little about the twists and bends of the machine. He is also not aware of other requirements e.g. location of store room etc. In this way a substitute worker works for less number of hours than scheduled and the work turned out by him is of low quality. The net result is that output suffers both in quantity and quality.

Secondly, a substitute worker is an ad hoc arrangement. He lives under the fear of removal as soon as the regular worker reports for duty. This fear hampers his incentive to continuous and hard work. The Damocles sword of unemployment hangs on his head. Psychologically he is unprepared to work and even when he works he is not fully involved in the work. This is one excellent example of absenteeism where the worker is absent while working. The final consequence is loss in output.

Thirdly, the loss of output is greater in case of unauthorised absenteeism. Here the worker remains absent without the prior consent of the management. The management becomes panicky and hunts for a substitute. By the time, a substitute is found, some hours of work are lost. In case
of authorised absenteeism the fall in output is negligible as a substitute is made available immediately.

Fourthly, the loss of output is not insignificant if a key worker remains absent. Key workers belong to the class of skilled manpower. If a key worker remains absent, it goes difficult to find a substitute for him as they are scarce. In such an event the entire production machinery of the section remains stand still. As the production process is round about, stoppage of output in one section leads to stoppage of output in other section. Absence of key workers will create chain-effect on the whole production process. This is the main snag contributing to a fall in output.

Cost of Production:

As far as absenteeism is concerned two types of costs are involved (i) substitution cost and (ii) overhead cost. To counteract absenteeism, the management has to keep back up workers as complementary forces. If the absenteeism is high the size of second line of defense will be big. This means, additional money is to be borne by the management. If absenteeism is the common phenomenon in industries, the replacement cost is merged with the wage cost. At one stroke the management have to make provision for wage payment
in case of permanent workers and it have to arrange for additional wage payment to substitute workers. It only suggests the high incidence of absenteeism on the management. The management pays the additional cost out of its profits. The incidence of absenteeism will be high on management, if the proportion of workers to capital is more in the industry. The axe will fall heavily on the profits.

If the size of profit is reduced the management’s incentive to produce is sapped. This effect is felt more severely in case of private owned economy, where profits act as lure to more investment and undertaking risky ventures. It may amount to killing the hen that lays golden eggs. The upshot of the argument is that overall cost of production tends to rise and this enhanced cost is met by a cut in the volume of profit which is undesirable for rapid industrialisation.

Over-head costs refer to money spent on the maintenance of administration, staff, machinery and equipment, maintenance of building cost and payment of taxes and insurance premiums and running of welfare activities as canteens etc. All these costs have to be shouldered by the management independent of high or low absenteeism. If the rate of
absenteeism is high the overhead cost may remain constant during that period. For example if the rate of absenteeism in an industry goes up from 5% to 10% there ensues a wastage of 5% in all departments of the industry.

(i) The additional 5% of the physical equipment remains idle, the rate of ware and tear of the equipment increases.

(ii) An additional 5% of the staff is without work although they are paid for.

(iii) An additional 5% of welfare activities goes waste although they have to be maintained.

(iv) They have to pay some taxes and other payments.

All these go to prove that high rate absenteeism keeps the overhead costs constant during their period.

On the other hand if the rate of absenteeism is reduced from 10% to 5% it will have beneficial effects on overhead costs.

(i) There is 5% reduction in wage payments.

(ii) An additional 5% of staff is busy with work.
(iii) There is reduction of additional 5% of idle capacity of equipment.

(iv) There is an 5% increase in the utilisation of welfare activities.

All these go to prove that overhead costs tend to fall as the rate of absenteeism is reduced.

On Profits: We can illustrate the probable cost of absence on the finances of the management by an hypothetical example. Suppose the gross profits of an undertaking is 100% with zero rate of absenteeism. Now the rate of absenteeism has increased to 10%. As a result of which the net profits have come down to 75%. We can calculate the probable money-loss to the management as follows:

\[
\frac{\text{GP}}{100} - \frac{\text{NP}}{100} = \frac{1}{4} \text{ or } 25\%
\]

This explains the adverse effect on the profits of the management as the rate of absenteeism increases. This is very obvious for two reasons.

(a) Portion of overhead cost of the industry is not reduced due to increasing absenteeism,

and (b) the fact that the management has to pay fixed financial costs such as interest, taxes on capital.
On Management: Absenteeism always causes some damage to the management. If workers are on permitted vacations, the loss to management is not significant. He has to rearrange the work schedule by posting badli workers in place of absentees. Here also the management stands to lose in the sense that the badli worker is less efficient than the regular worker who is absent, and wages have to be paid to both absentee worker and his substitute. If workers take recourse to leave without pay, the management doesn't lose much financially. The wage of the absentee worker is transferred to the badli worker. But the management is inconvenienced in the sense it has to struggle to find out a substitute.

The biggest loss to management is in the field of maintaining discipline among workers. The management has to redraw work schedule several times if absenteeism is on the increase in the industry. He is not encouraged to introduce scientific management as it is doomed to fail. When workers start remaining absent more times, the management becomes impotent to control them. The morale and discipline of worker is discounted. The management cannot plan for continuous flow of output in future. For example, if the demand for the product on hand at present is
considerable and it hopes to increase in the future, the management efforts to reach the targeted output within a given period of time will be frustrated due to increased absenteeism in the concern. Absenteeism is one thing which is unpredictable. There is no scientific or standard test in this regard. Increased absenteeism is the well-known phenomenon throughout the year i.e. from January to December with the exception that during some months absenteeism is at its peak. There is no question of absenteeism at its lowest ebb.

High rate of absenteeism is a menace to the management. If it continues unabatedly the management may be forced to take severe steps. The management may close down the factory or may obtain permission on introducing automation in the industry. New industry in the context of high absenteeism will be set up on capital intensive basis. The net loss occurs to workers in the form of large scale displacement of workers or loss of employment in future. Workers should become wise and regular in attendance otherwise they will be risking their own living and the living of their posterity.

On Workers: Absenteeism not always entails workers into monetary loss. If workers are on authorized leave,
there is no question of loss of wage. They are eligible for holiday with pay. This is undoubtedly a big boon or windfall gain. In economics such a gain is called fringe benefits. Similarly, if workers obtain leave on production of sickness certificate from ESI doctors, they are entitled for half-day wage. Here we discover money loss occurring to workers however small it might be. But in real sense workers derive a psychic income out of such a facility. Workers enjoy a pause or rest which is more valued in money-terms than a loss of half day's wage. On the bargain, the worker has benefited more than the loss done to him. The monetary loss becomes visible and a fact if workers resort to unauthorized leave. If the wage payment is made on the principle of 'no-work no-pay', workers who take to unauthorized absence have to forgo wages. This is the solitary instance of workers losing wages. Unauthorized absenteeism impoverishes workers. This cuts into their living standards. If the worker has many dependents to look after, it affects the living of other members of his family. His health and the health of his dependents deteriorate. Such workers will inherit a pessimistic outlook on life. They will blame their stars for bad days. They are thus, moulded into a life of fatalism.
They avoid working and expect miracles to happen. Buying a lottery ticket or spending money on cinemas becomes important games for them.

Absenteeism is an indication of irregular attendance. If workers stop coming to work without genuine reasons they may be considered as idlers shirking work. The management looks at them with an eye of contempt. It may keep a strict vigilance on their activities and put their names into blacklist. Workers by remaining absent on flimsy reasons set up a bad precedent to their colleagues. This may spread like a wild fire in jungle. Regular workers may also follow the same path. Therefore, fake absenteeism may engulf the entire labour force. By so doing the workers tarnish their own image and bring a discredit to the industry where they are working. The labour force tends to be demoralised.

Measurement of Absenteeism:

Various formulae have been recommended to calculate absenteeism rate. J.D. Hacket, for example, gives the following formula: Divide the total number of days or hours lost by the total number of days or hours that could have been worked, had all employees been present.
Absence rate = \( \frac{\text{Total Days lost}}{\text{Total possible days worked}} \times 100 \)

This can be obtained from the following data:

1) Total number of days lost 1642
2) Total number of days which could have been worked 28834

Absence rate = \( \frac{1642}{28834} \times 100 \)

= 5.7

Bureau of Labour Statistics, USA uses the following formula to arrive at absence rate:

Absence rate = \( \frac{\text{Mandays lost}}{\text{Mandays worked} + \text{Mandays lost}} \)

For the purpose of calculation, absence rate in India is defined as follows:

"The absence rate is defined as the total manshifts lost because of absences as the percentage of total number of manshifts scheduled." To quantify absence rate we had to have figures on manshifts lost due to absences and manshifts scheduled to work. This formula is widely employed by Labour Bureau, Simla and Indian Labour Journal. Therefore,
• Absenteeism rate = \frac{\text{Manshifts lost due to absenteeism}}{\text{Manshifts scheduled to work}} \times 100

The number of manshifts scheduled to work may be obtained by adding the number of manshifts lost due to absenteeism to the number of manshifts worked. As every worker is likely to work only in one shift on any day, the number of manshifts would normally be identical with the number of mandays. The words manshift and manday are thus synonymous.

Mr. Vaid contends that the standard formula underestimates absenteeism rate as the divisor manshifts scheduled to work is inflated. The term manshifts scheduled to work is the sum of manshifts actually worked and manshifts lost due to absences. There are three alternatives to select the divisor. The most common divisor selected is the employment of workers on the pay roll. This works out to be very close to the standard formula. Here the number of workers on the pay roll will always exceed the number of vacancies. This is because of substitution of badlis in place of absentee workers. This makes the task of knowing the divisor difficult. Another possibility is to accept the norm of "permanent workers" as the divisor. The term permanent workers is nebulous. According to Factories Act 1948 any worker who puts in 240 days attendance in a year will be considered as permanent worker. Permanent vacancies can be
another rule of knowing the divisor. Here the trade unions are opposed to cent percent filling up of the vacancies as it adversely affects the employment chances of substitute workers. Therefore, it is clear that number of vacancies does not tally with the number of workers employed.

The next choice lies in the principle of sanctioned strength. Here the number of workers employed depends upon the installed capacity of the firm or industry concerned during a period of time. It is our usual experience that some machines will always remain idle due to repairs or non-availability of raw materials. This choice therefore also suffers from the lacuna of being exact.

The last choice is to take the manshifts actually worked. It is easy to work out manshifts actually worked. Workers who report for work are marked present in their attendance register daily. The number of vacancies are quickly filled up by badli workers waiting at the gate of mill. Therefore, this number of regular workers plus substitute workers gives the actually number of manshifts worked. The fear of machine idleness is an exception rather than a rule.

On the basis of manshifts actually worked Mr. Vaid has evolved four formulae instead of a single standard
formula to calculate absenteeism rate in cotton textile mills of Delhi. They are as follows:

1. Absence rate = \( \frac{\text{Persons not working due to authorised and unauthorised absence}}{\text{Man shifts actually worked}} \times 100 \)

2. Absenteeism Rate = \( \frac{\text{Persons not working due to unauthorised absence}}{\text{Man shifts actually worked}} \times 100 \)

3. Sickness Rate = \( \frac{\text{Persons not working due to certified sick leave}}{\text{Man shifts actually worked}} \times 100 \)

4. Authorised Leave Rate = \( \frac{\text{Persons not working due to authorised leave other than sickness}}{\text{Man shifts actually worked}} \times 100 \)

In this connection, Mr. Vaid's work is commendable. But it may be remembered that Mr. Vaid's purpose of research is two-fold. He wants to prove that absenteeism rate in cotton mills in Delhi is much higher than the absenteeism rate calculated with the help of standard formula. Secondly, he attributes the high rate of absenteeism to the work attitude of chronic workers.

Mr. Vaid's deviation from the standard formula ably supports his objects of his study. But what is true of cotton textile industry may not be true of other industry. For example, it is possible to work out man shifts actually worked in cotton textile industry as the workers working

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in this industry are unskilled and they are unlimited in supply. But imagine a modern automobile industry wherein the supply of trained workers is limited, the mandays actually worked may fall short of number of machines available. It is on the applicability side that the standard formula is universal in the sense that standard formula can be applied to calculate absenteeism rate in traditional industry or modern industry. The purpose of standard formula is to indicate the nature and extent of absenteeism rate prevailing in old as well as new industries in the country.