

A STUDY OF THE SCOPE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF OCCUPATIONAL
WELFARE IN THE MANAGEMENT OF LARGE MODERN TELECOMMUNICATIONS
SERVICE ORGANISATIONS.

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THIS THESIS IS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (Ph.D)
OF THE COUNCIL FOR NATIONAL ACADEMIC AWARDS (CNAA) AT THE
MIDDLESEX POLYTECHNIC BUSINESS SCHOOL,
THE BURROUGHS, HENDON, LONDON NW4 4BT.

MARCH 1988

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I acknowledge with thanks and gratitude the assistance given to me by the two collaborating establishments - the Nigerian External Telecommunications Limited (NET) Lagos and British Telecom (BT), and many individuals in Nigeria and the U.K.

I wish to thank particularly the following:

1. All the employees and union officials of both NET and BT. I interviewed several employees at all levels in these organisations. I cannot name them all but wish to record the immense amount of help and cooperation I received from virtually everyone I approached.
2. I appreciate the assistance given to me by the British Telecom Welfare Department in London and the Administration Division of NET in Lagos, particularly Mr. K. Sanderson and Mr. B. Dool (BT Welfare Department) and Mr. A. R. Garuba (NET Administration Division) for providing me with valuable information and organising my visits to their respective organisations in Nigeria and the U.K.
3. Dr. Alec Martin and Dr. Alan Cowling my academic supervisors whose insightful and intellectually stimulating discussions and critical comments throughout the study enhanced the presentation of material in the thesis.

4. Collaborating bodies: The Nigerian External Communications Ltd., and British Telecommunications Ltd.

4. Finally, all the academic members of staff of the Middlesex Business School in Hendon who attended Seminars and discussions arranged to review the progress of the study and who made valuable contributions through their wise suggestions.

Without the assistance and cooperation of these organisations and individuals and others not listed above, the study would have been extremely difficult.

ABSTRACT OF THESIS

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TITLE: A STUDY OF THE SCOPE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF OCCUPATIONAL WELFARE IN THE MANAGEMENT OF LARGE MODERN TELECOMMUNICATIONS SERVICE ORGANISATIONS.

DEGREE: Ph.D.

DATE: MARCH 1988

The significance of occupational welfare both as a subject and a function in the human resources management of organisations has been undervalued by academics and professional managers in industry in Nigeria and the U.K. for many years. Evidence to support this claim lies in the fact that only a handful of articles and books have been written and few researches carried out about welfare practices in both countries since 1967 when Martin¹¹ published what is now the only comprehensive and concise account of welfare at work.

Books and articles have consistently failed to address the main issue of concern which is to examine and evaluate how far occupational welfare is important in the human resources management of organisations. The research presented in this dissertation provides insight in this area of concern and in addition offers suggestions to enable organisations in Nigeria and the U.K. to respond more appropriately to their employee welfare needs.

The thesis begins by developing a picture of the scope of occupational welfare (in both countries) which encompasses its origin and development, a review of existing literature and a comprehensive definition of occupational welfare.

Having set the scene, the significance of occupational welfare in the human resources management of an organisation is examined and evaluated by presenting a case study of welfare services in British Telecom followed by an indepth survey of employee welfare services in the Nigerian External Telecom. Both studies explore the labyrinth of issues relevant to the formulation of welfare policy. The object has been to discover the kind of employee welfare services provided, how they are managed and what role they play in the human resources management of the organisations concerned.

Careful analysis of this information leads to the development of sample systems models of occupational welfare.

1. A general model of an Occupational Welfare Systems.
2. The Wholeperson Concept Model.
3. An Employee Counselling Model.
4. A Group Welfare Service Provision Model.

These models can be used as a framework within which to review occupational welfare practices and procedures in organisations and to reach conclusions on how welfare may best be organised and managed in order to play a more effective role in the management of an organisation.

The thesis ends with a number of proposals on the future development and practice of occupational welfare.

LIST OF FIGURES AND TABLES

	PAGE
FIGURE 1. : BT Welfare Organisation	61.
FIGURE 2. : Welfare Costs in BT Expressed as a percentage of Labour Costs	72.
FIGURE 3. : Increases and Decreases in Welfare and Labour Costs and Salaries and Wages in BT from 1982-85.	73.
FIGURE 4. : Percentage Age Distribution of Employees in NET	126.
FIGURE 5. : Number of Children per percentage of NET employees	127.
FIGURE 6. : Marital Status of NET Employees	128.
FIGURE 7. : Years of Service of NET Employees	130.
FIGURE 8. : A General Model of An Occupational Welfare System	161.
FIGURE 9. : An Example of a Model of BT Welfare Service	162.
FIGURE 10. : Context Model of the Wholeperson Concept	177.
FIGURE 11. : An Employee Counselling Model	183.
TABLE 1. : Actual Salaries and Wages earned in each NET Division in 1984	115.
TABLE 2. : Costs of providing welfare services in NET in 1984	115.
TABLE 3. : Response Statistics on the Provision of a Comprehensive Welfare Service	131.
TABLE 4. : Response figures on the need for a Department to handle Welfare Service provision	132.
TABLE 5. : Response figures on the range of services required	132.
TABLE 6. : The need for NET to be involved in the personal problem of its employees	134.
TABLE 7. : Figures on reasons for involvement	135.
TABLE 8. : Ratings figures on sickness problems	136.

	<u>PAGES</u>
TABLE 9. : Ratings figures on Financial problems	136.
TABLE 10. : Ratings figures on Retirement problems	136.
TABLE 11. : Ratings figures on Bereavement problems	137.
TABLE 12. : Ratings figures on Employment problems	137.
TABLE 13. : Ratings figures on Domestic problems	137.
TABLE 14. : Ratings figures on Cloakrooms	140.
TABLE 15. : Ratings figures on Lavatories	140.
TABLE 16. : Ratings figures on Canteen Services	140.
TABLE 17. : Ratings figures on Sports and Social Clubs	140.
TABLE 18. : Ratings figures on Accommodation and Hotel Services	141.
TABLE 19. : Ratings figures on Holidays with Pay	141.
TABLE 20. : Ratings figures on Sick Pay	141.
TABLE 21. : Ratings figures on First Aid	142.
TABLE 22. : Ratings figures on Pension Scheme	142.
TABLE 23. : Ratings figures on Loans	142.
TABLE 24. : Ratings figures on Medical Services	142.
TABLE 25. : Ratings figures on Training and Development	143.
TABLE 26. : Ratings figures on Safety	143.

<u>CONTENTS</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	(i - ii)
ABSTRACT OF THESIS	(iii - v)
LIST OF FIGURES AND TABLES	(vi - vii)
 <u>INTRODUCTION</u>	
Overall Aim of the Research	2.
General Research Methods	4-7
Data Collection	7-11
Structure of Thesis	12-14
 <u>PART ONE</u>	
THE SCOPE OF OCCUPATIONAL WELFARE	
1.1 The Development of Occupational Welfare in the U.K. and Nigeria - An Overview	15-21
1.2 A Review of Existing Literature on Occupational Welfare	22-28
1.3 Definitions of Occupational Welfare	29-35
1.4 Conclusions on the Scope of Occupational Welfare	36-39
1.5 References	40-41
 <u>PART TWO</u>	
A CASE STUDY OF WELFARE SERVICES IN BRITISH TELECOMMUNICATIONS PLC	
2.1 History and Philosophy	42-51
2.2 Welfare Responsibility and Organisation in BT	52-61
2.3 Types of Services to Employees	62-73
2.4 Employee Perspectives on BT Welfare Service	74-81
2.5 Summary of main issues	82-88
2.6 References	89-90

PART THREE

A SURVEY OF WELFARE SERVICES IN THE NIGERIAN EXTERNAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS LTD.

3.1	The National Scene	91-98
3.2	The Influence of Culture and the Expectations of Nigerian Employee	99-108
3.3	The Nigerian External Telecommunications Ltd.	109-115
3.4	A Study of Employee Attitudes to Welfare Services	116-123
3.5	The Survey Findings	124-143
3.6	Summary of Main Issues	144-152
3.7	References	153

PART FOUR

OCCUPATIONAL WELFARE VIEWED AS A SYSTEM

4.1	The Implications of the Systems Approach for Occupational Welfare	154-159
4.2	A General Model of an Occupational Welfare System	160-171
4.3	The Whole Person Concept	172-177
4.4	An Employee Counselling System	178-186
4.5	Conclusions	187-189
4.6	References	190

PART FIVE

CONCLUSIONS RELEVANT TO THE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT AND
APPLICATION OF OCCUPATIONAL WELFARE

SUMMARY	191
5.1 The Basis of Welfare Policy in an Organisation	192-199
5.2 Why Welfare is Necessary	200-206
5.3 Employee Counselling as the Cornerstone of Good Welfare Practice	207-209
5.4 A Wider Role for Welfare in Organisations	210-216
5.5 The Future Development of the Welfare Function	217-228
5.6 References	229
 BIBLIOGRAPHY	 230-234
 APPENDIX 1	
 APPENDIX 2	
 APPENDIX 3	
 ADDENDUM 1	
 ADDENDUM 2	

INTRODUCTION

Occupational welfare has progressed in a marked fashion since systematic welfare services were first developed in organisations in the U.K. in the late nineteenth century. But in spite of the growing popularity and practice of occupational welfare, the number and scope of attempts either by academics or practising managers to evaluate its role in the management of organisations have been few - hence my own motivation to study it. One of the consequences of this scarcity of published information about a subject area of considerable importance to human resource management has been the inability of research of research to keep pace with developments in occupational welfare practice. This has resulted in confusion over names, definitions and the classification of categories of welfare service.

This study is an examination and evaluation of how far occupational welfare is currently important in the human resources management of large modern telecommunications service organisations. It draws most of its basic data from a study of two large telecommunications service organisations in the U.K. and Nigeria, and analyses the perspectives in published literature on welfare in order to reach conclusions on the nature of occupational welfare and what impact its practice currently has on the human resources management of modern technological organisations.

Overall Aim of the Research

The principal aims of the research are twofold:

1. to critically examine the extent to which employee welfare services play a role in the human resources management of large modern telecommunications service organisations, and development
2. to evaluate how far occupational welfare can contribute to the human resources management and development of such organisations.

To pursue these overlapping aims, it is necessary to set two specific objectives:

- (a) to state an appropriate null hypothesis, collect relevant data and to evaluate the significance of the data to the validity of the null hypothesis.
- (b) to develop conceptual models relating occupational welfare to the broader field of human resource management and development and corporate policy.

The null hypothesis is stated as follows:

that welfare services no longer play a role in the management of large modern telecommunications service organisations with special reference to Nigeria and the U.K.

Acceptance or rejection of hypothesis would depend on evidence of continued provision or growth and or adaptation of welfare services and the implications of management and employee views on welfare service provision and usage.

Also it will be seen that General Systems Theory as applied to Business Policy and Organisational Development provides the appropriate context for the conceptual models required for the second objective.

Choice of Industry

Because of its changing technology, the telecom industry is representative of those modern industries which can stimulate rapid industrial development and boost international trade and cooperation and is therefore particularly worthy of study. A study of welfare practice in a U.K. and Nigerian Telecom organisation furthermore provides an opportunity to compare welfare practices in a developed economy with that in an emerging economy.

The choice of the telecom service industry is also based on the importance of telecommunications for social and economic development. Like transport and electrification, telecommunications communications is a fundamental infrastructural element in any development effort, playing a crucial role in the transfer of information, data and ideas.

It is considered that evidence directly relevant to these organisations will be capable of generalisation to major sectors of industry in these countries and others at various stages of industrial development.

Of additional interest is the fact that British Telecom has developed from being part of the Post Office organisation to being a separate legal entity as a nationalised industry subsequently privatised. Similarly, the Nigerian External Telecommunications Ltd. (NET), has grown out of a partnership with Cable and Wireless Ltd. of London into a Federal Nigerian Government-owned limited liability para-statal organisation. Occupational welfare provision in this organisation has been greatly influenced by both social, cultural, economic and political factors and the Nigerian employee expectations. The extent of this influence is examined in more detail in Chapter 3.2. But in both NET and BT, growth has led to major changes in policies which make trends over a long period significant. Attention has been paid to studying present policies and future development, and gathering material of a relevant historical nature, contrasting the situation today with past practices.

General Research Methods

The data collection phase of any research investigation draws on two main sources of information which can be distinguished as 'primary and secondary' sources. Primary data are original data gathered specifically for the research in hand. Secondary data are those already existing, having been collected originally for other purpose.

Primary Data

Original data may be collected by one or a combination of three methods - observation, experimentation and sample survey. Observational techniques depend heavily on the skill and objectivity of the observer and suffer from the need for secrecy if behavioural patterns are not to be disturbed as a result of the subjects' awareness that he or she is under scrutiny. The scope of direct observation within this study was limited to giving the researcher an opportunity of seeing the staff Welfare Committee and the Joint Consultative Committee discuss welfare matters. As a technique it is doubtful how much illumination would have been gained through sitting in at other meetings and it would also have been necessary to interview participants subsequently to obtain their explanation on what went on and why. Experimentation avoids the lack of control common to observational method and could be less expensive to undertake than a sample survey. Its major drawback lies in the difficulty of replicating normal behaviour in a laboratory setting. Clearly it is inappropriate in a study such as this concerning people and their behaviour and attitudes towards services.

Basically there are three main methods of conducting attitude surveys:

- (a) the interview
- (b) the questionnaire
- (c) a combination of both (a) and (b).

The choice will depend on a number of factors such as the objectives of the survey, the size of the group to be surveyed and the time available.

Questionnaires and interviews can be regarded as complementary research tools. Questionnaires provide an economical method of gathering information on matters of opinion and attitude as well as fact from substantial numbers of people who may be widely scattered and whom it is out of the question to interview individually. Difficulties centre around the achievement of an adequate response rate, the ambiguity or inadequacy of written answers and a certain reluctance among respondents to reply to lengthy questionnaires or to give other than stock answers.

Interviewing is therefore necessary if one is to obtain reliable and exact information and authoritative views from those persons principally involved in the situation in question. In particular semi-structured interviews make it easier to follow-up promising leads or to press when vague or general stock answers are given. The ability of an interview to clarify ambiguities improves accuracy, permits the use of longer and more complex questionnaires and greatly reduces the problem of respondent self-selection. The major disadvantage of interviewing is interviewee bias, e.g. the interviewer may 'lead' the respondent or simply record the answers inaccurately.

Secondary data

Not only is it possible that the required information is already available, albeit in a form which requires re-tabulation, but also secondary data are essential to indicate both the content and the precise nature of the data to be obtained through primary sources. Further, published sources are more accessible and offer savings in time and money if properly used. Several readily available sources of secondary information are:

1. internal company records,
2. articles and instruments of government,
3. trade, professional and business associations,
4. private firms,
5. research organisations and
6. libraries.

Data Collection

Data collection methodology for this dissertation comprised:

1. Gathering relevant information concerning developments in the theory and practice of occupational welfare service provision and welfare management,
2. Relevant field studies in Nigeria and the U.K. and
3. Developing and testing an appropriate general model of an Occupational Welfare System.

Field Studies

There were two principal field studies:

- (a) There was a detailed investigation of welfare practices, attitudes and opinions of staff in the Nigerian External Telecom. A majority of management and employees were involved in this study. The Nigerian External Telecom was visited by the author for a period of about nine months during which time detailed information dossiers were compiled and interviews held with a wide range of managers and employees at all levels in the organisation.

- (b) A case study of British Telecom's welfare service was carried out. Over a period of two years, discussions were held to establish the structure and organisation of the welfare service. Additionally, a sample of different levels of staff, (both users of the service and those directly or indirectly connected to it) were interviewed to ascertain their role in the overall welfare system. These discussions were designed both to obtain a snapshot view of the overall organisation of the welfare service and to ascertain views on particular aspects of welfare provision and usage.

Of these studies, the Nigerian one was the more intensive. A combination of interviews and questionnaires were used in collecting data from both organisations. Since the prime

objective of the study is to find out about welfare services and how they influence the management of these two large telecom organisations, it was necessary to talk to managers and employees and to find out their attitudes towards the welfare services provided. In this direction the field studies have provided information on employees and management reactions and given people in both organisations the opportunity to express their feelings in a matter concerning their well being.

In addition the field studies have also provided the opportunity for people to make suggestions, thereby tapping the wealth of ideas which experience has shown to exist in all organisations at all levels.

The subjective elements in the case studies might limit the possibility of systematic analysis if for example, welfare staff in both organisations were inclined to exaggerate either the importance or the impotence of their functions and services. But it is important to find out what welfare practitioners feel or think about their functions, as it is to discover what actually goes on. Any study comparable to this would be incomplete if attention were not paid to the participants' own perceptions and assessments. As it turned out there was no serious difficulty in reconciling or in accounting for the views and attitudes expressed by people interviewed. These views and attitudes were not dependent on isolated incidents which had left bitter memories. Most respondents

seemed to try to give as balanced a picture as they could about the balanced a picture as they could about the welfare service even when they made it clear that they had strong views.

Comparing the accounts of all participants enabled the author to judge the situation for himself, and thus to discover how far participants shared the same assumptions and what conclusions followed from failure to make these assumptions explicit.

Several respondents, especially among BT technical staff could not imagine why they had been selected for attention, and thought they could make only a routine contribution which would be of no interest, simply because their experience was not out of the ordinary; these were balanced by others who thought that it would be rash and unwarranted to draw any general conclusions from their own experience which, as some argued with great force and conviction was possibly interesting - even fascinating - but certainly untypical.

Literature Search

The examination of relevant developments in the theory and practice of welfare provision covered reports and articles of research and development relevant to occupational welfare provision in both Nigeria and the U.K., and direct oral evidence from experts in appropriate research and professional bodies such as the Institute of Welfare Officers and the Institute of Personnel Management in the U.K., as well as reading relevant journals published by these and

other institutes and organisations in both the U.K. and Nigeria. The knowledge gained from these sources has contributed to my my understanding of the role of welfare services in the management of organisations and coloured the approaches to the conclusion reached.

Development of a General Model.

A general model of occupational welfare has been developed from the systems approach and associated procedures of conceptual clarification. The approach evolved out a general systems theory (GST), formulated by an inter-disciplinary team of scientists with common interests. The prime mover of G.S.T. was the biologist Ludwig von Bertalanffy. The systems approach takes as its basis a conceptual structure within which it is possible to organise and and ultimately understand better the complex nature of any natural phenomena. It is the way this model looks at phenomena rather than the phenomena itself for which some originality can be claimed. I have used systems techniques to analyse the existing conceptual thinking about occupational welfare provision in such a way as to make more clearly evident, an occupational welfare service's interconnections, inter-relationships and inherent properties which are in one sense all already known but in another not adequately recognised.

Structure of the Thesis

The Thesis is organised around five logically related parts:

Part One gives an overview of the welfare concept, its origins and developments in Nigeria and the U.K. from the seminal ideas of the Quaker employers to the developed and developing concepts of present-day practitioners. It then reviews existing literature on occupational welfare and finally provides a comprehensive definition of occupational welfare which sets the scene for the analysis which follow.

In Part Two, the description of the British Telecom Welfare service highlights its historical background and leads to a critical discussion of its structure and organisation and the status and responsibilities of welfare officers and welfare work in general. The nature and incidences of innovations within the existing welfare organisation in BT, the impact of the role of welfare in the organisation were examined with particular reference to the consequences of being both a welfare and personnel specialist at the same time.

Part Three begins with a discussion of the national scene which outlines the origins of occupational welfare and the types of welfare services provided in organisations in Nigeria. It examines the influence of culture and the Nigerian employee's expectations on welfare provision and the structure and organisation of welfare at NET where the welfare function is not departmentalised.

Also, it reports and presents conclusions on the findings of an attitude survey of management and employee's opinions on the welfare services presently provided and those anticipated in the future. The value of the studies in parts two and three is that they provide an opportunity to compare and contrast the actual practices of occupational health from two different cultures and demonstrates the kinds of influences that can affect and determine welfare provisions in these situations.

Part Four explores the concepts and assumptions inherent in a systems perspective of occupational welfare. It then proposes sample models developed from the experiences and studies of BT and NET which are seen as relevant to the future application of occupational welfare in organisations.

As a result of the theoretical and practical analyses of welfare in the preceding parts; Part Five discusses the contributions occupational welfare can make to the everyday management problems

encountered in organisations and reaches conclusions on how future events and changes in Nigeria and the U.K. will affect the role of occupational welfare in the management of organisations.

The research thus results in a clear and detailed description of actual welfare practices and their importance in the management of organisations. In this context it also serves;

1. to provide a methodological framework - thus a starting for more intensive studies of welfare in organisations.
2. to provide a factual framework for the study of occupational welfare that is informative and can be utilised into the future.
3. to further clarify the similarities and differences between and among the various theoretical perspectives on fringe benefits and welfare services, and
4. to provide a systems approach model for the study of theories concerning occupational welfare with particular reference to counselling.

PART ONE

THE SCOPE OF

OCCUPATIONAL WELFARE.

1.1 THE DEVELOPMENT OF OCCUPATIONAL WELFARE
IN THE U.K. AND NIGERIA - AN OVERVIEW

Introduction

Occupational welfare in the U.K. and Nigeria has passed through three similar stages of development. The first stage which may be summed up as 'employer paternalism', occurred at a time when progressive employers in both countries showed a pastoral care concern for their workers while expecting a reciprocal sense of service from them. The second stage was that of active government involvement supported by legislation, usually laying down requirements for employer provision. The third stage was one in which employer provision progressed to an active concern for employee personal problems rather than in just the provision of rudimentary welfare services.

Developments during the three stages mentioned above have been most influenced by differences and changes in the basic economic, cultural, political and social structure of both countries of which more will be said later. Also, there is evidence that the stage and rate of industrial development and growth has influenced differences in the history of occupational welfare development in both countries. The effect of these factors on the development of occupational welfare is examined in more detail in the following pages.

Stage One - Employer Paternalism

In the U.K., the first modern programmes of occupational welfare were introduced by individual employers in the last quarter of the nineteenth century to meet particular needs of their industry on a limited basis. Though there is evidence that fifty years before then, many schemes existed [1], individual employers such as Rowntree and the large Quaker employers were the first to show how good working conditions and profitability could be compatible. This was largely seen by students of industrial development as an assertion of a paternalistic relationship between employers and their workforce - an outlook in the spirit of the old guild-masters who expected a reciprocal sense of service from their workers.

In Nigeria, during early industrial expansion, the major employers were foreigners who were dependent upon a labour-force unaccustomed to monetary employment and often needing to be attracted to the isolated location of the factory far from their families and tribes. In order simply to keep going, such industries had to provide the most basic amenities such as housing, food and crude medical facilities. Also before 1960, when Nigeria became independent, there was little governmental involvement or legislative action in the provision of social welfare facilities. As such, much depended upon the goodwill and paternalistic planning of the individual employer.

The general standard of living was low and most action by employers was limited to the provision of a basic degree of comfort while maintaining productivity.

In both countries, the initiatives taken by these individual pioneers of occupational welfare seem relatively limited; the U.K. is very practical by comparison with Nigeria. These were mainly concerned with improving ventilation, sanitation and lighting, working hours and rest periods and providing canteens, medical care, sport and other leisure facilities. They were not concerned to interfere in or to attempt to moderate the basic worker-employer relationship, and therefore although appreciated by emerging trade unions, had little effect on the structural determinants of work. Even more important, the activities were confined to a very small number of employers in both countries.

Stage Two - Legislation Requirements

In the U.K., the introduction of legislation setting down minimum requirements on industry, as far as occupational welfare provision is concerned, has too often been put down to the activities of a few enlightened philanthropists or seen as part of an inexorable and steady progress. But as O'Higgins points out, 'both views are too simple'. The part was also played by the self-interest of employers; the attitude of courts to injured employees, trade union

organisations, new methods of production, and moral outrage at the worst abuses of a factory system. There was also the link between occupation and particular kinds of accidents, diseases and distortions of the human body' [2].

It would be possible to trace the emergence of the welfare concept in the U.K. back to the middle ages when the master stood in 'loco parentis' to his apprentices. Possibly also, it might be attributed to the depression which followed the Napoleonic Wars and which resulted in a general movement towards defining minimum conditions for workers. This had expression in the limited legislation of 1819 and the Factories Act of 1833 which was the basis of the nineteenth century reform. In 1831, too, the nineteen acts regulating payment in trucks were replaced by a general prohibition of payment of wages in goods; the truck system had been extensively used in many trades during the latter half of the eighteenth century, and it had enabled employers to beat down real wages by forcing employees to take part in their remuneration in kind or spend part of their incomes at company shops. These much earlier legislation, together with the subsequent Factories Act 1961, and the Offices and Railway Premises Act 1963, dealt mostly with the physical working conditions in factories. This legislation culminated in the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, which requires employers to ensure as far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of employees.

But, it was the introduction of the Welfare State legislation in 1942 after the 'Beveridge Report' which probably had the major overall cultural influence on the development of occupational welfare in the U.K. While the benefit of hindsight, enables one to see the inadequacies and weaknesses in practice of a post-war policy (3), in the first decade following the legislation, the State was believed to have met most basic welfare needs successfully and employers must have felt little obligation to provide additional services at the workplace. With inflation, a general rise in wages, and the belief in a prosperity shared by all classes, occupational welfare activity found its expression in conspicuous provisions such as sports clubs and recreational facilities.

While much of the legislation in the U.K. came after a long and hard-fought struggle on the part of the workers, in Nigeria such programmes were granted or imposed by the government with relatively little worker involvement. Nearly all programmes of occupational welfare introduced were based on those already in existence in the U.K. This was perhaps to be expected during the period of colonial government when the owners and managers of the firms establishing these provisions were themselves living in the U.K. But much of this colonial influence has persisted after independence and there appears to have been remarkably little innovation in the legislation concerning occupational welfare provision. For example, the same Nigerian Factories Act of 1958 which was handed over during the

colonial days is still largely the law governing occupational welfare provision in Nigeria. This act lays down certain minima which companies have to meet as far as health, safety and welfare of employees are concerned. These provisions have been generally observed throughout industries in Nigeria since then.

Stage Three - Interest in Employee Personal Problems

Very few organisations in Nigeria employ welfare officers to advise employees on how to deal with their personal problems. The very little counselling on personal problems that is done, is carried out informally by various heads of departments or personnel officers, only when a personal relationship exists between the employee concerned and the head of department. The reason for this is that there is not enough trust between management and employees in Nigerian industries to enable them to handle sensitive issues such as those concerning the personal problems of employees on a wide scale [4]. As such, developments in this area of welfare have been very slow or even non-existent.

By contrast, in the U.K., the focus in recent years has shifted to the provision of a personal welfare service and the employment of professional specialist welfare officers whose major concern is that of counselling individual employees who are experiencing personal problems or difficulties, and of providing an advisory service to management. The number of welfare officers employed in industry and

commerce as well as in the public corporations in the U.K. is steadily increasing. Examples of organisations that now employ welfare officers to counsel employees on personal problems are: the London Ambulance Service, Freeman's Mail Order service, Trustee Savings Bank, the London Boroughs of Hounslow and Hackney, the Central Electricity Generating Board, the British Broadcasting Corporation, London Transport, the National Coal Board, British Telecom, National Westminster Bank, British Airways, Barclays Bank, Selfridges Ltd., W.H. Smith and Son Ltd., ICI Ltd., etc.

1.2 A REVIEW OF EXISTING LITERATURE ON OCCUPATIONAL WELFARE

Welfare at Work, (Martin 1967)(12) contains the most comprehensive review of published literature on welfare and personnel management between the years 1949 and 1966. In it, the author discusses how earlier writers had confused welfare and personnel management and points out that the notion of welfare as an identifiable function in organisations was being overtaken and replaced by personnel management. Evidence in support of these two points was manifested by the synonymous use of the word welfare and personnel management and the relegation of discussions of the welfare function to subdivisions of the personnel management function in the literature reviewed. He also introduces a tripartite concept of classifying welfare services as being Physical, Group and Personal Welfare.

A similar survey of existing literature on welfare and personnel management between 1967 and 1985 has not only confirmed this relegation of welfare but has brought into light the confused usage of the words 'welfare' and 'fringe benefits' and a much reduced discussion of the concept of occupational welfare in modern textbooks on personnel management.

Apart from Martin's book, there are neither British nor Nigerian published textbooks covering substantially the whole area of 'occupational welfare' as defined widely in this study. Most modern

textbooks on personnel management published between 1967 and 1985 partly touch on the subject of welfare, while a handful of articles on welfare published in journals during this period concentrate mostly on reassuring readers that the practice of occupational welfare was still very much alive in industrial organisations in the U.K.

Various editions of some of the most well known books on personnel management such as 'Textbook of Personnel Management', (Thomason, 1976), 'Personnel Administration, A Point of View and a Method', (Pigors and Myers, 1982), 'The Theory and Practice of Personnel Management', (Cuming, 1985), 'Managing Human Resources', (Cowling and Mailer, 1981) [13] have very little written on occupational welfare. Only Cuming devotes about fifteen pages to welfare. He discusses welfare in the traditional sense of being only concerned with the provision of physical and group welfare services such as the provision of adequate ventilation, sanitation, lighting, sports and social club facilities etc. He disagrees with the notion of an employer getting involved in the personal problems of employees and sees an enormous variety in the provision and administration of welfare facilities between different organisations and the extent to which their personnel departments become directly involved. Cuming's book is neither up-to-date nor an accurate discussion of trends in occupational welfare provision in British industry.

Both, Personnel Management (Torrington, 1983) and Personnel Management (Bottomley, 1983), make no mention of welfare. 'A Handbook of Personnel Practice' (Armstrong, 1984), has six pages of a chapter devoted to welfare. The author takes Martin's tripartite line of classifying occupational welfare services. Apart from these classifications, this book does not really discuss anything new.

Probably the best and most concise theoretical criticism of the usefulness of occupational welfare can be found in pages 76 to 80 in 'Man-Mismanagement' (Fox, 1985) [16]. 'Personnel Management, Modern Concepts and Techniques', (Dessler, 1984) [17], is an American textbook which discusses occupational welfare under the title of 'Benefits and Services'. It devotes twenty-four pages to the topic and distinguishes benefits from services remarkably well, but makes no mention of the word welfare and leaves the reader with the impression that American industries perhaps do not provide 'welfare services' but just benefits and services. It is however not a useful summary of relevant theory and research in the context of this study

'Personnel Management in Nigeria', (Ubeku, 1975) [18], is by and large the only comprehensive textbook on personnel management by a Nigerian. There is clearly a confusion in the book between welfare services (which he discusses under 'fringe benefits in five pages) and fringe benefits which he takes to be the blanket coverage for services provided by employers for employees. He also devotes a quarter of a page to a discussion of welfare provisions under the

Health Safety and Welfare sections of the 1958 Factories Act of Nigeria. 'Success in Management: Personnel (Hackett, 1955)[19] can easily be described as the most up-to-date book on aspects of personnel management such as occupational welfare. One chapter of eleven pages is devoted to the discussion of employee welfare services which are clearly distinguished from employee benefits which are dealt with in a separate chapter. Welfare is discussed in both the traditional and modern sense and a lot of care seems to have been taken to present a closely reasoned discussion of much of the area of welfare.

'Introduction to Personnel Management' (Attwood, 1985)[20], has eleven pages on 'Looking After Employees - Welfare and Counselling Services'. In general, it is a good factual and up-to-date summary of what occupational welfare is all about in the context of modern personnel management.

'Non-wage Benefits' (Cunningham, 1981)[21], presents a very comprehensive discussion of benefits enjoyed generally by employees in all industries in the U.K. although he calls them 'non-wage benefits' he discusses services which could have been classified as welfare services and fringe benefits together. In this discussion, the author provides evidence from both government and private institutional researches and legislation to support his claims. There is no direct reference to welfare and the use of the term fringe benefits seems to include occupational welfare.

Only four relevant and useful articles have been written by academics in various journals in Nigeria and the U.K. since Martin reviewed literature on welfare in his book in 1967. There are probably a few other articles but none as comprehensive, up-to-date, and relevant to the issues much debated about welfare as these. Considering that a period of eighteen years has elapsed since then, this is clearly a manifestation of the neglect of welfare as a formidable function in organisations. In order of publication, the articles are as follows:

1. 'Stating the Case for Welfare', (Kenny, 1975).
2. 'Whatever Happened to the Welfare Officer', (Stewart, 1983).
3. 'Employee Welfare Under Unfavourable Economic Conditions', (Ejiofor, 1984).
4. 'Personnel Management and the Welfare Role', (Beaumont, 1984);
'Personnel and Welfare, The Case of the Problem Drinker at Work', (Beaumont and Hyman, 1985) [22].

As the title suggests, Kenny's article stands up in defence of welfare. He argues that welfare work has survived the challenge from management theorists and remained an important part of personnel work in the U.K. He states clearly his side of the debate that the practice of welfare in industry in the U.K. was in no way going into extinction; that instead, it was entering a phase in which it was being rediscovered. He denounces the criticism levied against welfare by Social Scientists and makes the point that the rediscovery

of welfare was manifested in the interest that has been shown over the years in the area of job satisfaction. That welfare increases job satisfaction and quite a lot of jobs can only be done if there is attention to welfare in the form of efforts to promote job satisfaction.

Stewart's article provides the evidence to support Kenny's claim that welfare work is far from dead. His survey of job advertisements over a two-year period, identified some 198 personnel management posts which mentioned either 'welfare' or 'counselling' as part of the job. The largest single group of these advertised jobs were in public administration. In addition, he found out that not only are large employers maintaining specialist welfare sections, but two-thirds of all personnel officers also seem to engage in activities associated with welfare at work. He identified employee counselling as the core of the welfare task.

Ejiofor's article presents a very factual picture of the sudden growth of welfare provision in Nigerian industry during the decade of the oil boom from 1970 to 1980. He analyses the dilemma employers now face, now that funds are no longer sufficient to support these generous gestures, and proposes ways by which employers can solve the problems they now face in this context. It is an excellent piece of academic work as well as a manifestation of the real world situation in industrial welfare practice in Nigeria.

The articles by Beaumont while reviewing evidence in support of the argument about the survival and usefulness of welfare at work takes a somewhat different line by presenting a contemporary case study of the actual activities of an individual engaged in welfare work. This case study he argues, demonstrates the practical reality of what a welfare officer does as opposed to prescriptive discussions of what a welfare officer ideally should do. When placed alongside theoretical discussions of a welfare officer's responsibilities, there are wide differences between them. The paper concludes by suggesting that welfare officers be involved in comprehensive employee counselling programmes akin to 'Employee Assistance Programmes' or 'Employee Assistance Resources' in American Organisations'.

Relevance of Literature on Morale and Job Satisfaction

In the U.K. the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 lays a statutory duty on organisations to provide for the Health, Safety and Welfare of employees. The Act says: 'It shall be the duty of every employer to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work, of all his employees'.

Welfare is not defined and for this reason, Health and Safety Inspectors may find it difficult to assess the extent to which the statute is complied with in practice. The statutory duty means that welfare provision is a condition of service as of right. On the other hand, enlightened employers who make welfare provision far in excess of statutory requirements make the assumption that good welfare leads to better productivity and efficiency.

T.P. Kenny(1975) made the point clearly when he pointed out that the rediscovery of welfare was manifested in the interest that has been shown over the years in the area of job satisfaction. That welfare increases job satisfaction and that quite a lot of jobs can only be done if there is attention to welfare in the form of efforts to promote job satisfaction.

It is against this background that it has to be recognised that one of the main assumptions of occupational welfare service provision is that it will improve job satisfaction and morale which in turn leads to improved efficiency and productivity. Although no studies have proved that the provision of welfare services will make employees more productive, it can be argued that even if welfare services cannot increase individual productivity, they can help to minimise decreases. In addition, increases in morale or loyalty may not result in commensurate or indeed in any increases in productivity, but undue anxiety can result in reduced effectiveness. Herzberg's two factor model in effect placed welfare amongst the hygiene factors, but he did not under-estimate the importance of 'hygiene' as a means of eliminating or at least reducing causes of anxiety or dissatisfaction.

Further treatment of the concept of job satisfaction beyond this point is out of the scope of this thesis. For further discussions, please refer to the literature on morale and job satisfaction provided in the 'addendum' on page 236.

1.3 DEFINITIONS OF OCCUPATIONAL WELFARE

In defining occupational welfare, the practical difficulties are to be found in determining its distinguishing characteristics. This has been manifested by the different conceptions of what constitutes occupational welfare services in organisations studied in Nigeria and the U.K. In both countries, occupational welfare is an 'umbrella' term used to indicate the general services provided by employers for their workers. For this reason and because of the diverse range of employer activities now in operation in Nigeria and the U.K., any definition employed in this study will have to take these two factors into consideration.

It has been argued that the term should be limited only to those services provided voluntarily by an employer and not those required by law or included in the terms and conditions of employment(5).

I believe that the voluntary nature of the provision of services is an important factor when determining criteria for deciding what is and what is not welfare service. The provision of services required by law or terms and conditions of service is usually taken for granted by most employees and as such do not particularly indicate anything special about their employers. But the provision of services much more than the law or terms of service indicate, shows a concern for and an acceptance of responsibility for the well-being of employees by an employer which is usually taken very well by employees. The weakness of the use of the voluntary criteria

as a means of distinguishing welfare services lies in the fact that when services are provided 'voluntarily', they seem to conjure accusations of 'paternalism' which is the most common criticism levied against welfare services.

Occupational welfare programmes have often been identified on the basis of their recipients, and there is often a tendency to restrict the application of the term only to services meeting the needs of manual workers(6). Similar programmes for white-collar employees or management are more likely to be classified under terms such as 'fringe benefits'. Since such services might be available not only to workers but to their families and on occasion former employees or prospective ones, such identity and coverage does not portray welfare services in their modern concept.

Some of the difficulties in saying exactly what occupational welfare is are due partly to the loose way in which the term has been used and partly because the usage has developed over the course of time and it is only fairly recently that a reasonably defined view of what it has become established. As terms become fashionable, so the temptation arises for more and more interested groups and people to offer their own definitions. Because occupational welfare is a common concept, very many names and a few definitions exist. Some writers and institutions call occupational welfare services fringe benefits, some supplementary benefits and others non-wage benefits. Some of these names and definitions will now be discussed in the following pages.

Some Theoretical Definitions

The British Institute of Management is an example of an institution that refers to welfare services as 'non-wage benefits'. Its definition describes 'them as items over and above basic remuneration which increase the well-being or wealth of employees at some cost to the employer(7)'. This definition does not give any examples of items that should constitute non-wage benefits. But it does emphasise their contribution to the well-being of employees as an essential element. Similarly, Christopher Stephen's definition(8), refers to welfare services as 'fringe benefits' and defines them as 'those benefits, social and other, which can be expressed in money terms, can be enjoyed as a direct result of particular employment, and which are granted by management over and above normal wages and salaries'. Again the vagueness of this definition is apparent. Stephen's leaves the course wide open for any item to be taken as a fringe benefit as long as it can be expressed in money terms. He specifies that they can be anything from company pension to a company sponsored home help service. A definition as broad as this gives the impression that welfare services are part of fringe benefits and that fringe benefits are an umbrella term for identifying all services provided by an employer for employees.

T.P. Kenny in his definition(9), makes the point that 'employee welfare movement stood for voluntary action of employers for human betterment, beyond the requirements of the law, the market or

social custom'. No doubt, the emphasis here is for 'voluntary action' by employers. The term 'voluntary' could be a significant means of distinguishing welfare services, now that most services and benefits are either required by law or included in the terms and conditions of employment.

Two outstanding and relevant definitions by Alan Bullock and Oliver Stallybrass in the Fontana Dictionary of Modern Thought and Thomas Kemper in a Handbook of Management, seem to have made the only attempt to distinguish between welfare services and fringe benefits. According to the Fontana Dictionary, 'the word welfare in welfare legislation or the welfare state refers generally to government support for the poor and particularly to the free or subsidised supply of certain goods or services, e.g. health and education.' Transferring this meaning to use in industry, occupational welfare would refer to 'a company's or firm's support for its employees and particularly to the free or subsidised provision of certain facilities, benefits or services aimed at improving their well-being'. This definition highlights welfare's generality as an all-embracing term concerned with the provision of all kinds of support, whether physical or mental to all employees.

The Fontana Dictionary also defines fringe benefits, as 'the elements of an employee's remuneration provided at the employer's expense under the contract of employment other than the rate of pay

per unit of time output'. 'They commonly comprise such items as holidays with pay, pension plans, life insurance, stock purchase plans and payment for absence during family emergencies'. 'They are to be distinguished from ex-gratia payments and from the provision of general amenities such as canteens and sports grounds.

Comparing both definitions, fringe benefits are much more measurable and identifiable. Even though they are also aimed at improving the well-being of employees, they are usually provided according to the terms and conditions of employment. So they cannot on their own be referred to as exclusively composing the only elements of welfare services. At best they can be classified as part of the package of benefits and services that can be called 'welfare services'.

In Thomas Kemper's definition, he sees welfare as 'that part of Personnel Management which is concerned with the physical and mental well-being of employees'. 'He therefore restricts occupational welfare to:

- (a) the provision of facilities such as cloak-rooms, lavatories, rest rooms, canteens, social and sports clubs,
- (b) fringe benefits, many of which are designed to reduce hardship in sickness or old age and,
- (c) personal counselling for those with domestic and other problems',

Since fringe benefits are catered for in most conditions of service, it is likely to be the odd one out in the above definition, otherwise the definition seems to be easily understood and straight to the point. It provides a basis for viewing occupational welfare in its proper perspective and sets out its scope in the light of modern practices in welfare in organisations. Both definitions have established occupational welfare as being the generality of activity by a firm or company aimed at improving the well-being of employees and fringe benefits as part of the generality of activity.

Functional Definition

In this study, a wider functional definition has been adopted which encompasses occupational welfare services provided by organisations studied in Nigeria and the U.K. In the Nigerian External Telecom (NET), the welfare services provided are as follows: Sports and social club facilities, subsidised canteen services, medical facilities and Company farms. In British Telecom (BT), the main focus is on the provision of a personal welfare service. The organisation does provide sports and recreational facilities but these are handled by a BT Recreation Council, so also is the health service handled by the Occupational Health Department. The catering service is run by a BT Catering Policy and Operational services. These welfare services are independent of the welfare department which is not in any way involved in their administration and organisation. They are evidence of the differences in emphasis and the kind of programmes and facilities which different organisations can regard as constituting their welfare services.

One common feature of these services in both organisations is that they are provided voluntarily and are not required by law or the terms and conditions of employment. Though as far as some of them are concerned, (for example, medical facilities), the law requires a certain minimum provision, they are provided at the discretion of the organisation concerned. These differences in emphasis can only further substantiate the ambiguous nature of the concept of occupational welfare. As such a definition that takes into consideration these variances and emphases can be the only one to employ.

In practice therefore, occupational welfare could be interpreted to refer to "the range of facilities and personal services provided voluntarily by an employer, which promote and preserve the well-being of active and retired employees and their families". A further discussion of this definition is provided in Chapter 1.4. I believe it will serve to clarify the meaning and scope of occupational welfare and perhaps pave the way for avoiding the confused usage and association of the term with fringe benefits.

1.4 CONCLUSIONS ON THE SCOPE OF OCCUPATIONAL WELFARE

This chapter first presents a brief summary of the preceding chapters and then provides a definition which explains the scope of occupational welfare practice in industrial organisations.

Three Stage Development.

Three main stages of occupational welfare development can be identified in Nigeria and the U.K. The idea of the three stages presented here should not distract attention from the fact that many changes might have taken place within individual industries in both countries that did not lead to wider enactment. Also it should be recognised that much of the development has been on a piecemeal basis with relatively little integration in these countries. In fact, in a way, occupational welfare development in both countries was partial and restricted to particular sectors of industry. In the U.K. for example, the size of the firm was often associated with developing trends in the provision of welfare services. The larger and more modern firms (e.g. the food industry in the late nineteenth century) first moved towards wider benefits, with the encouragement and pressure of unions. Then the medium-sized firms would find themselves pushing towards the same direction by union action which could point to provision in larger firms in the same industry. The final step of general extension to the smallest companies often required government legislation and aid[10]. Similarly in Nigeria, small companies usually found themselves

providing the same welfare services as the larger companies in order to keep their workers and to stay in the market.

A separate but vital point for discussions of future development is the extent to which this rather ad hoc growth with occasional spurts of legislation, influenced most by political and extra workplace occurrences, has been the best way to promote and enhance occupational welfare.

Occupational Welfare - A Personnel Function

The general scarcity of documented information on occupational welfare practice and the very little interest shown by academics in the subject area over the last nineteen years, seem to have quickened the displacement of welfare as an independent function in organisations by personnel management. In the U.K. the book, 'Welfare at Work', already referred to, is the only textbook that has comprehensively discussed the subject of occupational welfare since the last nineteen years. In Nigeria, from the beginning of industrial development in the early fifties to the present day, no book has been published about occupational welfare. Yet, in both countries, welfare seems to have been fairly well established and recognised as a personnel function even though personnel management evolved from being a welfare association.

A few modern textbooks on personnel management published in both countries now seem to treat welfare either as a section or as a subsection of a section on personnel management. But the generality

of literature on personnel management only devotes just a few pages to the discussion of welfare at work. Yet there is evidence to prove that most large organisations in Nigeria and the U.K. practice occupational welfare in one form or another and spend vast sums of money to improve the well-being of their employees.

One explanation for this negligence of welfare at work in the U.K. is that welfare lost the battle with personnel management when the change of name from the Welfare Workers Association to the Institute of Labour Management and then Personnel Management occurred. This change of name, according to some literature on personnel management [11] reflected a change of emphasis of the function of personnel management in industry. This was when it dawned on employers that their relationship towards its employees was more than just looking after their personal problems, that it also involved a responsibility for a wide variety of important functions relating to the satisfaction of the employee with his job, and the satisfaction of the organisation with the employee, and that it needed a highly trained specialist member of the management team in the form of a personnel manager within the organisation to carry out these functions.

A Comprehensive Definition of Occupational Welfare

The attempt to define occupational welfare in Chapter 1.3, placed emphasis on its dynamic nature. As shown by the findings in the two organisations presented in this thesis, there are significant variations between organisations in the provision and organisation

of welfare services. For these reasons, this study has adopted a functional definition of occupational welfare. Occupational welfare service may be defined as 'the practice of providing a range of facilities and personal services voluntarily by an employer, which promotes and preserves the well-being of active and retired employees and their families', the key word in this definition being 'Voluntarily'.

Any facility or personal service provided by an employer would qualify as an occupational welfare service as long as it is not required to be provided by law or included in the terms and conditions of employment.

Facilities in this context would refer for example to:

1. Catering and recreational facilities such as canteens and a variety of sports and social clubs.
2. Medical facilities such as the provision of clinics and the appointment of medical doctors and nursing staff, while personal services would include,
3. Counselling employees and providing advice and assistance on a variety of individual problems.
4. Welfare visiting during sickness or death, and
5. Providing aid to disadvantaged groups such as disabled persons, young persons, migrants with language problems, ex-offenders, and alcoholics, mothers of young children, etc.

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PART TWO

A CASE STUDY OF WELFARE
SERVICES IN BRITISH
TELECOMMUNICATIONS. PLC.

2.1 HISTORY AND PHILISOPHY

The Post Office Welfare Scheme.

What is now British Telecom Welfare Service had its origin in the Post Office Welfare Scheme which began in July 1943 when the then Post-Master General appointed 'a welfare study group', on the welfare requirements of the Post Office. At that time, the Post Office was part of the Civil Service and most grades (except minor and manipulative) enjoyed the same Civil Service pay scales and conditions of service which were overseen by HM Treasury.

Following the study group's recommendation, an embryo welfare section was formed in the staff branch of the Personnel Department in May 1944 without definite functions. Thereafter as a result of various discussions which took place from 1945 to 1947 between management and staff sides of the already existing Whitley Joint Consultative Committee in the Civil Service to decide the nature of the proposed new welfare organisation and the duties of welfare staff a standing joint committee on welfare was formed in 1947. The 1947 committee signalled the official takeover of the Post Office welfare scheme and also led to the appointment of Welfare Advisers and a National Director to take charge of the welfare scheme. Ten of the first twelve welfare advisers appointed were allocated to the regions while the other two were allocated to the headquarters. Their primary task was to assess the need for local welfare officers and the

numbers required. This recommendation paved the way for the appointment of the first welfare officers who were drawn mainly from Post Office ranks.

The initial success of the take-off of the scheme was due in large measure to the diligence and efficient powers of organisation of Mr. E.B. Davies, the Midland Region Director who became known as the 'Father of the Post Office Welfare Scheme'.

Although the Post Office had begun to establish its welfare scheme by appointing welfare officers, it was difficult for these welfare officers to gain credibility quickly within the organisation.

Initially there was a caution in accepting welfare and it was not surprising that some local managers and staff representatives received it as a possible threat to their respective functions.

Welfare officers often found(1) that managers and supervisors were suspicious of their work and they were also attacked by the unions as a management device for controlling employees. The problems of being the 'person in the middle' were not unlike the difficulties faced by first line supervisors. Work people were not sure whether the aims of welfare were altruistic and felt that there was an element of hypocrisy in the welfare officer's actions. Managers saw the possibility of another standard besides economic efficiency being applied and were antagonised by the thought of any restrictions on their power.

Apart from the problem of gaining credibility within the organisation there also remained one other very important initial problem which was; to whom would welfare officers be responsible? In most regional branches of the Post Office for example, the relationship of the welfare service to the rest of the organisation was unclear and went unnoticed by many. It was associated in most minds with group welfare projects such as first aid and mass radiography. According to the Post Office Journal, Lighthouse(1972); no one seemed to know how services should be used. Welfare officers had to take on a variety of odd jobs hived off from other duties. They could for instance, be called upon to be a sort of accommodation-cum-billeting officer. For example, in an effort to recruit West Indians for vacancies in the provinces it was suggested that an officer should meet them at the port as they disembarked and offer lodgings and welfare services. 'Controller of sick bays and first aid arrangement is another title early welfare officers might have merited. They were called in as consultants in discussions about working or welfare conditions, sometimes making inspections with the local controlling officer and staff association representative. They were involved in refreshment club management, they cooperated with training officers organising educational improvement for both juvenile and adult staff and they helped to inspire and maintain interest in sports and social affairs. These initial problems were viewed seriously by the pioneering management of the Post Office Welfare Scheme between the early years

of 1947 and 1959. They acted swiftly and decided the role of the welfare officer in the organisation. He was not to belong to either management or staff but was expected to be some kind of 'neutral angel' that each side could call upon. It was argued that if he was part of management he would be considered an outsider by the staff and if attached to the staff-side would be suspect by management. The concept of a personal welfare service and the implementation of the Post Office welfare policy was formally introduced into the organisation during the 1960's when Dr. A. Martin was appointed as Chief Welfare Adviser (at Principal level equating to the Treasury Welfare Adviser) and coordinator of the work of regional welfare advisers. But it was not until in 1972 that the role of the service was clearly defined as follows:

1. 'to be concerned with the difficulties which may confront employees in their everyday life'.
2. 'that the Welfare Officer's function is to help individuals towards finding ways of dealing with them'(2).

Also in 1972, a Welfare Training Centre was set up with modern teaching facilities. The services of the Centre were considered so good that contemporary organisations such as the Central Electricity Generating Board, British Rail, North Thames Gas, a number of local authority councils and even the Citizens Advice Bureau sent their welfare staff to be trained there.

British Telecom welfare department still maintains links with most of these organisations and they still cooperate effectively in employee welfare matters.

British Telecom Welfare Services

Even though the years of welfare service provision and Administration under the Post Office have been a period of increased demand for more extensive provision of community and personal welfare services, the Post Office made great efforts to meet the need for trained personnel and services and enhanced its reputation in the field of occupational welfare. The Post Office Welfare Scheme still continues in its own right under the management of the Post Office Corporation and has provided a solid foundation for improving and developing to one of the best in the U.K.

Following the reorganisation of the old Post Office into Telecommunications and Mails with Giro, the telecommunications arm was renamed 'British Telecommunications' (BT). Under the British Telecoms Act of 1981, the telecommunications as well as welfare services provided by the Post Office fell under the administration of the new public corporation. British Telecom was subsequently privatised in 1984.

One of the immediate impacts the formation of the new corporation had on the provision of welfare services is that it led to changes

in the structure and organisation of welfare under the new corporation throughout the country. While the welfare department has remained under the overall control of the Director of Personnel at BT's Headquarters, the status of the Welfare Officer has been raised to that of a professional manager in his own right. Due to an expansion of the services of the Welfare Training Centre, a more intensive and longer period of training is now provided to cover the most essential aspects of welfare work.

There has also been an expansion of the number of welfare staff employed to advise staff on personal problems. This figure has increased from seventy-five during the Post Office era to one hundred and thirty-five in the BT era. The main reason for this increase has been due to the need by management to make use of the opportunity of the formation of a new organisation to expand services in order to increase overall efficiency.

The main focus of the welfare officer's job in British Telecom has been the concept of a personal welfare service through employee counselling which now occupies well over sixty-five percent of a welfare officer's time. Another major organisational change has seen the abolition of the posts of Chief Welfare Officer and Senior Welfare Officer levels within the welfare structure and the transfer of responsibility to functional managers to take care of welfare services in their departments. Also in some of BT's territories and

divisions, new positions of Welfare Service Managers incorporating personnel and welfare functions have been created in an attempt to decentralise the welfare service.

Welfare Philosophy

According to Lambert(1971)(13), the first statement concerning the philosophy of the Post Office Welfare Service was spelt out to the first group of welfare officers in 1951 by Sir Donald Sargent who was then the Deputy Director General of the Post Office. This set the course for the future.

Essentially, the statement directed that the basic philosophy of the Post Office Welfare Service shall be based on 'a concern for the well-being of the individual worker, demonstrated positively through the system of counselling on personal problems without any departmental strings being attached. This statement became the terms of reference for planning, organising and structuring the activities of the Post Office's Welfare Officers for many years. By analysis, it provided directives on four main areas as follows:

1. the scope of welfare practice in the organisation;
2. how this concern of welfare can be achieved;
3. the place of line management in welfare practice, and,
4. the substantive foundations on which the philosophy is based.

The implications for the scope of welfare practice in the then Post Office as far as this statement is concerned were clear. The primary concern of the service was to protect and preserve the well-being of every employee in the organisation irrespective of status. This suggests a belief in good organisation and a broad mission of pastoral care for their workers which might in turn lead to higher output by controlling sickness, absenteeism and by early resolution of grievances and personal problems.

This statement of the Post Office's welfare philosophy(3) also emphasised the practice of employee counselling as a means of improving the well-being of an employee. There was a fair amount of debate in the early days according to Sydney Lambert(3) on the merits of aiming for either counselling in-depth as practised by the Marriage Guidance Council and other social work agencies, or operating an information and referral service like the Citizens Advice Bureaux. The general view of the managers of the service at the time was that with the amount of casework dealt with, the in-depth approach would take up too much time while the information and referral idea smacked of instant welfare. In the event, management decided that good occupational welfare casework in the then Post Office should operate between the two concepts. However, personal casework has remained the solid base of the welfare officer's job in the organisation up to the present.

The stated aim of casework as practised in the Post Office is first to help the employee to assess and understand his or her difficulties, and second to help resolve these difficulties, or ease them. A solution can come through discussion and counselling and where necessary practical help. Sometimes an understanding hearing is sufficient(4).

When British Telecom was created in 1981, it more or less fully adopted the philosophy on which the Post Office welfare service had been based for the previous 34 years. Its statements on the scope and meaning of a personal welfare service and its aims and objectives are contained in various lecture handouts on BT's Occupational Welfare Officer's courses and brochures on the Welfare service(5). It was not possible during the research to obtain copies of BT's statement of welfare philosophy. The pretext for this was 'confidential reasons'. I was however assured by the managers of the service that such a statement was in existence and that the handouts and papers on the welfare service published by the welfare department were based on such a policy statement.

The Concept of the "Whole person".

The substantive foundation on which BT's welfare philosophy operates is the concept of the 'whole person'(6). This accepts that a person has a number of roles to play in everyday existence, e.g. as employee, father, mother, son, daughter, householder and citizen etc.. It is

difficult to isolate these roles from a person's role as an employee in an organisation. Also in performing these roles, problems and difficulties arise which may be domestic, financial or social. At first sight, many of these problems appear to have little or nothing to do with an employer, but it must be remembered that they affect an employee in the context of his work. Furthermore, employees cannot give of their best when they have excessive stresses and strains at home. This is one reason why BT interests itself in personal welfare service where specialist welfare officers are employed to advise members of staff on personal problems. A more detailed discussion of this concept is undertaken in chapter 4.3 of this thesis.

2.2 WELFARE RESPONSIBILITY AND ORGANISATION IN BT.

Responsibility for Welfare

To most employees in BT, welfare officers are the very embodiment of the welfare service. Welfare Officers have been described as 'managers and coordinators of resources both human and material'(6) and as 'general practitioners in welfare' with an immense list of responsibilities(7). Yet almost all the welfare officers to whom I have talked resent these labels and see themselves simply as specialists in welfare by training and education. These perspectives of the office are reflected in the ambiguities and contradictions built into the role in the welfare service. For example, as noted earlier, one commentator(8) on Post Office welfare, styled the Welfare Officer as 'some kind of neutral angel' that each side of the organisation could call upon on any matters affecting both employees and management, reflecting his position during the formative years of the service when welfare officers were 'Jacks of all trades'.

But since the 1960's when the role of the welfare service was properly defined, a recognition of his professional and specialist status emerged(9). The extent of his responsibility as far as the welfare of employees in the organisation is concerned subsequently limited to the use of his specialist or expert knowledge in advising staff and management on personal problems(10). Thus evolved a 'tripartite partnership' in which the Welfare Officer,

line manager and employee together became responsible for welfare. The respective roles of the welfare officer, manager and employee as far as this partnership in BT welfare service is concerned are discussed in the following pages.

The role of the Welfare Officer

The work of welfare officers within the British Telecom organisation is to offer a private counselling service to individual employees and to act as advisers to management on a variety of human problems [10]. Examples of the types of cases where counselling and advice to management and employees may be needed are those:

1. Relating to personal relationships, particularly of a private nature - for example, a different family problem about which the person either cannot or will not open-up to management.
2. Out-of-character changes in behaviour patterns in the working groups observed over a period by management.
3. Directly related to the work situation - death in service, late/sick attendance records, trial periods, irregular attenders, age/medical retirements, changes of duty after accident or illness etc..
4. Where information is sought on such matters as entitlement to national insurance benefits, industrial rehabilitation and re-training facilities, community social services, etc.

To be able to carry out these functions efficiently, welfare officers in BT are carefully selected and trained[11].

Details of the selection process and a comprehensive training scheme that provides the welfare officer with the many and varied skills needed to guide him in the execution of his responsibilities are to be found in the Training Center's manual on welfare officer's training programme[12].

The role of management

It is a basic assumption in BT, that line managers are responsible for the welfare of their staff[13]. The manager only brings in the welfare officer when skills and know-how are needed of a kind not expected within the accepted group control function of management. Once management has assessed the need for these skills to be brought in, early consultation with or referral of the case to the welfare officer becomes essential.

The success of the service in a sense depends on the level and degree of cooperation and understanding between management and welfare staff. It is regarded as essential by the partners in the BT welfare service that managers and welfare staff be fully aware of one another's points of view in any given case. This will allow an efficient, practical and humane approach to the problem and possibly to its solution.

The role of the employee

The employee in a sense is the most important member of the 'partnership'. He is the 'problem owner' without whom, there would be neither problem nor welfare officer nor management involvement. The 'employee problem owner' can be a messenger, an ordinary worker, a technician or even a retired former member of staff as long as he or she work(ed) for BT. The policy of helping people to help themselves is generally adopted by BT's welfare officers in dealing with cases. It is not the task of the welfare officer to take over an employees problem but rather to assist him or her to help themselves. For success to be achieved therefore, the employee who consults a welfare officer is normally bound to disclose the truth about a situation to the welfare officer who will then through his expert knowledge advise on the best approach and information or referral service needed.

Position of Welfare Department in BT.

The welfare department is part of the Personnel and Corporate Services unit which is under the control of a Director of Personnel and Corporate Services who is a member of BT's Board of Directors. The welfare service is organised from within three main areas as follows:

1. British Telecom Headquarters (BTHQ) in London: This is where the Chief Welfare Adviser directs and coordinates the welfare

activities of the organisation. For all welfare matters including First Aid, the Chief Welfare Adviser (CWA) is directly responsible to the Head of Corporate Services Division who in turn is responsible to the Director of Corporate Personnel who is finally answerable to the board members. This means that the welfare and personnel departments in BT are involved in a complementary relationship, the implication being that welfare is seen as part of the personnel system and therefore inseparable from it. This kind of relationship is much talked about in academic circles as being responsible for the 'soft-image' view of personnel functions by other departments in many contemporary organisations (14). This view is further discussed in chapter 5.1. Also located at BTHQ under the direction of the CWA is the welfare administrative office which is controlled by a welfare officer who is the main contact on general welfare matters and welfare arrangements for disabled employees.

2. Welfare Training Centre:

This centre is also located in London and the CWA has overall responsibility for it. It has tutors of senior welfare officer rank who plan and run the courses. They organise the training of welfare officers and advise them of future training needs in the area of refresher and post-appointment and attendance at relevant conferences and meetings.

3. Divisions, Territories and Districts:

These are the main business branches and structure of British Telecom and they each have their own teams of welfare staff.

The present attempt to decentralize the organisation of welfare in BT, gives autonomous powers to welfare teams in these units to select and appoint their own welfare staff who may or may not be specialists in welfare matters. These units have now introduced a number of designations such as 'Welfare Service Managers', and 'Welfare Managers' which have almost completely replaced the old designations of 'Chief and Senior Welfare Officers'. They are responsible to the respective Boards of Directors of Welfare service in the divisions, territories and districts.

Officers

British Telecom operates a multi-hierarchical management structure which makes it possible for any member of staff to be appointed to any vacant management position. This means that in the welfare department (as in other departments), there are a number of chief and senior welfare officers whose backgrounds have been in other professions. Whatever advantages and disadvantages this might bring to the organisation in general and in particular to the welfare department are a matter of debate. But in the least it has the obvious benefit of giving someone within a particular department an opportunity to advance his or her career albeit in a different profession.

There are basically three welfare officer levels in BT. They are discussed below:

1. Chief Welfare Adviser (CWA):

In principle the CWA is responsible directly to the Head of Corporate Services Division. He is supreme in his own department provided always that he has the confidence of the Head of Corporate Services Division. In general terms he is responsible to the Head of Corporate Services Division for the implementation of welfare policy in British Telecom. He is also head of the Training Centre, First Aid Centre and the Welfare Administrative Office even though he has individual subordinates in control of these subsections. He is directly responsible for advising divisional, territorial and district managers on welfare matters even though he has no control over how they organise their welfare functions.

2. Chief Welfare Officer (CWO):

Senior Welfare Officer (SWO):

Welfare Service Manager (WSM):

Welfare Manager (WM).

Chief and Senior Welfare Officer levels are being gradually phased out in BT's welfare organisation. Responsibility of CWO's and SWO's has been shifted to personnel officers in some territories and districts. Scotland Region and BT International Division are a few of the areas of the business still retaining the old hierarchy. Where these hierarchies still exist, the CWO is responsible for organising all welfare activities and answerable to BT's board of

directors of welfare service of the division, territory or district. Most of them also organise First Aid (a statutory requirement under the Health and Safety Act) and carry out other duties that the board feels CWO's should do in their areas, some of them take on additional duties as board members in the regions as a way of making the management structure work more efficiently.

The Senior Welfare Officer is responsible for supervising the day to day working of welfare officers and assisting them with dealing with any difficult problems that arise. They are also responsible for training, development and appraisal of welfare officers and deal with senior managers' casework.

Welfare managers or welfare service managers are the new designatory replacements to CWO's and SWO'S in the divisions, territories and districts and as such are functional equals to them. The main distinctions, (according to the Chief Welfare Adviser), are to be found in their knowledge and experience of welfare matters and the duties they perform. This new breed of welfare managers may or may not be experts on welfare matters. Even when they are experts on welfare, they now take on other duties more directly concerned with personnel matters. This new arrangement has the advantage (according to the Principal Tutor on welfare at the Training Centre), of making it possible for the specialist welfare managers to learn more about personnel and hence widen their promotional prospects by integrating

personnel and welfare functions; a practice which was seen as impossible by some welfare officers in the early years of BT's welfare service.

Because of the autonomous powers granted the districts, territories and divisions to organise and implement their welfare arrangements, the training of the non-specialist welfare managers (ie. the one with less knowledge of personnel) to acquire welfare skills cannot be made compulsory. They accept responsibility for all welfare matters in addition to their personal functions and take charge of expert welfare officers allocated to their district or territories. Such an arrangement may create difficulties in future if welfare policies are to be properly implemented in the various areas of BT's businesses.

3. Welfare Officer (WO):

Welfare Officers carry out the day to day welfare activities in the organisation. Such activities involve counselling of employees on various problems and difficulties, seeking outside help on various matters, visiting sick and retired employees and providing information on various issues as required by employees. Some organise welfare talks on services they can offer to staff and management.

On average, WO's deal with about '40' new cases a month. These are cases where one hour or more is spent on a person, e.g. interviewing, counselling and seeking outside help. The average loading is about one WO to about 2,500 staff. Figure 1 on page 60 gives a pictorial view of the existing structure of BT's welfare organisation.

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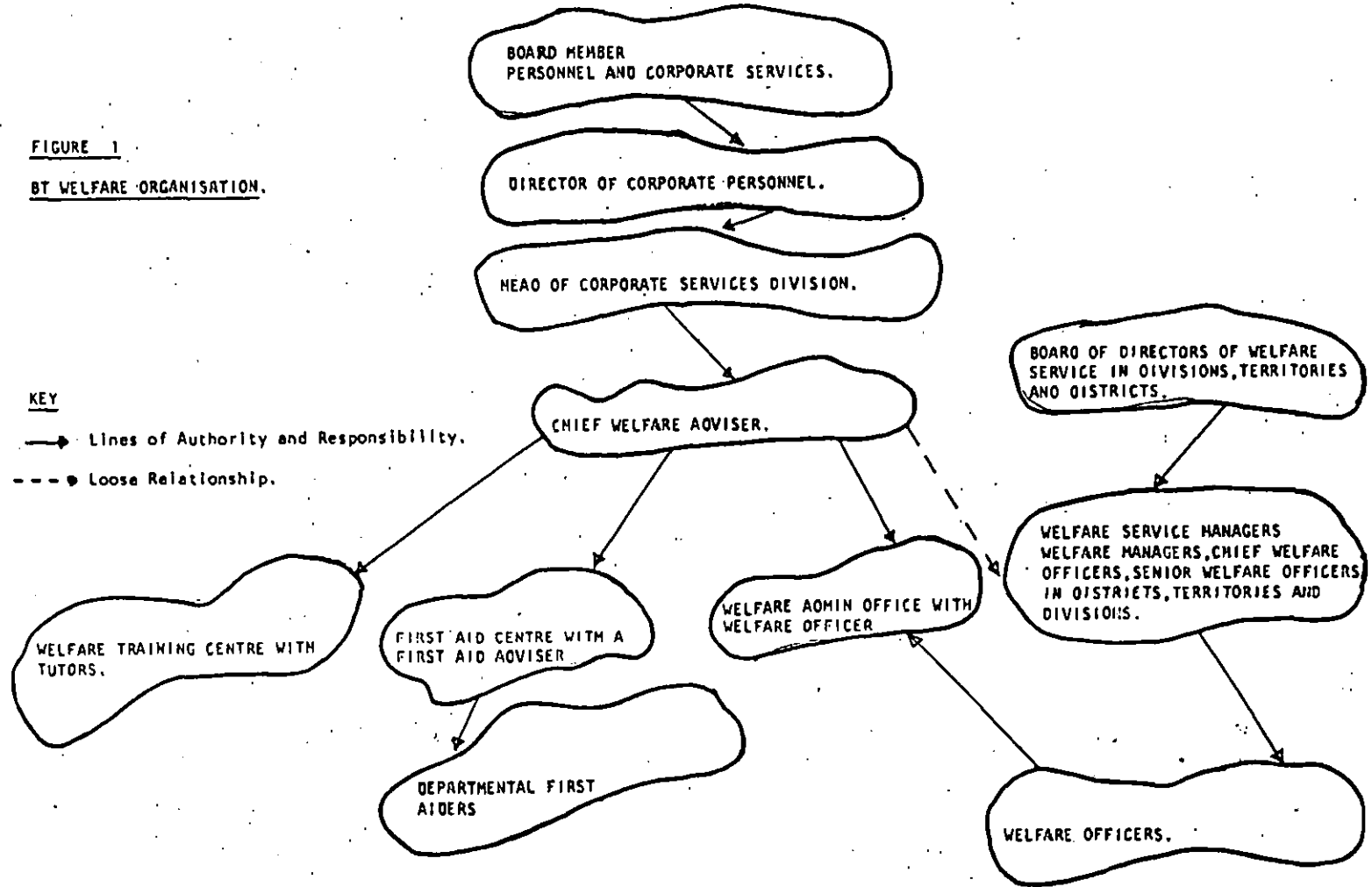
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FIGURE 1
BT WELFARE ORGANISATION.



2.3 TYPES OF SERVICES TO EMPLOYEES.

This chapter examines a range of specific services and facilities provided by the British Telecom Welfare Service for its active and retired employees. These services fall broadly into two main groups - 'personal' and 'group' welfare services. In a limited way, the welfare service also concerns itself with advising management of any deficiencies that may come to its attention as regards the provision of physical welfare facilities such as rest room accommodation, washing facilities, heating and lighting, etc..

Personal welfare services are concerned with the personal problems and difficulties of employees. The work of the welfare officer (as has been stated earlier in chapter 2.2), is almost entirely concerned with advising and helping employees to deal with these personal problems and difficulties. Employees may come to him or be referred to him by management or outside agencies - with problems arising from domestic situations, bereavement, sickness, financial difficulties, pension problems, housing and certain employment matters etc..

Group welfare services provided by BT consist mainly of sports and recreational facilities and catering services. Just as it can be argued that personal welfare services affect efficiency and productivity, so also the provision of group welfare services can be justified on the assumption that they are good for morale. Both points will be discussed in more detail in later parts of this thesis.

Personal Welfare Services

These types of services fall into the following categories:

1. Support during sickness

The aim of this service is to provide help and advice to absent from work for periods exceeding two to three months because of prolonged illness.

The approach is usually for the welfare officer to be notified immediately by the line manager as soon as an employee goes on sick leave. The welfare officer would then encourage management to write and visit members of their staff on sick leave including mentioning services of welfare office. When the service exceeds two to three months without contact, the welfare officer should make a visit. Once he makes the contact, he then tries to identify that a welfare need exists in the particular situation. This may become obvious if it is found that the employee cannot help himself without support and if such aid is not forthcoming from the state, medical or welfare services or the employees or the employee's own family[13].

2. Assistance to the Bereaved:

This service provides help and advice to relations of members of the staff who die before retirement. At times like this the State services may not be able to assist and the family is often non-existent or helpful. BT welfare service attaches a lot of

importance to this service and considers it one of the most widely appreciated services of a welfare officer.

The company procedure is for the welfare officer to approach the situation with tact and common sense, putting the bereaved employee or the widow or widower of the employee in touch with the right organisations and helping with funeral arrangements, statutory benefits, advice on procedure to be followed after a death, dealing with Will and Probate matters. Management are encouraged to write and visit next-of-kin and to advise them to contact the welfare officer for further help and advice.

3. Help with Domestic Problems.

The range of problems involved are strictly personal ones and they usually affect life at home. They cover all types of matrimonial and family problems, illnesses of dependents, single parenthood, elderly parents and legal cases. The approach is to counsel employees on how to help themselves or where to go for expert advice and the statutory benefits and social services available.

4. Help with Employment Problems:

The kind of cases include complaints about supervision, lack of promotion, requests for transfer to another department, inter-personal relations and feelings of inadequacy about duties. Employees are encouraged to discuss these kinds of problems with their boss or through BT's grievance procedure where they should

normally be solved. The most that is done is to provide a counselling service which gives employees the opportunity to talk about these problems and allows the welfare officer to suggest actions the employee can take to put things right.

5. Assistance to Pensioners:

BT provides a welfare service for staff who retire on age, health and redundancy grounds. In all cases help and advice is offered through counselling and assistance provided in all matters concerning retirement, DHESS benefits, pension and grants, retraining for other employment, training opportunities scheme, how to adapt to a new life, and redundancy payments due. BT welfare department maintains continuing contact with retired staff. Welfare officers organise visits to pensioners, and if requested, regularly mails them free of charge, copies of 'Telecom Today' - a BT monthly house magazine to keep them informed of developments and changes in the organisation

6. Help during Financial Crisis:

The types of financial problems which are usually dealt with by BT's welfare officers are of three main types:

- those involving minor financial difficulties, more serious debts and financial distress cases. The causes of these problems range from domestic reasons such as illness, through to irresponsibility involving gambling, living beyond means, drinking and drugs and bad management by wife, husband or both.

Minor financial difficulties arise when there is a sudden emergency such as loss of money and this is usually dealt with either by providing a salary or wage advance, seeking help from local benevolent fund or increasing earnings opportunities.

The more serious debt and financial distress cases which result in an inability to pay money owed, (for example rent and debt etc.) and to meet daily needs, are dealt with by applying for help from the British Telecom Benevolent Fund which exists for the exclusive benefit of BT staff and or their dependants.

7. Help with Housing difficulties:

The services offered provide help, advice and information on general housing needs, improvement grants, rents and rates rebates, rents of furnished and unfurnished tenancies, tenants rights, landlord's rights, evictions, harassment and how to acquire temporary and permanent accommodation. Staff are usually referred to the appropriate agency that can deal with particular problems and where necessary arrangements for casual leave are made with appropriate departments for this purpose.

Other cases dealt with by welfare officers include, special such as alcoholism, drug addiction, disablement, accident and criminal injury procedures, alternative work and rehabilitation and personal hygiene problems.

Group Welfare Services

These services are of three main types - catering services, sports and social clubs and Occupational Health Service (OHS).

1. Catering Services:

British Telecom operates one of the largest directly controlled staff catering service in the country. It's activities are controlled by British Telecom Catering Policy and Operational Services,

'As at 1983, BT currently operates 400 staff restaurants (160 in London) throughout the U.K. It employs about 3690 employees, 45 percent of whom are part-timers. These restaurants provide 46,000 main meals, 130,000 snacks, and 176,000 beverages daily. The 'small unit' types of restaurants which number about 260, serve up to 400 meals and snacks daily, while the 'medium units' serving from 400 to 800 meals and snacks daily number about 79. The 'large units' are 61 in number and they serve more than 800 meals and snacks daily'.

Apart from restaurants, BT also provides about 3000 mess rooms for essential self-catering needs where no staff restaurant is available.

The British Telecom College at Manor Gardens, London runs courses for catering staff up to Catering Executive 'A' level. Training in aspects of staff restaurant operation including cookery.

hygiene, safety, catering law, accounting and catering management management is available. Some specialised courses are run under licence from the Hotel and Catering Industry Training Board, which also monitors training standards. British Telecom catering training courses are also marketed throughout the catering industry both in Britain and abroad.

2. Sports and Social Clubs:

A recreation Council called the British Telecom and Post Office Recreation Council is in charge of about 700 subsidised sports, cultural and social clubs which are run under its authority throughout the country.

3. Occupational Health Service (OHS):

BT's Occupational Health Service (OHS) was founded in 1972. Since then it has acquired a reputation of excellence throughout the U.K. and maintains frequent contact with other occupational health organisations throughout British industry to keep abreast of developments. The chief medical officer is head of the service and he is responsible for evolving and instituting policy of the OHS. He is assisted by a deputy chief medical officer, a nursing officer and an administrative staff. In each territory or district, the OHS is headed by a medical officer who is the health team leader in respect of the nurses under his control. In total, the OHS professional staff consist of some 50 nurses, 16 full-time doctors and a number of part-time doctors and nurses.

The service aims to look after BT employees and their problems and the working environment. It is not a treatment service and the health and advice it gives are essentially preventive in nature. It is of particular concern if an employee's work affects his health or if his health affects his work. The OHS advises management on the proper assessment and control of health hazards - physical, chemical, biological and psychological. It also advises management on the health aspects of employment - firstly at the recruitment stage and and subsequently throughout employment, undertaking health examination where necessary. Main areas relate to the effects of ill health on working capacity, provision of suitable employment for those with temporary or permanent disabilities and for those people who need premature retirement for reasons of illhealth. When sickness absence is investigated, means by which it may be reduced are suggested.

Costs of Providing Welfare Services in BT

There was an air of secrecy and suspicion surrounding the discussion and disclosure of facts, figures and information in general on the costs to BT of providing welfare services. I was told that management regarded this area as highly confidential and therefore not to be discussed with an outsider. Because of this, there was a limit to the amount of information I could obtain in this respect.

Apart from published figures on yearly staff costs, I managed to obtain approximate estimates (which were read out to me by a BT

official) on what BT spent on its welfare service yearly from 1982 to 1985. It was not possible to obtain a breakdown of how much was spent during these years on each area of the welfare service. One common method of determining how much welfare services cost employers is to measure them as a percentage of the employer's total labour costs. In the case of BT, the figures showing welfare costs expressed as a percentage of labour costs from 1982 to 1985 (since the creation of BT) are shown graphically in Figure 2 on page 72. Also on page 73, figure 3 shows the percentage increases and decreases in 'labour costs' and 'welfare costs' and 'salaries and wages' over the same period of time.

Welfare has cost BT over the four year period illustrated, on average of about .08 percent of total labour costs. In money terms, this means that over this four-year period, an average of about £2,000,000 has been spent by BT to provide welfare services to its employees while £2,622,000,000 was spent on labour costs. When expressed as a cost per employee, BT spent on average about £8.65 on each employee per annum on welfare.

In general, the level of welfare costs seems to decrease sharply over years while the level of increases in total labour costs and salaries and wages also gradually but not significantly decreased. This means that over the four year period, welfare costs have decreased continuously while labour costs and salaries and wages increased slightly every year. Welfare costs and labour costs seem to be carefully

balanced against labour turnover, retirements and wastage. Average annual decrease in welfare provision has been 15.3% over three years and the average annual increase in labour costs has been 5.1%

The above comparisons when viewed as they are, do not look very impressive. Labour investment costs relative to capital investment costs are expected to be lower than capital costs where capital costs are high. It would have been instructive to compare these figures with those applying to the British Post Office. But unfortunately such data were not available.

It is most regrettable that BT did not in the event provide the freedom of information concerning welfare development and costs which I have been led to expect. Nevertheless, the general picture which emerged was of expansion and development since 1981 coupled with reorganisation particularly in terms of reduction of senior staff welfare officers and increased devolution which has led to cost savings. To this extent the main null hypothesis is disproved. However, some contrary evidence emerges in terms of union officers' perspectives of welfare provision discussed in the following chapter 2.4.

FIGURE 2 : A- WELFARE COSTS EXPRESSED AS PERCENTAGE OF LABOUR COSTS.
 B- WELFARE COSTS PER EMPLOYEE.

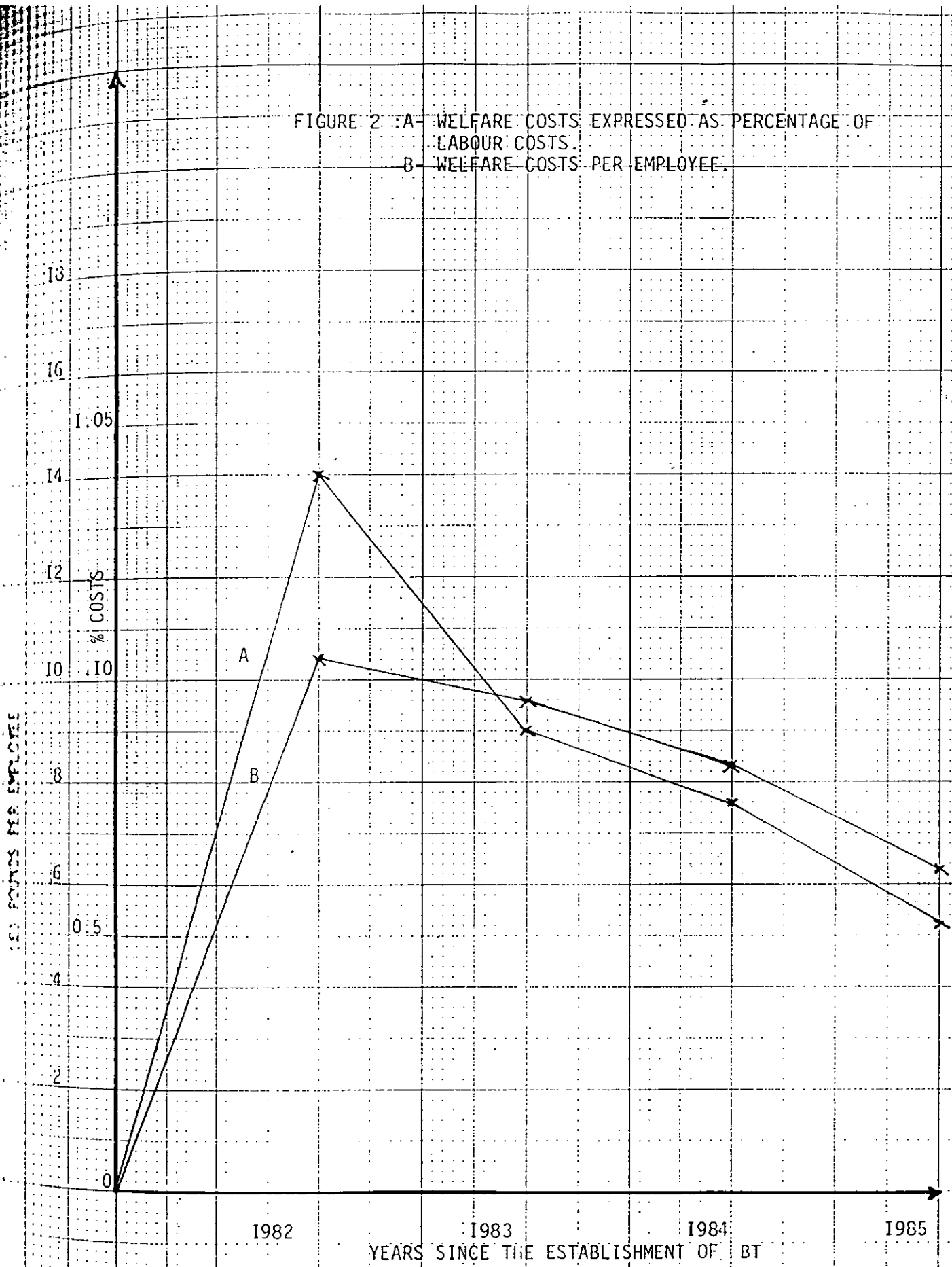


FIGURE 3: INCREASES/DECREASES IN WELFARE & LABOUR COSTS & SALARIES & WAGES.

INCREASES IN LABOUR COSTS

A- LABOUR COST INCREASES
B- WELFARE COST DECREASES
C- SALARIES & WAGES INCREASES

YEARS

82

83

84

85

DECREASES IN WELFARE COSTS

-5

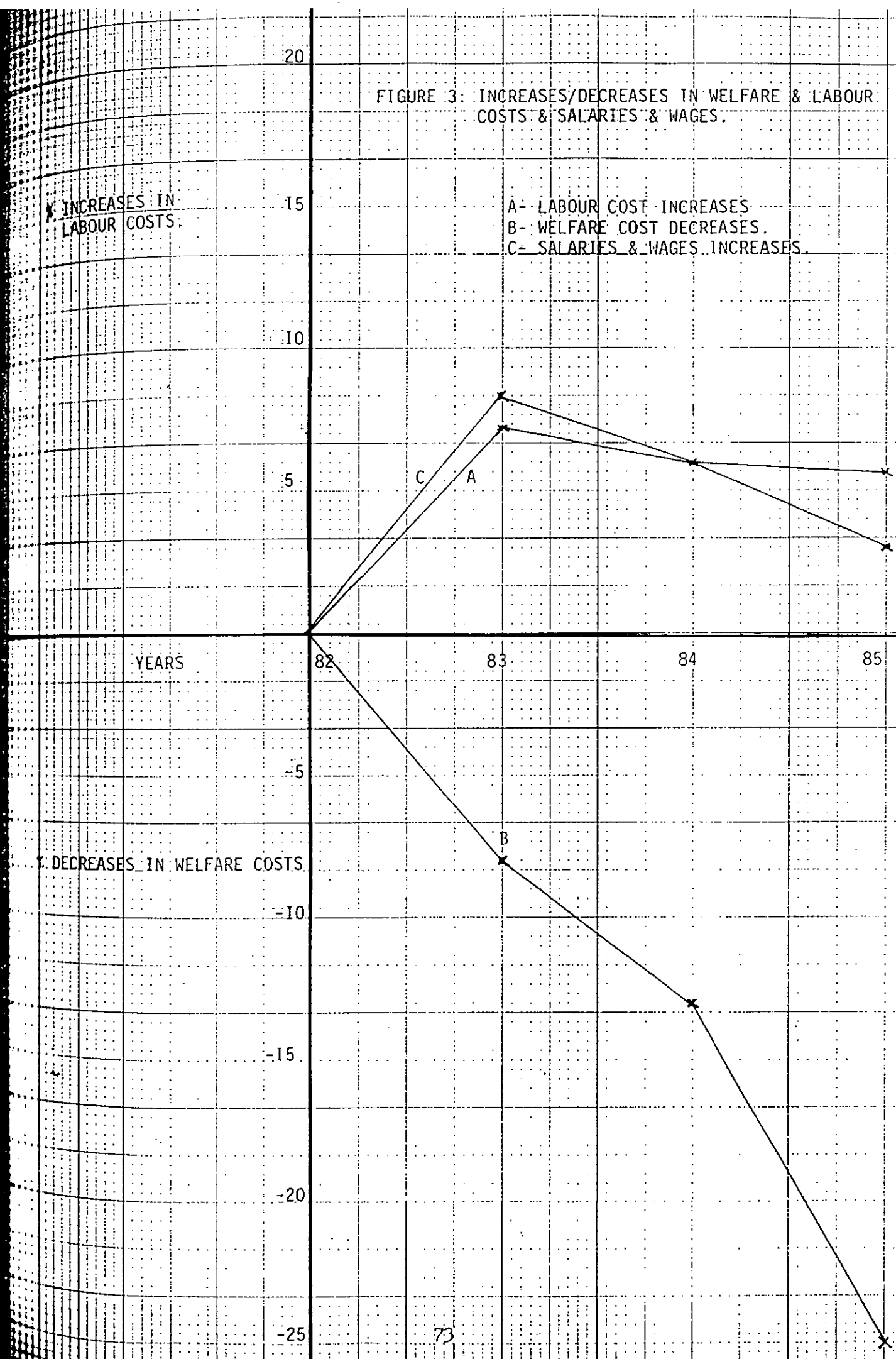
-10

-15

-20

-25

73



2.4 EMPLOYEE PERSPECTIVES ON BT WELFARE SERVICE

Because BT is the minor study, no attempt was made to carry out a formal company-wide survey of employees' attitudes to the welfare service. Instead the aim was to find out and establish modern practice in welfare in BT which will then be used as a model for discussing the welfare service in the Nigerian External Telecommunications Ltd.

One way of doing this, (apart from the many months spent in BT's welfare department talking to welfare officers and reading relevant literature on the welfare service), was to organise a structured discussion with randomly selected line managers, Trade Union officials and ordinary employees of BT. To the line managers and Trade Union officials, the aim was to comment on the welfare service as both its users and coordinators while the employees had to comment as users of the service only. Even though the sample covered is by no means representative of BT's workforce, it however gives a near-accurate impression of how both users and managers of the service see it. A sample of the kinds of questions asked (which were adapted to suit the department and people interviewed), is provided in Appendix 1.

This chapter therefore provides a summary of the views resulting from my discussions with Trade Union officials, line managers and ordinary employees of British Telecom.

Trade Union Perspectives.

In BT, the biggest organisation representing workers or employees was the Post Office Engineering Union (POEU) with 135,000 members in January 1985. It merged with the BT Civil and Public Services Association (CPSA) to form the National Communications Union (NCU). The NCU now represents about 90 per cent of BT's employees. Details of the merger were still being worked out at the time I approached the union for discussions. I discussed with the secretary and about ten shop-stewards and members of the union from various branches, about the role the union was playing in promoting occupational welfare in the organisation.

Little evidence is available that unions do not appear to have played a very significant role in the development of the welfare service in BT. Though they were involved in negotiations during the early years [15] to determine what the major emphasis of the service would be in later years, they seem to have generally been more concerned with negotiating for basic pay increases and the improvement of working conditions for staff generally. Most of the union's work has been concerned with dealing with various members' problems which cover aspects of work, home life, personal problems and money matters [16]. But as a general rule, problems relating to work, are regarded to be within the sphere of the first line manager or supervisor.

Domestic problems, money matters and housing are seen also to fall within the province of the welfare officer.

The major activities of the union are centered around the provision of what it calls the 'Union's Personal Services', these are; free legal aid to all its members, assistance with the processing of claims for accidents on or off duty which may result in death or permanent total disablement, providing a death benefit to next-of-kin and a comprehensive education scheme which covers general social education and specific training for Trade Union work [16]. Clearly there is need for a day to day liaison between Union and Welfare Officers to avoid unnecessary overlap.

During our discussion, the NCU officials argued that in general they have always supported management in promoting a healthy organisation particularly when the well-being of their members are involved. They blame political appointments to top managerial positions in BT by the government as the cause for the confrontational attitudes now adopted by the unions towards almost every management intention.

As far as physical welfare facilities are concerned, the union role has always been to bring management to reality whenever there are deviations from statutory requirements. The unions are satisfied with existing provisions and arrangements for group welfare services. Their members organise and participate fully in sports and social clubs, and feel a lot could be done to improve them. Through their membership of the BT Sports Council, and the BT Union Council, committees are elected which deal with sports facilities and

through these, they hope to make gradual but effective changes. In spite of their early support and interest from the 'Whitley Committee' origins, the unions have very little confidence in the current development of the personal welfare service system. First and foremost, they see the existing arrangements to decentralize the welfare service as a further opportunity by management to increase its influence in dictating the responsibilities of the welfare officer. They feel strongly about the incompatibility of personnel and welfare activities; that attempts being made in the decentralisation effort to make welfare managers combine welfare duties with personnel and safety responsibilities will not work well and will only make the service inefficient.

Secondly, since the welfare service has been in existence, there has been a very good relationship between unions and the welfare department. This has been built mostly on the good work done on the numerous cases of staff referred to the welfare officer by the union officials. Welfare officers and union officials used to meet frequently to discuss, exchange views and experiences and agree on a common strategy to adopt on various staff issues. But since the creation of BT, these meetings have been stopped. As a result, union services and welfare services are no longer as integrated as previously. Although no direct evidence was offered. There were rumours of reported cases where welfare officers have been alleged to have leaked confidential information about staff to management. Such cases have had the effect of discouraging staff from taking the personal welfare service seriously.

According to them, the personnel welfare service will have no more future in BT if the following problems are not solved:

1. The existing lack of trust between union members and the welfare officers.
2. Management over-involvement in the affairs of the welfare department
3. The involvement of non-specifist welfare managers in the welfare service. Evidence from the union officials interviewed is that of a deteriorating welfare officer service, however, it was not possible to judge the extent to which these views were widespread amongst union officials, because no thorough sampling of officials was attempted.

Staff Perspectives:

Most of the staff I talked to seemed quite satisfied with the work welfare officers are doing in general. Further probes revealed that staff were generally ignorant of the kinds of services on offer in the welfare department. On first thought, it was the union officials only, they thought they could go to with problems concerned with their work. Most of them see the welfare officer as a kind of intermediary between them and management over problems of employment. There was no awareness by many that the welfare officer dealt with domestic and financial difficulties. Such issues they would refer to supervisors and line managers for advice only if they were on good terms at the time. Otherwise it would be left to them to deal with in their own way.

They all agreed that there is a serious case for publicising the welfare service and its activities more effectively within the organisation

Management Perspectives:

The line managers I discussed with were drawn from the five divisions of the business. Among them were a Resourcing and Training Manager, Commercial Officer, Financial Accountant, Protocol Support Engineer, a Catering Executive, a Computer Hardware Manager, a Research and Development Manager and a Chief Nursing Officer.

Most of these people accept the view that the prime responsibility for the welfare of employees remains with managers and supervisors; that welfare staff are available to assist them with expert knowledge and a wide range of contacts. On the basis of this premise, they claim that they have always advocated and supported the establishment of a personal welfare service, being well aware of the benefits they would derive from being able to refer their staff to the services of expert and impartial welfare officers. In spite of the costs involved, line managers claim that they have always provided support for the development of the service in two main ways:

1. They frequently advised staff under their supervision to use the welfare officers' services and allowed time off work to consult welfare officers.
2. By putting pressure on top management to expand the service and the provision of service in general. (There are of course some exceptions in terms of location of staff, e.g. employees who work but do not stay in London, cannot make effective use of sporting and social club facilities.

On the issue of the relationship between welfare staff and management, most managers agreed this has been good even though there has been the odd occasions of welfare officers taking a bit too much on themselves and over-stepping their mark. They all see 'employee counselling' as the 'cornerstone' of an efficient personal welfare service and think that BT welfare officers are doing a good job. However some managers argued because female employees enjoy or benefit more by talking about their personal problems more than men, most of the clients of welfare officers in respect of domestic problems are female. This fact was substantiated by one-third off the managers I talked to. Welfare officers' evidence do not necessarily support this. This fact does point out that men might be very sensitive in discussing their domestic problems with welfare officers.

With the increased decentralisation of the welfare service and the alleged gradual erosion of confidence in welfare officers, most managers do not see a happy future for the welfare service in BT. They point out that already, decentralisation has led to the phasing out of cadres in the welfare service - (the chief welfare officer and senior welfare officer positions) which have been accepted and recognised levels of experienced and well-trained officer positions. Some managers consider the real danger to the service to be the unions. They argue that due to the gradual loss of confidence between employees and welfare officers because of breaches in confidentiality, the unions now counsel employees on personal problems.

The welfare department has encouraged this state of affairs by its continued inadequate publicity of its services. As a result employees are not totally aware of the kind of services available. Managers predict that if this is allowed to continue, in due course, the unions will make it impossible for employees to use the welfare service. What is needed, they advise, is an integration of the relationship between unions and the welfare department so as to be able to provide complementary services to each other for the benefit of all in the organisation.

2.5 SUMMARY OF MAIN ISSUES

This part of the thesis has reviewed modern practice in occupational welfare in British Telecom. The scope and significance of occupational welfare in the management of organisations continues to excite widespread interest(17),concerning as it does the well-being of the individual in the world of work,and the most appropriate method to cater for the betterment so that he can give his best in promoting company objectives.

The contents of the various chapters have demonstrated the wide sweep of occupational welfare,as well as its obvious practical relevance in the human resource management of a large modern technological organisation such as British Telecom.

The foregoing chapters provide scope for highlighting significant areas areas which will be developed further in this study. These areas are discussed below.

'A Personal Welfare Service'?

A remarkable feature of the development of the welfare function in BT is the fact that it emphasises and focusses on the provision of a personal welfare service. This idea was adopted at a time when welfare provisions in contemporary organisations were dominated by the provision of physical and group welfare services. For example,

concern for sanitation, canteens, hours of work, medical care, rest pauses, sports facilities and general education and leisure pursuits(18).

The choice of a personal welfare service in BT as revealed from my discussions was based not only on humanitarian considerations but also on productivity considerations. This belief sees benefits of increased productivity and efficiency resulting from the provision of a personal welfare service. This notion seems to be based purely on instinct because no one has proved that the provision of a personal welfare service makes employees more settled and so more productive.

As reported above apart from union officials, most employees see the service as very useful, particularly the provision of help and information on personal problems and difficulties. Perhaps this feeling may have contributed towards the continued successes of BT (as stated by its Chairman) in steadily improving efficiency, quality and range of its products over the years(19). This extrapolation of this kind is out of the scope of this thesis.

However, this emphasis on the provision of a personal welfare service is a tribute to the outstanding foresight of the early managers of BT's welfare service. It is perhaps a common fact that the provision of physical and group welfare services in most organisations in the

U.K. and other industrialised countries is now taken for granted by employees. Quite rightly too the provision of these services are now almost entirely covered by legislation(20). Therefore in modern day terms,as far as welfare service provision is concerned, the hallmark of a progressive organisation seems to depend on the willingness and ability to move a step further from the provision of such facilities to something more.

'The Whole Person Concept'

The philosophy of BT's personal welfare service as has been explained in chapter 2.1, is based on the concept of the whole person. The concept is similar to the 'holistic' concept on which the 'Systems Approach' is based(21). It involved looking at a problem from a broader viewpoint - as a whole. One of its main characteristics is that when one part is altered, the whole is altered in a greater or lesser degree through re-arrangement of the parts. A systems approach to the study of employees personal problems would involve trying to understand the employee as a whole (i.e. in all his roles - as a worker, father, mother, etc.). It also means looking at the areas of interactions or activities in everyday life in order to understand why he is behaving the way he does. The systems approach concentrates on all these relationships and parts rather than parts alone.

There is no doubt that this concept

is a useful way of looking at the problem of dealing with the personal welfare of employees and a further development of it will be undertaken in a later part of the thesis.

Sharing Responsibility for Personal Welfare

Under the British Telecom welfare organisation, there is a tripartite responsibility for the welfare of employees. This includes the employee who owns the problem and wants to do something about it, the manager or supervisor who is in charge of the employee and is primarily responsible for his welfare, and the welfare officer who is available when needed and possesses the expertise and skills in order to help solve the problem.

This division of responsibility seems to have worked well with each person playing his part in the arrangement with respect and regard for the status, knowledge and experience of the other. But due to existing decentralisation of the welfare services, this relationship seems to be in danger of collapsing. The danger due to decentralisation has arisen because of the proposed introduction of welfare Managers who are non-experts in welfare in the organisation to share the responsibility for helping welfare problem solving. Such an arrangement now raises issues which will affect the efficiency and confidentiality of the welfare service, because it is argued that non-experts in welfare may not be able to completely handle the types of cases which are dealt with by expert welfare officers(22). This is one of the many predicaments

facing the welfare service in BT at the moment. So far there has not been a shift of emphasis from BT's management on this issue. Even if a change in policy is to come, the new managers would have to be given some time before they are proved wrong. At the time data were being collected, the concept of welfare managers carrying additional responsibility for other aspects of personnel work was a new one. No agreed job description of ~~welfare~~ welfare managers was available. It was not known to what extent they would be trained with other welfare staff.

The Place of Welfare in BT.

The welfare department is part of the Personnel and Corporate Services unit of BT. With decentralisation of the services currently going on, it seems very likely that all the subsidiaries of the department in the various divisions, districts and territories of BT will be put under the personnel departments in these areas. This makes the possibility of ever having a welfare department independent of personnel remote. Welfare may never have a status of its own in BT.

Welfare now seems to be living increasingly under the shadow of more cost conscious personnel management department and this means perhaps, a reversal of the 'soft image' accusation 23 .

Problem of Publicity.

The development of an effective welfare service depends on two main factors:

- (a) Management policy, and
- (b) the cooperative response of the total labour force and its union representatives.

Management policy determines the welfare philosophy which in order to be effective must be known to all management and potential users of the service who are in essence the labour force of the organisation/^{the} cannot cooperatively respond to the welfare services provided if they do not know enough about them. One way out of such a dilemma could be to adequately publicise the welfare service in order to create and sustain a required labour force image towards it. Publicity in this sense would involve all forms of advertising and activities which will inform employees of the organisation about its welfare provisions.

At present the main medium for publicising the welfare service is by means of a brochure [25], which sets out briefly BT's welfare policy, the selection and training of welfare officers, availability of welfare officers, the kinds of problems a welfare officer can deal with, a note on the degree of confidentiality surrounding all dealings with welfare officers and an open request to contact a welfare officer.

Throughout my visits to BT, there was no department or noticeboard in which I found this brochure displayed. Even in the welfare department and at the Training Centre, these brochures could not be easily found. Another means of publicising the service as I was told was through the occasional talks given to staff by welfare officers. There was no proof that a talk has been given as recently as two years ago. I could not apply this situation to justify figures of welfare service users provided by the department which were that 50 percent of managers, 45 percent of employees, 3 percent of union members and 2 percent of others used the welfare service.

However this state of affairs is blamed largely on the reorganisation of BT due to its privatisation by the government, and attempts by BT management to limit the independence of the service.

Summary of evidence concerning null hypothesis in BT

The foregoing chapters provide the following evidence to disprove the hypothesis stated in page 2.

1. Growth: There has been an expansion of the number of welfare staff in BT. This figure has increased from 75 during the Post Office era to 135 in the BT era. Also new positions of welfare Managers incorporating personnel and welfare functions have been created.
2. Continuation of Training Courses for other Organisation:
Not only does welfare persist in BT, but BT is still in the lead; it runs training courses other organisations attend. It sets examples in other areas such as providing 'Travelling Scholarships and organising charities aimed at promoting its image as reported in

the March 1988 issue of 'Telecom Today', the British Telecom's staff newspaper.

3. BT spends on average about £2m yearly on the welfare service. This is not the sum of money to be spent on a service which is not useful.
4. Evidence from discussions with employees and management shows that as users and managers of the service, that they are satisfied with the service being provided though there is always room for improvement. Only some union officials gave a picture of deteriorating welfare officer service which cannot be substantiated.

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PART THREE

A SURVEY OF WELFARE SERVICES IN
THE NIGERIAN EXTERNAL
TELECOMMUNICATIONS LTD.

3.1 THE NATIONAL SCENE.

Introduction

This chapter discusses welfare services provided for workers and their families in industrial organisations in Nigeria. First, it reviews the background to the present situation by describing how the concept of employee welfare evolved. Secondly, it examines legislation concerning welfare services and analyses its influence on the provision of services. Thirdly, and finally, it outlines the major types of services commonly provided within industrial organisations in the country.

Background

Due to the absence of records, concern for the welfare of employees can only be assumed to have evolved when the first employees' association - the 'Civil Service Union' was formed in 1912. Its remit included the promotion of the welfare and interests of native members of the Civil Service¹¹. Between 1912 and 1945 this union remained the only organisation in the country with an expressed concern for the welfare of employees. Its members, apart from enjoying the right to monthly salaries, leave, sickness, absence, means of transport, etc. (today's conditions of employment), were in addition also entitled to certain welfare benefits such as housing, sports and recreational facilities and canteen services.

The civil service conditions of employment and welfare benefits became a model and envy of the private sector workers who at this time were neither entitled to conditions of service nor welfare services. What must be understood is that the majority of private sector employers at the time were rural farmers who knew nothing and cared very little about wage employment and its implications. But the situation changed when commercial organisations concerned mainly with produce buying were introduced and people became paid for work done. Then the civil service influence took over the scene. The union so influenced the thinking of workers in the private sector that subsequently organised employees' resistance units in terms of unions sprang up in the major commercial organisations in the country. The resistance was about a perceived exploitation of the Nigerian worker by the then Colonial owners of industry; and the aim was to pressurise them to introduce civil service type conditions into employment.

This organised resistance led to the 'General Strike' of 1945 which was concerned with a demand for conditions of employment and welfare services. It was during the strike that it became apparent to employers that full-time specialists were needed to handle union grievances which had hitherto been handled by General Managers and their Assistants in the produce buying commercial organisations in existence at the time. This need paved the way for the employment of Nigerians to take charge of the Personnel Function in most of these organisations. These Nigerians

were first designated Labour and Staff Managers, then Personnel Assistants and finally Personnel Officers and Managers. Their main responsibility was to negotiate with the unions. Indeed most of the first Nigerian personnel managers were former Trade Union Leaders. In this context, the personnel function became a machinery for pacifying the union. This fact perhaps accounts for the lack of status of personnel managers in the early years in the Nigerian industrial scene. Anyone, trade unionists, typists, clerks etc., who was popular with workers could be recruited or promoted as personnel manager rather than get trained and well-educated people to do the job.

The arrival on the scene of the Nigerian personnel manager as a result of the general strike gave rise to further developments. First, it opened a channel of communication between the employers and the unions which constantly led to an awareness (by the employers) of union views and demands about anything (and at that time welfare featured prominently in these demands). Secondly, this awareness almost always produced positive results (i.e. conceding to most demands) aimed at preventing further strike action. As a result, between 1950 and 1957, many private sector employers started introducing conditions of employment and welfare services. Following these developments, the Government stepped in 1958 to introduce the Nigerian Factories Act which specified statutory minimum requirements for industry in Health, Safety and Welfare matters.

After independence in 1960, when industrial activity increased, much more modern practices in conditions of employment and welfare services evolved. These practices have seen the delegation of welfare responsibility to subordinates within personnel departments in large organisations. This notwithstanding, welfare still remains largely within the province of the present day personnel manager. What has happened is that welfare no longer forms the core of the activities of the personnel manager as it did during the early years of the development of the personnel function.

Welfare Legislation in Nigeria.

As far as occupational welfare provisions are concerned, the law is governed by the Factories Act of 1958 which also deals with Health and Safety. It provides for certain minimum standards which have to be met by industry among which are the following:

1. The provision of adequate supply of drinking water positioned and maintained at suitable points conveniently accessible to all employees,
2. the provision of adequate washing facilities and toilets,
3. where there is no clinic attached to the factory where sick employees can be treated or given first aid, a first aid box or cupboard must be provided. Small companies which cannot afford to maintain a clinic can keep a first aid box and train a number of employees in first aid so that they can help fellow injured employees before they are taken to hospital,
4. the provision of adequate cloakrooms where workers can change their clothing.

Quite surprisingly, the Nigerian Factories Act only deals with rudimentary welfare provisions that fall within the physical welfare group. Sanitation and lighting services are contained in the section on health and safety. No mention is made in the Act about the provision of canteens, sports and social clubs or any other welfare services. Because the Factories Act specifies that employers who fail to provide Statutory minima will be penalised by law, the responsibility of ensuring that both statutory welfare services and those provided by Companies voluntarily is generally entrusted to personnel departments in most organisations.

Types of Welfare Services.

Welfare services provided by organisations in Nigeria can be classified into two main categories - Physical and Group welfare services. The provision of physical welfare services such as adequate standards of drinking water, washing and cloakroom facilities, First Aid, Health and Safety services etc., is covered by legislation, and most organisations meet the standards required. Group welfare services are either provided for all or for a group of employees (such as senior management) voluntarily by organisations. Into this category fall:

1. Canteen Services;
2. Sports and recreational services, and,
3. Medical services.

The point has already been made in part one, chapter 1.1, that personal welfare services are not provided. This does not mean that employers are not sympathetic towards the personal problems and difficulties encountered by their employees. Such matters are dealt with informally by individual departmental managers. What it means is that no welfare officers or other specifically concerned with helping to solve the personal problems of employees are employed, and the little counselling that is done is carried out on an informal basis. One of the main reasons for this is that much of the development in employee welfare has been focussed on the provision of employee benefits or incentives and rewards rather than on the voluntary provision of welfare services. Such incentives and rewards involve several forms of cash payments ranging from various allowances to bonuses. Some examples are:- no-accident bonus, Christmas bonus, shift allowance, out-of-station allowances, entertainment allowance, housing allowance, transportation allowance, leave allowance, etc..

Such provisions might have been designed to please Nigerian workers who see money as the only major cause of inequality between the rich and poor and therefore the most effective way to improve the well-being of the employee.

Canteen Services: A great many of the companies operating in Nigeria have canteens attached to either their factories or offices and the food provided is heavily subsidised. The existence of separate dining rooms for

directors, middle management and junior management, and of a staff restaurant and works canteen, all in the same building is common. It may be justified to a limited extent where confidential information is likely to be discussed at mealtimes. But it is a clear indication of the existence of social stratification in industry in Nigeria.

Only small organisations employing less than fifty people tend not to provide any catering facilities for employees. However, canteen facilities can be the most controversial aspect of employee services in Nigerian organisations, and as a result many organisations have canteen committees - a specialist form of joint consultation.

Sports and Recreational Services: These are very common today especially with big organisations employing over 1000 employees. They vary from playgrounds for football and tennis to club houses where employees can meet for drinks and indoor games. The most successful sports and social clubs in existence today in organisations in Nigeria are those which are largely run by the employees themselves with perhaps a full-time paid secretary in the larger organisations. Frequently the personnel department has overall responsibility for the maintenance of facilities and for general administration, while a committee of employees decides on policies and programmes. The question of the degree of financial responsibility for these facilities and programmes must be determined by an organisation. Some organisations provide club premises, sports ground and maintenance only, and expect employees to meet the expenses of equipment and activities

through club subscriptions, dances and sale of refreshments. Others provide an annual subsidy towards running costs; few take all financial responsibility as it is agreed generally that the most flourishing clubs are those where the members themselves contribute a certain amount of time, effort and money.

Medical Services: Most small, medium and large organisations employing not less than fifty people provide free medical services for their employees. These include payment of doctor's fees as well as costs for medicines and hospitalisation for employees. The more generous organisations extend this benefit to the employee's wife and up to four children. Some very large organisations have their own clinics and a team of doctors and nurses. There is no legal requirement for Nigerian employers to engage the services of professional medical staff. There is under the Factories Act of 1958 - Health and Safety section, an obligation on every employer to make adequate first aid provision for employees. This means providing properly equipped first-aid boxes and travelling kits, and appointing at least one trained first-aidler for every 150 employees in offices, and for every 50-150 factories and other areas which are thought to be more hazardous. Employees are to be kept informed of the first aid arrangements which affect them, and records are to be kept of all first aid cases treated.

3.2 THE INFLUENCE OF CULTURE AND THE EXPECTATIONS ON NIGERIAN EMPLOYEES.

Introduction

In its general usage, 'culture' is an elusive and emotive word. But in the context of this thesis, it is defined as 'custom' which manifests itself in the Nigerian society in the form of long established habits or tradition. In considering its influence on welfare service provision, we have to examine critically, aspects such as, the extended family family system, polygamous family structures, religious practices and the patronage of traditional medical and catering facilities.

The average Nigerian employee expects employment to bring prosperity and benefits to the worker and his extended family system. However, ever since modern industrialisation began in the early 1960's, this expectation has depended to a great extent on a number of factors which have in addition prevented the Nigerian employee from showing the same degree of loyalty and commitment to his organisation as that which is said to typify the employer-employee relationship in the developed countries. Such factors include among others the prevailing economic situation in the country, the extent of inequalities in existence between managers and employees in the sharing of benefits provided by their organisations, and the bad management of services and benefits in organisations in the country.

The Extended Family System.

The extended family system is still a very common aspect of the Nigerian way of life. It is opposed to the nuclear family system which consists solely of husband, wife and children and spans only two generations; it is a numerically larger unit including three or more generations of kin. It usually involves an employee in all sorts of responsibilities for his relatives. For example, in Nigerian societies it is normal for an employee to look after his mother or father in law, brothers, and sisters (in addition to his wife and children, etc.), support them materially and financially, and also house and feed them.

In this context, the extended family can be a major source of stress on the Nigerian employee which can result in a variety of domestic problems which can greatly inhibit his productive efficiency and effectiveness. It will most certainly result in extraordinary loads of work for welfare officers attempting to cope with employee personal welfare problems. There are no records of any organisations that have either extended their welfare services to include the extended families of their employees or attempting to deal with the problem in any other way. But the extended family system remains a reality of the Nigerian way of life and a problem to confront future occupational welfare officers.

Polygamous family structures.

The domestic welfare problems caused by the extended family system can be further compounded by polygamous practices whereby an

employee can be married to up to four wives. Partly as a way of discouraging polygamy, some organisations in Nigeria including NET have introduced restrictions on the number of dependants in an employee's family who can qualify or use certain services. For example, free medical treatment and even free transport which used to be provided for all the dependants of employees is now provided for an employee and his wife and a maximum of four children. In the Air Transport industry, free medical services are provided to employees only. This is at a time when most Nigerians still aspire to have four wives and at least twelve children(20).

There is no doubt that polygamus managers and employees in Nigerian organisations face hard times ahead both in terms of the non-availability of welfare services to their dependants and the probability that they may never be able to acquire the most satisfactory state of mind necessary to enable them to give their best to their organisations.

Religious Practices

In a sense, religious loyalties in Nigeria are closely allied to extended and polygamous family structures. Moslems tend to indulge more in polygamous practices than Christians. Moslems also feel very strongly about traditional attire being worn at work (even when they are unsuitable because of the kind of machines being used) and about

the prescriptions of their religion not to eat certain foods. In addition they fast one month every year during which work and social activities are strictly restricted.

These modes of eating and clothing, brought about by adherence to religious practices can affect greatly the catering and protective clothing provisions in organisations in the country. For example, different menus have to be provided for Moslems and Christians and special arrangements have to be made to accommodate the Moslem fasting month of the year. Also because of the nature of traditional attire, special protective wear have to be designed for Moslems who work in factories.

Traditional Medical and Catering Facilities.

In an age of civilization when most third world countries including Nigeria still look to the developed countries to provide them with everything, it is not surprising that modern methods of treatment (improved greatly by technological developments) take precedence over what has been designated crude traditional medical treatments. For example, evidence of sickness in every Nigerian organisation must come from a qualified modern medical doctor. Such demands fail to live up to the reality, that many Nigerians because of loyalty to customs still and will continue to patronise native doctors or traditional medicines. No organisation that I know of gives any significance to this fact

which can greatly influence the costs and provisions of medical provisions of medical services in organisations in the country. Similarly, catering services and arrangements have to take into consideration what the ordinary Nigerian employee is accustomed to. He regards food as something which grows, not as something for which money should be paid. Money is seen by him as a commodity to be used for the luxuries of life, the new prestige symbols such as cars, motor cycles, televisions, and videos, etc. Accordingly, he will grudge more than a bare minimum of his wage as a regular payment for food.

The employee is probably accustomed to family cooking and may have a form of diet peculiar to his tribe. The idea of food cooked in the mass or of a standard 'neutral' type likely to appeal to all may revolt him. In addition what he likes to eat may not be nutritious; he may not get it in the canteen but at the same time he has not been educated to see the advantages of his health in what is provided. Moreover the cook will not be able to specialise in all the types of food asked for by different tribes in the country and too little thought is given to the selection of canteen cooks. They may gain their posts through relationship with the staff rather than cooking ability.

The worker may already have his own arrangements with a local woman or other person to provide him with food. She has many advantages; she will provide credit and take a weekly or monthly payment in arrears.

Indeed in Nigeria, she may well take nearly all the worker's wages and act as his banker - a service which a canteen, usually dealing in cash purchases, will not provide. She cooks for a small clientele and is a specialist in her particular style of cooking. In short she provides the human touch which a canteen cannot. Where she exists, she is the canteen's most powerful enemy.

Expectations.

The paternalistic origins of welfare (discussed in chapter 1.1), show that workers are expected to see welfare service provision as kind gestures which should be reciprocated. But in culturally conscious societies such as we have in Nigeria, this can hardly be seen to be true. Workers expect incentives, rewards and welfare services as of right. The origin of this expectation can be found in old traditions of employment in which 'labourers were given food and drink in addition to the agreed day's wage'. This view has helped to colour the attitudes and expectations of Nigerian employees and managers as far as provision of welfare services, incentives and rewards are concerned.

As a result of this background, organisations tend to be viewed by society as a whole as having a wider mission than is generally understood in the developed countries, being expected to provide socially desirable benefits such as employment, housing, transport and assistance with important social rituals and ceremonies, etc.;

considerations of profit maximisation and efficiency may be viewed as secondary or incidental.

Economic Conditions.

During Nigeria's oil boom years 1970 to 1980, workers were expecting and indeed received high increases in rewards and incentives and welfare services provided by organisations. As Ejiofor (1984), put it, 'with so much liquid resources, many organisations started personnel pay policies unrelated to personnel work practices. The Federal Government conspicuously led the way when it paid the Udoji Salaries and Arrears of 1975(3). The salaries of some workers doubled overnight. Private organisations followed suit. Some of the best fringe benefits in Africa got into contracts of employment. The dominant concern of most salaried workers in Nigeria was less work, longer breaks, excuse duty certificates, approved casual leaves, the next annual leave, the on-coming public holiday and the looming industrial action, all these to be enjoyed side-by-side with frequent salary increases, attractive allowances, accelerated promotions, fictitious claims, benefits and bonuses. More and more people became allergic to work while they claimed fantastic better conditions of service, often with emphasis on conditions rather than on service(1). During the oil boom, the attitudes of Nigerian workers became so bad that the then President in 1982(4), described it as the worst in the world. Given the prosperous economic situation, poor management, obsession with wealth, general indiscipline

in society and low level of patriotism, the bad attitude simply became entrenched.

Arrogance, authoritative management styles, and inequalities.

There is in Nigerian societies an emphasis on prestige and status differences, creating relationships of dependency which in organisations finds expression in wide differentials between organisational levels, particularly between managers and workers. As Ejiofor (1984) noted, 'many welfare programmes are so inequitably dispersed between managers and employees that they encourage a dysfunctional work attitude. He continues by pointing out that what frustrates the low paid workers most is the 'boss-take-all' attitude prevalent in Nigerian organisations. One example is the case where a manager on tour is provided with a luxury hotel suite while the driver has no place to sleep. Another case was observed in a drinks factory where workers complained that whereas managers could take home cartons of drinks free, a worker was sacked if he tried to take away even a bottle of drink. Also in its write-up on conditions of service, the Udoji Commission pointed out that 'fringe benefits tend to be heavier at the top than at the bottom, and thus favour the better off as against the worse off'. In addition, a survey of some Nigerian companies carried out by the General Manager of the Lagos based Freeman's Engineering Company (1975) (5), found that over 70 percent of workers made reference to several aspects of the conditions in their

establishment to show that management was gaining at the expense of the workers. The complaint which dominated this survey was that management enjoyed fantastic salaries and other fringe benefits as opposed to workers who had too little of both. One respondent pointed out that, while the managing director of the firm had two cars, he was not even given an advance to buy a bicycle.

The arrogance and authoritative management styles of Nigerian managers are shown in organisations in the low regard they have for their subordinates, in a view of workers as human resources who are materially and financially lower in status; in not maintaining informal relationships and keeping aloof; in an emphasis on the observance of protocol rather than the accomplishment of worker-related tasks. Nigerian managers tend to view their authority, professional competence and information as personal possessions rather than impersonal concomitants of their organisational role. This coupled with the emphasis on the wide differentials in status, power, education, experience and perceived ability between managers and workers, makes Nigerian managers very reluctant to delegate authority, to share information and to involve subordinates (who may be perceived as a potential threat) in decision making processes.

Many desirable employee services and benefits are badly managed in Nigerian organisations. For example it is not unusual to see people

who are not in employment being given treatment and drugs in company clinics, so also staff quarters are allocated to nepotically selected employees, and sports and recreational clubs and facilities used by non-employees with the support and cooperation of senior managers.

A check on these excesses and attributes is crucial to the effective management of welfare services in organisations in Nigeria. The Nigerian employee expectations and the cultural influences will continue to be powerful influences and determinants of the kinds of services and benefits to be enjoyed by Nigerian workers. As such they need to be taken more seriously and researched upon in order to advantageously rely on them.

3.3 THE NIGERIAN EXTERNAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS LTD.

Company Background Information

When Nigeria became independent in 1960, the Federal Government decided to go into partnership with Messrs. Cable and Wireless of London to form the Nigerian External Telecommunications Ltd.(N.E.T.). The company was incorporated in December 1962 with 51 percent shares owned by the Federal Government and 49 percent by Cable and Wireless. In 1972, the Federal Government took over complete control of the company and acquired 100 percent share holding.

Its main products are national and international telecommunication services. Specifically, the services offered by the company include the following:

1. International Telephone
2. International Telegraph
3. Telex and Telex Delivery
4. Leased Circuit Telegraph
5. Public Telegraphy Facsimile
6. Transmission and reception of real time television
7. High speed data transmission.

All these services are available twenty four hours a day and can be transacted at customer's premises and at the N.E.T local offices in Lagos as well as State capital branch offices all over the country.

Organisation

Headquarters: The Nigerian External Telecom Ltd., headquarters, consists of a number of offices in the centre of Lagos.

Divisions: NET has eight divisions - Managing Director's office, Administrative Division, Finance Division, Corporate Affairs Division, Commercial Services Division, Engineering and Technical Operations, Division, Works and Property Division and Management Information Services Division. These divisions are located in the Lagos headquarters.

Staff: The total number of staff employed by NET at January 31st 1985 was 4,737. They are distributed among the divisions as follows:

1. Managing Director's Office	610
2. Administrative Division	640
3. Finance Division	295
4. Corporate Affairs Division	47
5. Commercial Services Division	1,190
6. Engineering/Technical Operations Divisions	885
7. Works and Property Division	911
8. Management Information Services Division	159
Total	4,737

Unions

Employees of the company are by law prohibited from forming trade unions.

However, a Joint Consultative Committee(JCC) comprising of staff and management representatives has been established. Meetings of the JCC are held once a month to discuss matters relating to conditions of service affecting staff, staff welfare and other matters as contained in the constitution of the committee.

Welfare Service.

Neither the staff handbook nor any issues of the NECOM Journal - (a house magazine of NET) makes any references to NET's welfare philosophy. The closest I could get to obtaining an official statement on what the aims and objectives of NET's welfare service are, can be found in an article entitled 'Fourth Development Plan Projects' in Volume 3, No.2, November/December 1982 of the Magazine called 'The President(61. In this article NET's aim of providing welfare services are described by the editor as being 'to attract and retain staff'. This view, according to the article was conceived out of the perceived need to employ highly qualified people to man the sophisticated and highly complex equipments used by the company. Once recruited and trained, NET cannot afford to lose these highly skilled employees. Therefore it vigorously pursues policies aimed at improving the welfare of its staff.

Responsibility for welfare.

A chief Personnel Officer in the Personnel Department is responsible for both Industrial Relations and Staff Welfare in NET. He reports to the Assistant Director of Personnel who is in turn answerable to Director of Administration..

The Staff Welfare Committee is mandated by NET management to take charge of the responsibility of not only ensuring the retention and improvement of welfare services provided, but also to make suggestions and recommendations to management for the provision of additional facilities or services which might boost staff morale and encourage higher productivity.

This committee consists of two representatives from each of the divisions of the company. It is also supposed to have a representative from the Joint Consultative Committee (JCC). The Chairperson is the head of Administration Division, while the vice-chairperson and the secretary are elected from among the staff representatives. The responsibilities of the committee as set out in its terms of reference are as follows:

1. 'Generally to attend to all matters touching on staff welfare, e.g. promotion of physical welfare and improvement of working conditions; creation of healthy interpersonal relationships among staff, accident prevention and suggestions for improvement of general amenities'.
2. 'To specifically address itself to services directly affecting staff welfare, e.g. canteen services, health, transport, recreation and socials'. Scheduled meetings come up once a month but emergency meetings can be called at short notice.

Types of Welfare Services

The point has already been made in Chapter 3.2 that the development of employee welfare services in organisations in Nigeria has been

dominated by increased provision of a wide range of incentives and rewards rather than increased provision of welfare services. This is because the majority of Nigerian workers see cash payments in terms of various allowances and bonuses as the main contributors to their well-being(3). As a result, the various initiatives which can be grouped under welfare services are neglected and have hardly developed beyond the provision of group welfare services.

The welfare services provided by NET for its employees are a good example of the kinds of group welfare services which still remain the focus of most employers in the country. These consist of four main types of services:

1. Subsidised Canteen Services: These are provided for both junior and senior staff at reasonable cost. Meals are served in the morning, afternoon and evening. Canteen services are available at Marina, Ikorodu and Lanlate Satellite Communications Earth stations.
2. Medical Services: A fully operated clinic is provided at Marina, staffed with doctors and qualified nurses. The company also engages the services of two registered clinics within Lagos to take care of the dependants of employees. There are also medical facilities at Ikorodu and Lanlate stations.
3. Company Farms: Cultivated farm lands at Ikorodu and Lanlate produce yams, maize, cassava and poultry which are sold to staff at reasonable prices.

4. Sporting and Club Activities: there is a NECOM Football Club.

There is also an annual football competition amongst employees organised on divisional basis for the Managing Director's cup.

Table tennis tournaments are also arranged. Company aided clubs such as photographic, automobile and shepherds clubs also exist.

Welfare Cost

1984 estimates showed that NET spent about 6.1 percent of total labour costs on the welfare of staff. When expressed as a cost per employee, it means NET spent N165.3 about £81 per annum on each employee's welfare. Though only 1984 figures were available during my visit to the company, I was assured by top management that the picture has remained nearly the same over the past five years. Medical expenses had taken the lion's share of total expenditure on welfare by NET. This is evidence to support the inadequacy of medical services available in the country; the result of which has led most organisations to undertake their separate comprehensive arrangements. Respectively, canteen services, sports facilities, social activities and general welfare claim .9 percent, .5 percent, .7 percent and 72 percent of total expenditure. A breakdown of actual salaries and wages earned in each division and total costs of providing various welfare services in 1984 are shown in Tables 1 and 2.

(See over)

TABLE 1. ACTUAL SALARIES AND WAGES EARNED IN EACH DIVISION IN 1984.

	Kaira
1. Managing Director's Office	921,657
2. Administrative Division	1,955,480
3. Finance Division	849,830
4. Corporate Affairs Division	189,206
5. Commercial Services Division	3,594,789
6. Engineering/Technical Operations Division	3,383,767
7. Works and Property Division	1,493,060
8. Management Information Services Division	523,125
	<hr/>
TOTAL	12,837,789

TABLE 2. COSTS OF PROVIDING WELFARE SERVICES IN NET IN 1984.

	Kaira
1. Canteen Services	6,850
2. Medical Services	761,281
3. Sports facilities	4,197
4. Social Activities	5,150
5. Welfare (general)	5,644
	<hr/>
TOTAL	783,122

3.4 A STUDY OF EMPLOYEE ATTITUDES TO WELFARE SERVICES.

Introduction

The general scarcity of information on the provision and management of welfare services in organisations in Nigeria is proof to some degree that many employers do not bother to find out what their employees' attitudes are towards the welfare services they provide. In addition, most welfare services are now taken for granted by employers and employees even though the law does not require them to be provided. The Nigerian External Telecom Ltd., is an example of an organisation that spends large sums of money on incentives and rewards and the welfare of its employees without bothering to find out if the provision of some or all of these benefits and services is really necessary. The reason for this can be attributed to bad management resulting in the careless use and allocation of resources particularly as happened during the oil boom decade of 1970 to 1980(7).

Employee attitudes are significant for a number of reasons.

Firstly, they help to ensure that the necessary kinds of services are provided and in doing so create the basis for evolving a sound management policy towards the welfare of employees. Secondly, they provide justifications for supplying welfare services in organisations. By their voluntary nature, a lot of welfare service provision is an act of faith.

The main justifications one reads about, for employers providing welfare services are humanitarian and economic(8). Yet no studies have proved that employees now care about the humanitarian and economic reasons of their employers when making use of these services. As such they are provided along with other statutory terms of employment without anyone caring too much about them. According to Michael Wade(9), welfare services in organisations have become so competitive that they seem to have lost their human touch. Economically as well, they fail the test of significance because it has certainly not been proved that the provision of welfare services makes employees more settled and therefore more productive. The ^{close} to finding out about employees' attitudes to welfare services is the example quoted by Reid and Robertson(10) in which an American study showed that worker preferences for various types of welfare services depended on a wide range of factors concerned with the employee's status and personal circumstances.

It is the paradoxical results of these rather rare studies that is the real justification for the attempt in this study to find out about employee attitudes to welfare services provided by the Nigerian External Telecom Ltd. (N.E.T.).

The aim of the study is to evaluate the perceptions, attitudes and opinions of management and staff towards welfare services, and to use this to determine what influence welfare services have on the management of the organisation in general.

The data for the survey was collected by the following methods:

1. Questionnaires distributed among the employees of the organisation (appendix 2 enclosed).
2. In-depth interviews with selected groups and individual employees of various levels from all the divisions in the organisation.
3. Studying available literature and publications on the organisation's welfare services.

Sample Frame

The sample was drawn from the total number of employees in the Lagos Headquarters of the organisation. This is because most of the operations of the company are located in and around Lagos State. With the exception of state transmitting stations and the Satellite Communications Earth Station in Kaduna which have just a handful of staff, the Lagos headquarters workforce is highly representative of the diverse tribal groups and opinions in Nigeria. The total number of people employed in the Lagos headquarters, Ikorodu and Lanlate is about 3,700. Sample size according to Krejcie and Morgan (11) adopted for the survey was 350.

Questionnaire Design.

The questionnaire was designed so that it was fairly short to enable respondents to complete them in half an hour or less by making it possible to answer the majority of questions by circling or ticking a number of boxes. The questions were mainly designed to obtain the views of management and employees on welfare services

* See appendix 3.

provided by the Nigerian External Telecom Ltd. An introductory note was included in the questionnaire to explain the reasons and background of the research, and to sell the questionnaire to the prospective respondent. Also it was necessary to explain to respondents what occupational welfare is in order to dispel the misunderstandings and misconceptions surrounding the use of the term.

The following explanation was given: That basically, occupational welfare refers to a company's or firm's support for its staff and particularly to the free or subsidised provision of certain facilities and services. Such facilities and services range from the provision of physical amenities and group services to employee counselling on a range of personal problems and difficulties. Physical amenities include the provision of cloakrooms, lavatories, washrooms etc., while group services are concerned with the provision of facilities such as canteens, sports and social clubs and medical facilities for all employees. Employee counselling is aimed at helping the employee to find solutions to domestic, financial, sickness, bereavement, retirement and employment problems.

The questionnaire was tested out on several groups of people and a pilot study was conducted before they were finally sent out. Discussions were held (by the researcher) with senior and middle management, supervisors and foremen, representatives of the Joint Consultative Committee and other key personnel. At these meetings,

consent was asked from all concerned for the survey to take place. Publicity to all employees was circulated by those present at the meetings, additional publicity was provided by 'noticeboards' and letters in pay packets.

At every stage, it was stressed that questionnaire completion was entirely voluntary and no one need accept a form if he did not wish to do so. Anonymity would be respected and the forms would be seen by no one except the researcher.

On the first day of the survey, the researcher and two members of management staff and their subordinates allocated by NET to help in the administration of the survey visited employees in different divisions of NET, distributing questionnaires and answering questions about the survey. Several such visits were made to distribute further questionnaires and collect completed ones. Collections and distributions were made at suitable times for those on shift and night duties. Arrangements were made for those who had not completed their questionnaires on time to return them to their heads of departments in sealed envelopes who would then forward them to the researcher in the Administration Office.

Response Statistics

The response was as follows:

Questionnaires sent out	400
Returned undistributed	50
Therefore valid questionnaires sent	350
Returned questionnaires	250
Improperly and non-completed replies	51
. . Valid responses	199
Response rate (valid)	<u>57%</u>

See appendix 3 for a detailed breakdown of response Statistics.

Discussions with employees of N.E.T.

There were two main types of discussions - Group discussions, and Divisional/individual discussions. Group discussions consisted of open meetings with members of the Joint Consultative Committee and the Staff Welfare Committee which are the two most active and powerful employees' organisations in NET. Divisional/individual discussions involved interviews with either individual or group members of staff drawn from each of the divisions which make up the organisation. Discussions varied in length and scope and were mostly semi-structured. They covered a time of between one to four hours and involved discussing the questionnaire and other issues related to the provision of welfare services. A fuller account of these sources of information is as follows:

Group discussions.

- a. Joint Consultative Committee (JCC): consists of the main staff representatives and represents about 80 percent of staff and are drawn from each division. 8 representatives were present.
- b. Staff Welfare Committee (SWC); responsible for taking care of all welfare services in NET. In contact with about 50 percent of employees in the Lagos headquarters, 9 members were present during the discussions.

Divisional/Individual discussions:

1. Management Information Services Division: Seven representatives were present at the meeting. One Principal Information Services Officer, three junior managers and three junior staff.

2. Administrative Division: Four employees were interviewed, one Assistant Director of Administration, one Chief Staff Development Officer, one Principal Administrative Officer and a Chief Personnel Officer. I also interviewed the Chief Chief Medical Officer.
3. Corporate Affairs Division: A group discussion that involved four employees took place; two chief Corporate Affairs Officers and two Principal Corporate Affairs Officers.
4. Engineering and Technical Operations Division: Nine employees were present at the group discussion; two Principal Technical Officers and seven supervisory and junior staff representatives.
5. Works and Property Division: Only one Principal Housing Officer was available for discussion.
6. Finance Division: Two Principal Accountants and one Chief Accountant were interviewed.
7. Commercial Services Division: A group of seven commercial superintendents and Exchange Operators were interviewed.
8. Managing Director's Office: One member of this office was interviewed - his personal assistant.

Available Literature

The company's library was not in use during the researcher's visit but the Administrative Division keeps past and current copies of articles, booklets and various publications about NET's welfare services. For example, almost all copies of NECOM journal carried articles about the welfare service. Some represented views and views and opinions of users of these services, others were mainly directed at publicising the services that are available to employees.

3.5 THE SURVEY FINDINGS.

The main survey findings described in this chapter are based on an analysis of questionnaires returned by employees and management of the Nigerian External Telecom Ltd., and they covered the following areas:

1. The labour force of NET.
2. The necessity to provide a comprehensive welfare service.
3. The range of services needed.
4. Employee awareness of existing facilities and their subsidies.
5. The need to provide a personal welfare service.
6. Satisfaction/Dissatisfaction with existing services.

These areas will now be discussed in detail.

The Labour Force

The survey respondents were drawn from all the eight divisions of the organisation. Senior management represented 5 percent of respondents, while middle and junior management levels constituted 15 and 25 percent respectively of the sample. The remaining 55 percent of the sample were made up of junior staff from the various divisions. Technical officers dominated the response by junior staff comprising about 40 percent of the total junior staff involved in the sample. About 66 percent of the total labour force of N.E.T., work in the headquarters office in Lagos, while 34 percent work in other branches of the organisation around the country.

Half of the labour force of NET are aged between 30 and 39 years. 27 percent are aged between 30 and 49 and 22 percent between 19 and 29. No juveniles are employed. Assuming no early retirements or resignations, the majority of staff can still put in an average of about 20 years each before reaching normal retirement. These figures are illustrated in Figure 4. on page 125.

The proportion of females employed in NET is only 20 percent while the male population of the labour force stands well over 70 percent. Also over 85 percent of the total labour force are married, while 11 percent are single and less than 1 percent each are widowed or divorced. 35 percent of the married personnel have between 1 and 3 children, 31 percent between 4 and 6 children and 29 percent have no children at all. Full illustrations of the number of children and marital status of NET employees are provided in Figures 5 and 6 respectively, on pages 127 and 128.

The implications for the organisation as far as these high proportions of married employees and large families are concerned may be manifested in high figures of absenteeism or low morale and productivity due to domestic and family problems. Though NET does not keep figures of hours lost due to absenteeism, my discussions revealed the absence of various levels of staff some of whom were not able to come to work on certain days because of one form of domestic problem or other.

FIGURE 4: % AGE DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYEES OF N.E.T.

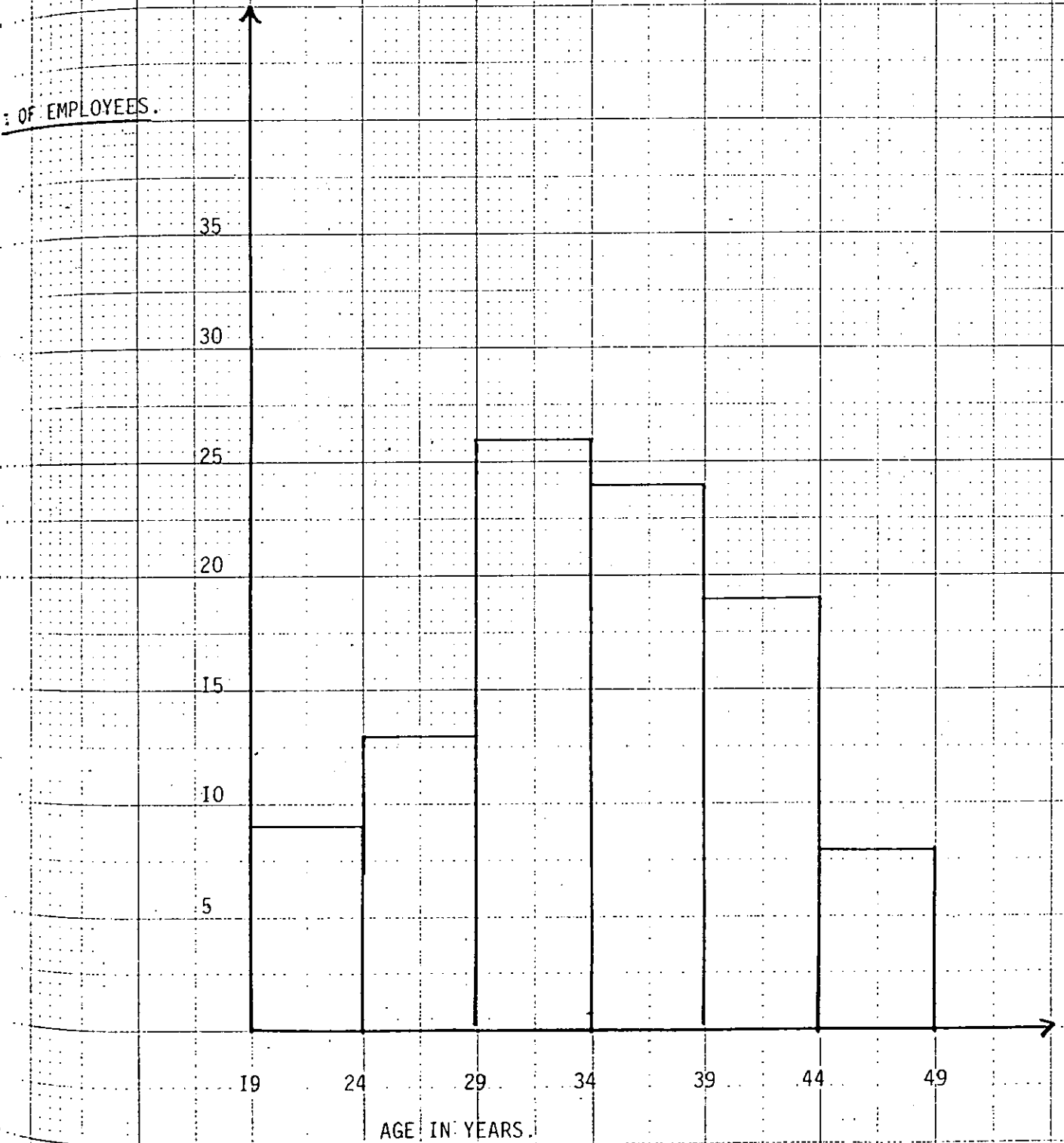


FIGURE 5: NUMBER OF CHILDREN PER % OF N.E.T. EMPLOYEE

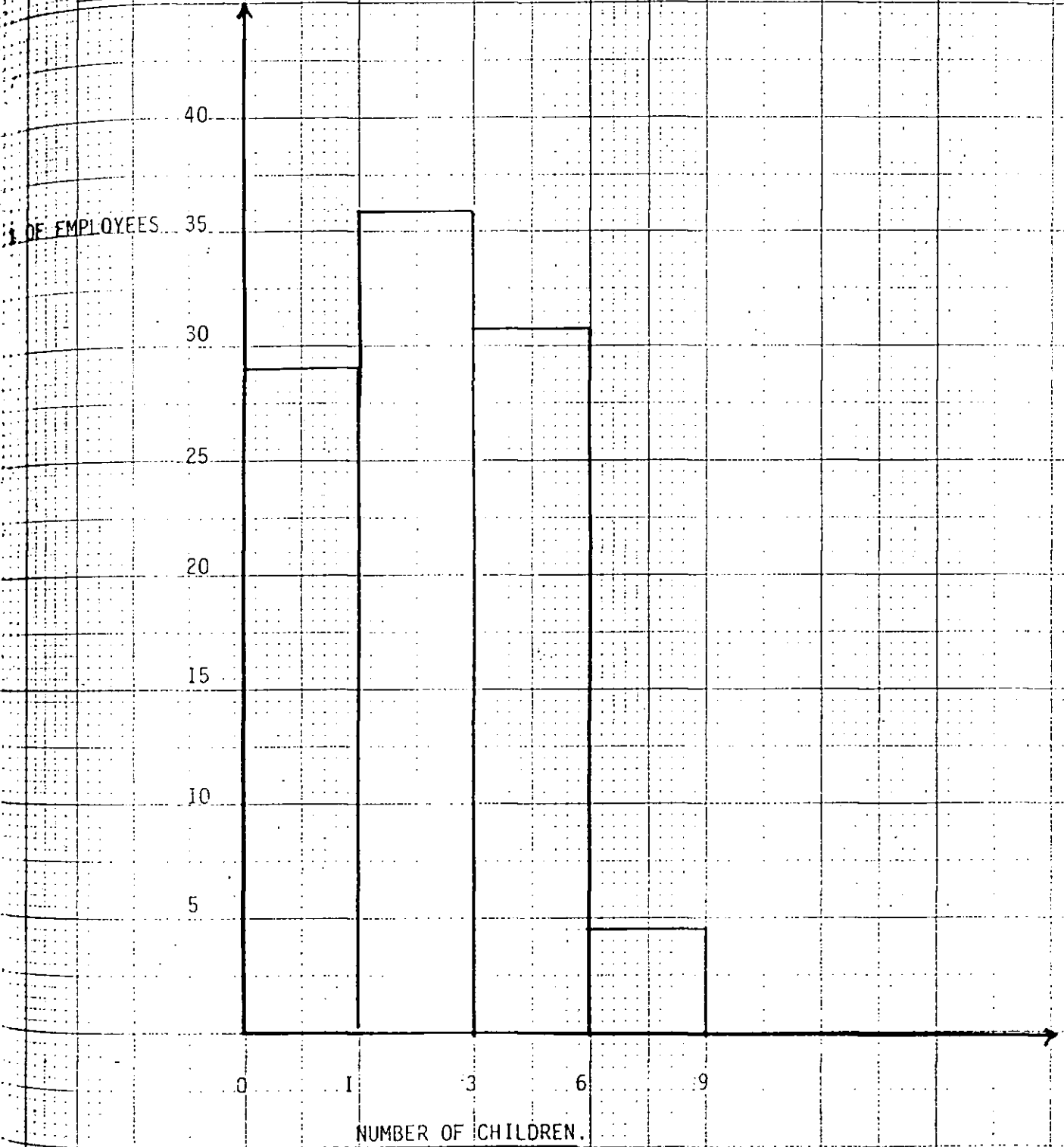
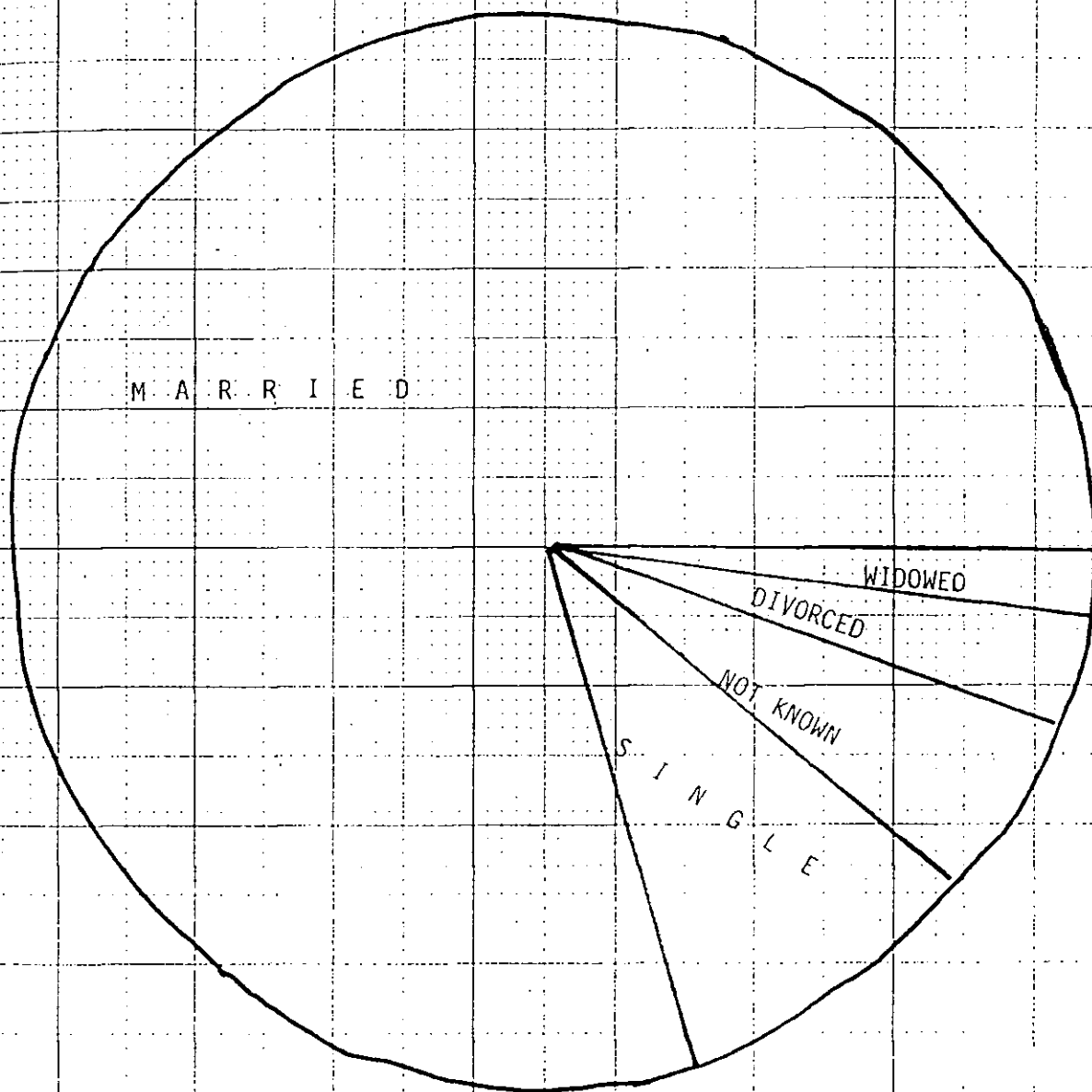


FIGURE 6: MARITAL STATUS OF N.E.T. EMPLOYEES.



% OF EMPLOYEES

MARRIED-85%

SINGLE- 11.1%

DIVORCED- 0.5%

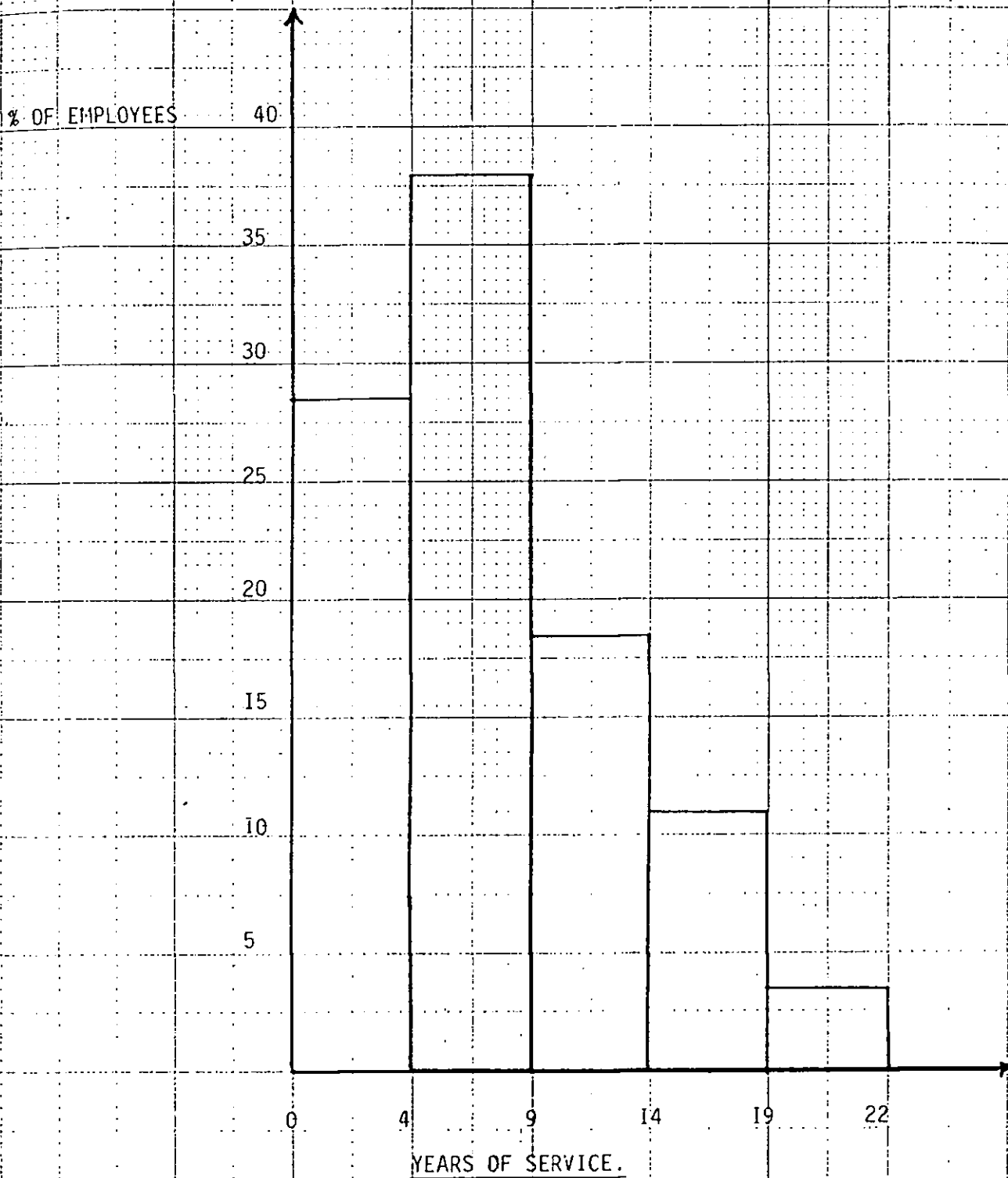
WIDOWED- 0.5%

NOT KNOWN- 2.5%

Absences are most chronic during the afternoons when most employees would go and collect their children home from school. Similarly, many hours unaccounted for are lost when staff have to take their children and family to hospitals. Others go about their private activities without bothering to report to the office first at the start of the day's work.

More than half of the labourforce of NET have been with the organisation for between 5 and 14 years. About 15 percent have been with NET for between 15 and 22 years, while almost 30 percent have spent not more than 4 years with the organisation. Various factors might account for why employees stay very long with NET. One fact which has an obvious influence is that workers in Nigeria do not have very many choices of large and successful employers. It is therefore a sensible choice for employees to stay with an organisation they have started with. Also there is not much of difference in terms of either conditions of employment or welfare services. Management are more sensitive to the introduction of a new service than even the unions once they know about it. Keeping abreast of the developments in industry in the country provides this opportunity to almost all employers. This is why both conditions of service and the provision of welfare services in industrial and commercial organisations are so similar throughout the country. Figure 7 illustrates the years of service of NET employees.

FIGURE 7: YEARS OF SERVICE OF N.E.T. EMPLOYEES.



The necessity to provide a comprehensive welfare service.

There is an overwhelming feeling among NET employees that the organisation should provide a comprehensive welfare service. The figures in table 3 below show that 97.5 percent are in favour with only .5 percent against and a 2 percent 'do not knows'.

TABLE 3. Provision of a comprehensive welfare service.

<u>Employees</u>	<u>Frequently %</u>
Yes	97.5
No	0.5
Do not know	2.5
<hr/>	<hr/>
Total	100.0

A comprehensive welfare service would involve the provision of physical, group and personal welfare services. This demand for a comprehensive welfare service fits in with the views of employees shown in table 4 about which department should manage such service. These figures show that approximately 50 percent of employees think that a welfare department with welfare officers should handle the welfare services of the organisation. The Joint Consultative Committee is the employees second choice to manage welfare in NET by 26 percent. The choice of the personnel department as number three indicates a loss of confidence on its present management of the service, and a clear sign of dissatisfaction with present practices by the majority of NET's employees.

Table 4. Department to handle welfare services

<u>Department</u>	<u>Frequency %</u>
Welfare department with welfare officers	49.7
Joint Consultative Committee	26.6
Personnel department	20.6
Other departments (not named)	1.0
Do not know	2.1
<hr/>	
<u>Total</u>	<u>100.00</u>

The range of services needed

There was no clear indication by NET employees of a choice of any particular service. Over half of the workforce did not know what range of services other than those existing at the moment they would like to see provided. In a sense, this attitude reflects the level of ignorance among NET's employees as far as knowledge of welfare services beyond the boundaries of NET is concerned.

When added together, about 24 percent of employees want existing facilities and services improved. Among the new ideas, a staff club-house seems to be most desired in the Lagos head office of NET. The range of services suggested are as follows:

Table 5.

<u>Range of services required</u>	<u>Frequency %</u>
1. End of year or Christmas party	0.5
2. Staff Club-house	7.0
3. Nursery school	2.0
4. First aid	2.0
5. Cloakrooms	1.5
6. Transport services for staff children	1.0
7. Luncheon scheme	1.5
8. Insurance scheme	0.5
9. Scholarship for staff children	1.0
10. Staff supermarket	0.5
11. Welfare department	1.5
12. Existing services to be improved	7.5
13. Recreation facilities	0.5
14. Housing allowance	0.5
15. Housing facilities	3.5
16. Staff/management relations to be improved.	0.5
17. Canteen services to be improved	1.0
18. Transport services to be improved	8.0
19. No services required	0.5
20. Do not know	56.8
<u>Total</u>	<u>100.00</u>

Most employees also feel that NBT's involvement in their personal problems could motivate and make them perform better at their jobs and as a result production be improved. As many as 37.77 percent feel this way. About 16 percent feel that involvement in personal problems will be important to raise the standard of efficiency and sense of commitment in the organisation. Only 1 percent think it will be good for company image; while 1.5 percent think it can reduce man hours lost. A more precise picture of the attitudes of NBT's involvement in personal problems and the reasons given are shown in tables 6 and 7.

Table 6.

<u>NET TO BE INVOLVED IN THE PERSONAL PROBLEMS OF ITS EMPLOYEES.</u>	<u>FREQUENCY %</u>
YES	87.0
NO	9.0
DO NOT KNOW	4.0
<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>100</u>

TABLE 7.

REASONS FOR INVOLVEMENT	FREQUENCY %
1. Will improve production	19.6
2. Will motivate and make them work better.	18.1
3. Important for efficiency	18.5
4. Inspire sense of commitment	7.0
5. Good for company image	1.0
6. Could reduce man hours lost	1.5
7. Will help management to understand staff better	3.0
8. Should be limited to the provision of help only when unexpected things happen.	2.5
9. Happy employees make a happy company	2.5
10. Employees need help in alot of issues	1.0
11. Responsibility of company anywa	1.5
12. Could improve satisfaction with organisation.	0.5
13. Do not know	33.5
<hr/>	
TOTAL	100

The significance of the types of personal problems most likely to occur was tested out by asking employees to indicate which of them were; 'very important, important, slightly important or not important; at all'. Sickness or illness problems were seen to be most important with over 95 percent of employees. Financial problems were considered to be next in order of importance. Over 90 percent of employees feel they are very important. Retirement problems were ranked third by 98 percent while problems

associated with employment came next at 79 percent, 75 percent thought bereavement problems were most important, while 63 percent thought domestic problems most important. A precise picture of these attitudes of employees is shown in tables 8,9,10,11,12 and 13.

Table 8.

SICKNESS PROBLEMS	FREQUENCY %
Very important	87.9
Important	8.5
Slightly important	0.5
Not important	X
Do not know	3.1
TOTAL	100

Table 9.

FINANCIAL PROBLEMS	FREQUENCY %
Very important	69.9
Important	21.1
Slightly important	5.5
Not important	X
Do not know	3.5
TOTAL	100

Table 10.

RETIREMENT PROBLEMS	FREQUENCY %
Very important	72.4
Important	16.6
Slightly important	3.0
Not important	3.0
Do not know	5.0
TOTAL	100

Table 11.

BEREAVEMENT PROBLEMS	FREQUENCY %
Very important	43.7
Important	31.7
Slightly important	11.6
Not important	1.5
Do not know	11.5
<hr/>	
TOTAL	100

Table 12.

EMPLOYMENT PROBLEMS	FREQUENCY %
Very important	62.3
Important	16.6
Slightly important	6.5
Not important	2.0
Do not know	12.6
<hr/>	
TOTAL	100

Table 13.

DOMESTIC PROBLEMS	FREQUENCY %
Very important	27.7
Important	35.2
Slightly important	17.1
Not important	12.6
Do not know	7.4
<hr/>	
TOTAL	100

Employee awareness of existing facilities and subsidies

Employees were asked if they are aware of the existence of canteens, social and sports clubs and housing and hostel accommodation. The majority of employees - over 60 percent, said they are aware of and use canteen services provided by NET at Head Office. About 84 percent of employees are also aware that canteen services provided are partly subsidised. Only between 20 and 30 percent are not aware of the existence of canteen services and their subsidies at Head Office.

Just over half of NET employees are aware of the existence of social and sports clubs at Head Office. About 48 percent are not aware. Only 18 percent are aware of the provision of these services at the branches of NET. Over 30 percent know that these services are partly subsidised. Similarly, almost 50 percent of employees are aware of the provision of housing and hostel accommodation, and over 70 percent also know that they are partly subsidised. 20 percent are aware of their existence in the branches of NET. The majority of employees feel that all staff should be given loans to purchase or build their own houses. About 95 percent feel this way.

The need to provide a personal welfare service.

Employees were asked if they thought NET should be involved in finding solutions to their personal problems. More than 80 percent said 'Yes' while only 9 percent said 'No'. This attitude should provide a solid base for the establishment of a personal welfare service.

Satisfaction/Dissatisfaction with existing services.

The survey tried to discover the attitudes of employees towards existing facilities provided by NET, by asking them to indicate if they were 'good, neither or bad'.

Most employees felt that restroom and cloakroom arrangements were bad and needed improvement. My discussions and observations confirm these feelings. Lavatories were too few and did not work properly. Cloakroom and restrooms were untidy. A feeling of indifference towards canteen arrangements is indicated by the majority of employees, while less than 50 percent think sports and social club arrangements are good. Only slightly over 40 percent of employees and just over 50 percent think that accommodation and holidays with pay are good. 54 percent also agree that sick pay provisions are good. 84 percent of employees think that medical services provided by NET are good, only 40 percent think the first aid facilities are adequate. My discussions and observations confirm that there are no first aid arrangements in most departments.

Company pension schemes, loan arrangements and training and development opportunities are seen by over 50 percent of employees to be good. Safety arrangements from my observations are inadequate. Only 34.1 percent of staff see them to be good. The survey figures are shown in detail in tables 14 to 26.

Table 14.

<u>Cloakrooms</u>	<u>Frequency %</u>
Good	13.0
Neither	8.0
Bad	39.7
Do not know	39.3
Total	100

Table 15.

<u>Lavatories</u>	<u>Frequency %</u>
Good	33.6
Neither	14.6
Bad	42.2
Do not know	7.6
Total	100

Table 16.

<u>Canteen Services</u>	<u>Frequency %</u>
Good	32.6
Neither	14.6
Bad	42.2
Do not know	7.6
Total	100

Table 17.

<u>Sports and Social Clubs</u>	<u>Frequency %</u>
Good	44.7
Neither	26.6
Bad	18.6
Do not know	10.1
Total	100

Table 18.

<u>Accommodation and Hostel Services</u>	<u>Frequency %</u>
Good	43.8
Neither	25.1
Bad	21.7
Do not know	9.4
Total	100

Table 19.

<u>Holidays with Pay arrangements</u>	<u>Frequency %</u>
Good	56.8
Neither	23.1
Bad	12.5
Do not know	7.6
Total	100

Table 20.

<u>Sick Pay Arrangements</u>	<u>Frequency %</u>
Good	53.8
Neither	16.6
Bad	3.5
Do not know	11.6
Total	100

Table 21.

<u>First Aid facilities</u>	<u>Frequency %</u>
Good	40.2
Neither	16.6
Bad	35.2
Do not know	8.0
Total	100

Table 22.

<u>Session Scheme</u>	<u>Frequency %</u>
Good	68.3
Neither	16.6
Bad	3.5
Do not know	11.6
Total	100

Table 23.

<u>Loan arrangements</u>	<u>Frequency %</u>
Good	66.8
Neither	19.6
Bad	10.0
Do not know	3.6
Total	100

Table 24.

<u>Medical Services</u>	<u>Frequency %</u>
Good	84.4
Neither	10.1
Bad	3.0
Do not know	2.5
Total	100

Table 25

<u>Training and Development</u>	<u>Frequency %</u>
Good	52.3
Neither	30.2
Bad	14.0
Do not know	3.5
Total	100

Table 26

<u>Safety arrangements</u>	<u>Frequency %</u>
Good	52.3
Neither	30.2
Bad	14.0
Do not know	3.5
Total	100

3.6 SUMMARY OF MAIN ISSUES

This part of the thesis began by outlining the National scene as far ^{as the} provision of occupational welfare services is concerned. It then discussed the influence of culture and the Nigerian employee expectations, reviewed the welfare practices at the Nigerian External Telecom Ltd., and finally reported on a survey carried out to evaluate the perceptions, attitudes and opinions of management and staff at NET.

The contents of the various chapters have demonstrated the popularity and significance of occupational welfare services as well as their obvious practical relevance in the successful management of industrial organisations in Nigeria. In this way they provide further evidence for rejecting the general hypothesis proposed in the thesis.

Two sets of issues to be discussed, also seem to emerge when considering the contents of these chapters. The first set arises out of the descriptions of existing national and NET provisions of occupational welfare services while the second set comes out of the findings of the survey of employee attitudes in NET.

Issues arising from the description of the National Scene and NET provisions of welfare services.

In Nigeria as well as in almost any other country in the world, State provided welfare services are always inadequate. But a fundamental

difference between Nigeria and the U.K. is that there is no comprehensive welfare state system in existence. The state provides medical, educational, health etc., services which are inadequate and badly managed. Because of the continued inadequacy and the deteriorating state of public services generally, most employers have to take on the responsibilities to provide such services if they are to ensure that their employees would be fit and able to come to work.

The worrying point is that even though welfare costs as categorised in this thesis represent a significant proportion of most company expenses in Nigeria, very little care is taken to plan, maintain and manage them properly once introduced. For example, no particular significance is given to the elements of culture even though it is widely recognised that Nigeria is a culturally conscious society as has been explained in Chapter 3.2. In this connection, organisations should pay particular attention to the patronage of native doctors so that employees who do so are dealt with in the same way as those who patronise the recognised medical practitioners. The polygamous and extended family systems have to be taken into consideration in deciding who should qualify or use the welfare services provided; so also should religious loyalty and tribal norms.

Because of competition or pressure to introduce identical or better welfare services than their contemporaries, organisations seem to act without sufficient long-term planning or consideration of the

role of welfare in planning. The consequences are that most services so introduced according to Ejiofor(71) become dysfunctional to productivity. An example is sports and social clubs. While very successful sports and social clubs managed by some organisations in Nigeria bring prestige to their organisations, many Nigerians get frustrated with them. They see successful football clubs being sponsored by an organisation that cannot supply them with reliable electricity, they see an organisation that cannot deliver letters and telegrams on time spending resources also organising football clubs. These exercises are seen to be sheer misallocation of resources.

The way some welfare services are managed in some organisations in Nigeria creates animosity among employees. Under NETA's present dining arrangements for example, there is a difference in service arrangements for different levels of employees. Junior, middle and top managers are served by waiters while other staff have to take their turn in long queues. Also most junior staff feel that these levels of employees are served higher quality meals. The majority majority of staff feel that present dining room arrangements should be abolished. Most employees would prefer waitress service. Given a choice between cafeteria and waitress service. There was a feeling from my discussions that employees at management levels have strong territorial instincts which lead them to sit in the same place at the same table everyday. This tendency can frustrate attempts to

promote informal communication between different levels of the organisation in the context of a common dining room. The focus in Nigerian organisations on the provision of incentives and rewards rather than welfare services has greatly affected the growth and development of welfare services over the years. As a result, most organisations still only provide traditional welfare services. The notion of a personal welfare service is still very much a novelty. The reasons for this are embedded both in the Nigerian employee's expectations and the continuous changing state of economic development of the country.

For example, studies have shown that among Nigerian executives the nine most valued employer provided services are, in order of popularity, housing/accommodation, car and driver, medical facilities, retirement pension, stock purchase plan, profit sharing, annual bonus, severance pay and club or professional membership[12]. Most employees prefer cash to some welfare services. I would not be surprised if a labourer valued overtime pay more than every other welfare service. Money is seen by the average Nigerian employee as the only means of bridging the gap between the rich and the poor and as such only cash benefits or allowances matter to them. These differences may be attributed to one's position in Maslow's need hierarchy[13], or differences in sex and scale of preferences springing from one's personality. For example, a study leave programme, means little to a fifty year old labourer, gateman or cleaner. A long

service award of a gold watch given to a retiring polygamus machine operator with ten children is also of little value. Because of all these reasons, most employers in the country concentrate on the provision of various types of cash bonuses and allowances which are seen by employees as providing direct cash benefits to them. These provisions have been greatly enhanced by profits from the oil boom decade which has been referred to in Chapter 3.2.

Issues arising from the survey of employees attitudes to welfare services in NET.

In general, the survey findings provide overwhelming evidence in support of the need for employers to take employee welfare very seriously if they are to manage their organisations successfully. One way they could do this is to get employees more involved through attitude surveys when introducing welfare schemes; because failure to find out what is really needed could reduce many services to the level of fads or fashion.

Specifically, the survey provides evidence of a majority view by NET employees that a comprehensive welfare service managed by a welfare department is favoured. Also there is an urgent need to overhaul and improve the provision and management of existing services in order that they can meet their desired objectives.

Most employees in NET would like to see a personal welfare service introduced into the organisation. In accordance with the sensitivity

of Nigerians to problems of illness, finance and retirement, employees' feel that consideration of such difficulties should be given priority in a future personnel welfare service. With the exception of medical services, an overall high percentage of NET employees are dissatisfied with the state and management of existing services. This perhaps partly accounts for the observed general indiscipline among NET employees manifested by lateness to work, unnecessary time-offs for private businesses and high absenteeism. In most cases, bad management and lack of services are responsible for this state of affairs. For example, there is no doubt that the provision of a bus service to transport the children of NET employees from school to their homes and vice versa will cut down on the number of hours lost when employees have to take time off to collect their children from school.

Similarly, the enormous domestic problems confronting the average Nigerian employee because of the extended family system can prevent them from working to their full potential. There is no doubt that the provision of a personal welfare service would help minimise the hardships encountered by employees in their everyday existence.

Mostly because the first owners of modern industries in Nigeria were entrepreneurs drawn from the developed western countries, virtually all the occupational welfare service programmes in Nigerian organisations were and are still based on those of foreign countries. For

example, it was revealed earlier in chapters 1.1 and 3.1 that the Nigerian Factories Act enacted since 1958 under colonial government is identical to the U.K. Factories Acts of 1961 and 1963 and still in operation. This means that the same guidelines are being applied in establishing physical welfare services which are now covered by these acts. Most canteen, medical and sporting and recreational facilities are still also established along the lines created by foreign owners of industries.

Nevertheless, inspite of the above imitative tendencies, the pioneers of occupational welfare service provision in Nigerian organisations do not still seem to have fully appreciated the need at least in principle, to adapt them to the country's customs and values in order to play a more effective role within the industrial and local context. What is needed is for Nigerian organisations to evolve occupational welfare systems uniquely suited to their environment if they are to respond more effectively to the needs of Nigerian employees.

A fundamental redefinition of the role of occupational welfare in the Nigerian context now seems to be called for. It would involve a re-examination of the whole notion or concept of occupational welfare as it applies or should apply to organisations in Nigeria, before there could be any meaningful consideration of its role and priorities.

In the light of these fundamental requirements, the role of occupational welfare in Nigerian organisations can be analysed into two major functions (derived from the definition provided in part one) as follows:

1. Provision of facilities and personal welfare services relevant to the needs and interests of Nigerian employees.
2. Promotion and Preservation of the well-being of active and retired employees and their families and dependants.

In considering both functions, the fundamental question seems to be that of 'relevance'. Nigerian organisations must first aim to identify themselves with the realities of an unsophisticated, mostly uneducated and traditional, but expectant workforce; only then will they be able to discover what the real needs and interests as defined by the customs and traditions are and provide accordingly. Welfare officers and line managers would be playing a much tougher and wider role than their counterparts in the U.K. The line manager would need to develop a better relationship that would bring him or her closer to his work force, so that he can become more effective in performing his role of being primarily responsible for the welfare of his employees. For the Nigerian manager, this would mean a complete change of attitude towards his subordinates and in understanding their problems. A welfare officer would need a clear understanding of different traditions and loyalties to religion, the degree of polygamous and extended family commitments among employees and

the probable consequences that could arise from them. He should be aware of local facilities that already exist to cope with problems arising from these modes of life. Overall, an extensive knowledge of the country and its tribal divisions and the way these can effect developments. Apart from pension arrangements, there is very little contact between retired employees and most organisations in Nigeria. This is because in most cases, majority of people retire from employment in the urban areas, to return to spend the rest of their lives in the rural areas. A truly effective welfare service must be able to restore links, and extend services to cover such people.

Summary of evidence concerning null hypothesis in NET

NET provides both physical and group welfare services. These provisions have persisted and remained satisfactory (in spite of the financial problems affecting the country) as observed during the survey of welfare services at the organisation, and have developed into the provision of new initiatives such as 'Company farms' where various items of food are grown and sold cheaply to NET staff. The number and range of social and sporting clubs has doubled over the years and continues to remain a main attraction to the majority of employees as observed.

The survey of employee and management attitudes and opinions shows a consensus of views on the need to provide a comprehensive welfare service incorporating a personal welfare service. Most staff feel that the provision of such a service will make them work more effectively. NET spends on average about N7m on welfare provision. This spending together with the views of staff and the growth and persistence of the service provide evidence to disprove the hypothesis proposed in the thesis.

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PART FOUR

OCCUPATIONAL WELFARE VIEWED AS
A SYSTEM

4.1 THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE SYSTEMS APPROACH FOR OCCUPATIONAL WELFARE.

This chapter briefly reviews the developments and meaning of the systems approach as a prelude to a discussion of the models of occupational welfare which have been developed from the experiences and knowledge gained as a result of the case study of British Telecom and the survey of welfare services at the Nigerian External Telecom.

The Systems Approach and Management Theory

The dominance of first the 'Classical School' and second the 'Human Relations School' [1] has been overtaken by a more comprehensive approach to the study of management in organisations. This more recent approach views the organisation as a 'system' i.e. an inter-related set of activities representing processes which enable inputs to be converted into outputs. Systems may be 'closed' or 'open'. Closed systems are those, which, for all practical purposes, are completely self-supporting and thus do not interact with their environment. Open systems are those which do interact and exchange information, material or energy with their environment. Social systems, e.g. organisations are always open systems, as are biological and information systems.

All systems are composed of the same basic elements; inputs, processes and outputs.

Inputs are the start-up force that provides the system with its operating necessities. Inputs may be concrete or abstract and can vary from raw materials to specific tasks, information or finance, etc..

The process is that which transforms the input into an output. As such it may be a machine, an individual, a computer, a chemical or equipment, tasks performed by members of an organisation, etc..

Outputs are the results of the operation of the process or alternatively, the purpose for which the system exists. They may be concrete or abstract, e.g. products, services, ideas, etc..

The systems approach enables systems thinkers to study key elements of organisations in terms of their inter-action with one another and with their external environment. Whereas in the past, the explanations were in terms of structures or people, now it is possible to identify theories which seek to explain or predict organisational behaviour in a multi-dimensional way by studying people, and structure and technology and environment at one and the same time. The most recent formulations of systems theories tend to be labelled 'contingency theories' because they emphasise the need to take specific circumstances or contingencies into account when devising appropriate organisational and

management systems. This and many other theories associated with the systems approach are well dealt with in various textbooks on organisation theory [2].

The essential ideas common to all usages of the word and all systems are the notions of 'complexity' and 'inter-relatedness'. Every system is complex and has many interacting elements, all organised to accomplish certain objectives. The complex problems of organisations private and public, and the yet more difficult problems of society as a whole are so obviously multifaceted and contain so many inter-connections that it is obvious that we must somehow embrace the 'whole problem' in seeking to solve it, lest improvements in one area produce effects elsewhere which are inimical to the whole. This viewing of a problem as a whole is termed the 'systems approach'. It represents an attempt to be 'holistic' and it is the foundation on which the systems paradigm is based.

In taking a systems approach therefore, one must strive to look at the problem as a whole and in its proper perspective - from a holistic viewpoint. Thus the systems approach may be defined as a way of going about tackling a problem which avoids taking a piecemeal approach because of the awareness that there are interactions between parts of the system and that alterations cannot be made to some parts of a system without considering the effects on the system as a whole. Three essential attributes of the

systems approach can be deduced from this definition. They are that the systems approach;

1. recognises the inter-relationships which are essential in defining a system.
2. also recognises that factoring out a part of a problem by neglecting the interactions among sub-systems and components increases significantly the probability that a solution to the problem will not be found,

and,
3. requires that boundaries of the system be extended outward as far as possible to determine which interrelationships are significant to the resolution of the problem.

Organisations as systems.

In a systems analysis, the organisation must be studied as a whole with multiple, interpenetrating levels and sectors. This means conceptualising the organisation as a concrete total phenomenon and attending to the intricate ways in which its components are tied together. For example, the functional departments become hierarchical subsystems each of which tries to fulfil its part of the general plan, but the success of which depends as much upon the activities of the other subsystems as upon its own efforts.

This principle of totality directs us to see the intricate ties of organisations to the larger society - not only to macro-structural features such as economic and political systems but also to the everyday activities of people. Its emphasis is concentrated upon the interactions between the different elements in an organisation - the people, the structure, the technology and the environment,

which could be seen as a response to the greatly increased pressures upon organisations and their employees in recent years as a result of very rapid changes in political, technological, economic and social environments.

Through its doctrines of inter-relationships, complexities and wholeness, the systems approach provides a useful basis for analysing occupational welfare practices because of the inter-departmental nature of the welfare function in organisations. Moreover, there are recognisable similarities between systems concepts and occupational welfare concepts (as practised in organisations studied) which will be discussed later in the next chapters. For example, the 'wholeperson concept' advocates the understanding and treatment of the employee in all his role contexts in order to make his work more effective in the organisation. This in effect is an application of the principle of wholeness on which the systems approach is based. The systems approach therefore can serve both as a useful source of reference and a platform for viewing, explaining and perhaps solving problems associated with organisations. These are the tasks to be explored in the next chapters.

Use of Models.

According to O'Neill (1986)(3), models are visual representations of a set of complex interrelationships between themes, ideas or concepts. They are important because they show a set of

relationships that we had not previously considered and how elements of which we are already aware can relate to each other. Probably the most important element of all, is that a good model will itself be simple to understand. It will cut through huge areas of vagueness and uncertainty and crystallise the complex relationships into one clear whole'.

In the context of systems, a model is usually constructed so that the underlying reality can be studied more closely particularly for planning and design purposes. Their use can be justified (as in O'Neill's) on the grounds that:

1. they are objective oriented i.e. they are directed towards the optimisation of a system or subsystem.
2. they expose critical variables by identifying those elements and relationships which are critical to predict overall system performance.
3. they are simple to understand i.e. because they contain the fewest variables that have adequate predictive qualities.

Many organisations, e.g. IBM, United Biscuits, Honeywell, etc. have developed corporate models which contain elements covering each part of the organisation's activities, e.g. financial, manufacturing, sales, inventory, distribution etc.. There is no reason why these organisations and others should not also develop corporate models covering the areas of human resource management such as employee welfare. Such a model will provide management with insights about the working of the real system and also assist them in trying out designs, arrangements and plans.

4.2 A GENERAL MODEL OF AN OCCUPATIONAL WELFARE SYSTEM.

In order to carry out a systems analysis of occupational welfare, it is necessary to discuss those fundamental functions such a system must perform in order to exist. These functions are well illustrated in Figures 8 and 9 which are designed to expound the systems view and show how the basic aim of an occupational welfare system (i.e. to provide a comprehensive welfare service in which managers and employees and their families, and retired staff are considered as having a right to a sense of well-being), can be achieved. Figure 8 (on page 161) depicts a general 'input-conversion-output model of an occupational welfare system with essential elements of parts and relationships necessary for it to function; while Figure 9 (on page 162), presents an example of a model of occupational welfare system based on BT welfare service with real world parts and relationships. Both models discussed extensively in the following pages are based on Easton's (1965) systems analysis of political life (4).

Occupational Welfare as an Open System

I may begin by viewing occupational welfare as a system embedded in an environment to the influences of which the occupational welfare system itself is exposed and in turn reacts. What makes the identification of the environment useful and necessary is that it presupposes that occupational welfare forms part of an open system - meaning that it interacts with its environment on which it relies

FIGURE 8 A GENERAL MODEL OF AN OCCUPATIONAL WELFARE SYSTEM.

NOTE: For an illustrative Sub-system extension of Process 3 below, see page 162a & 162b.

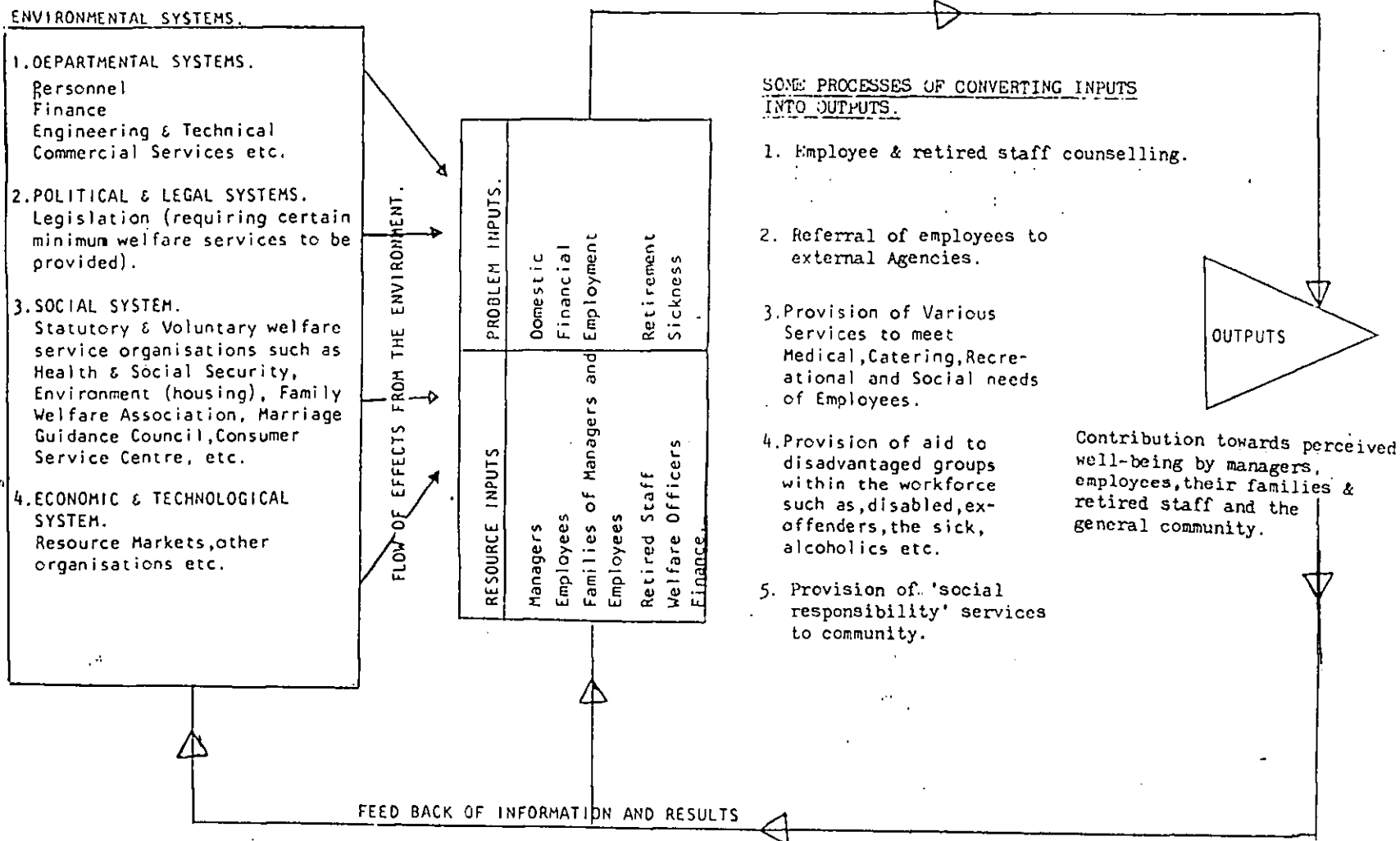
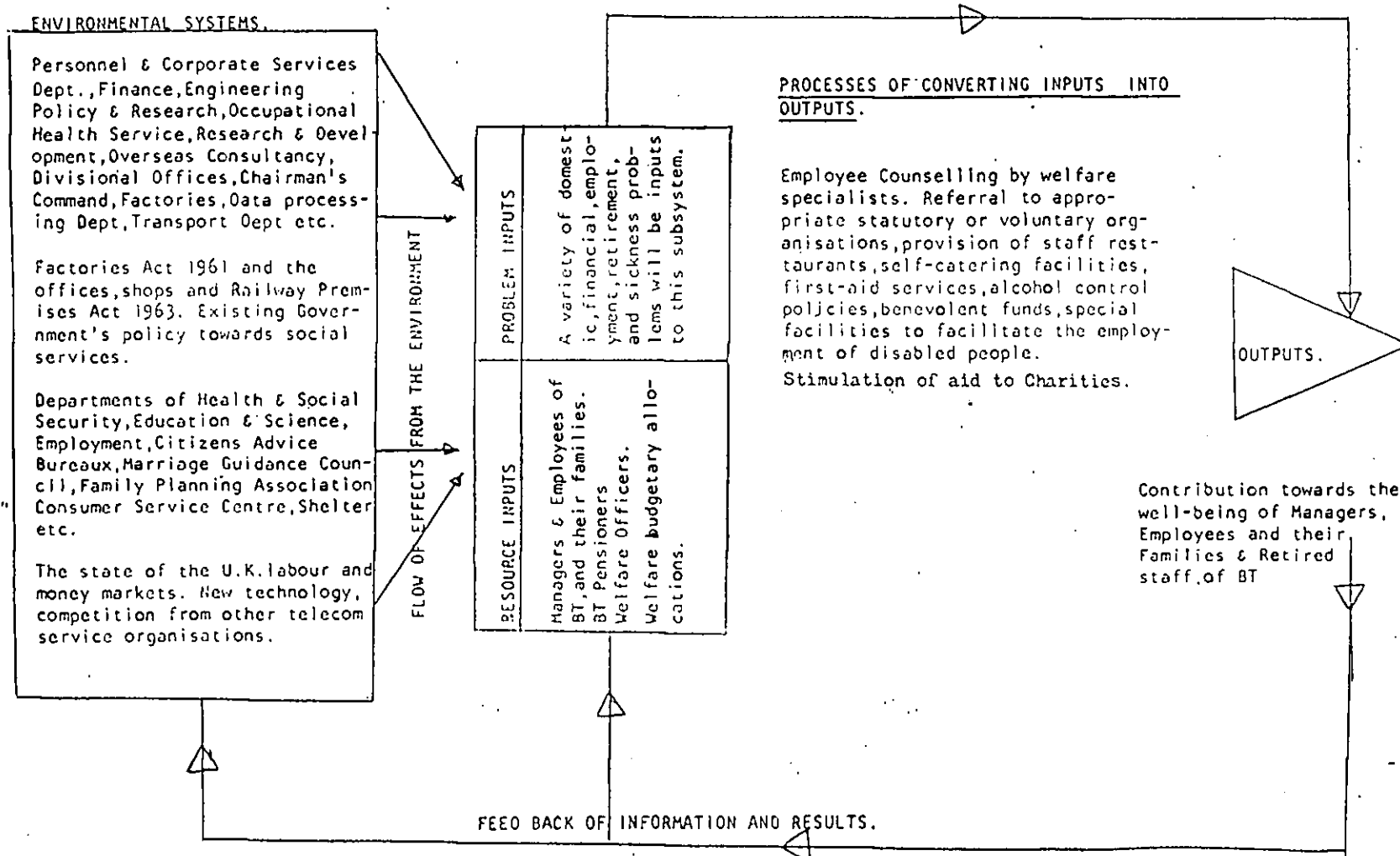
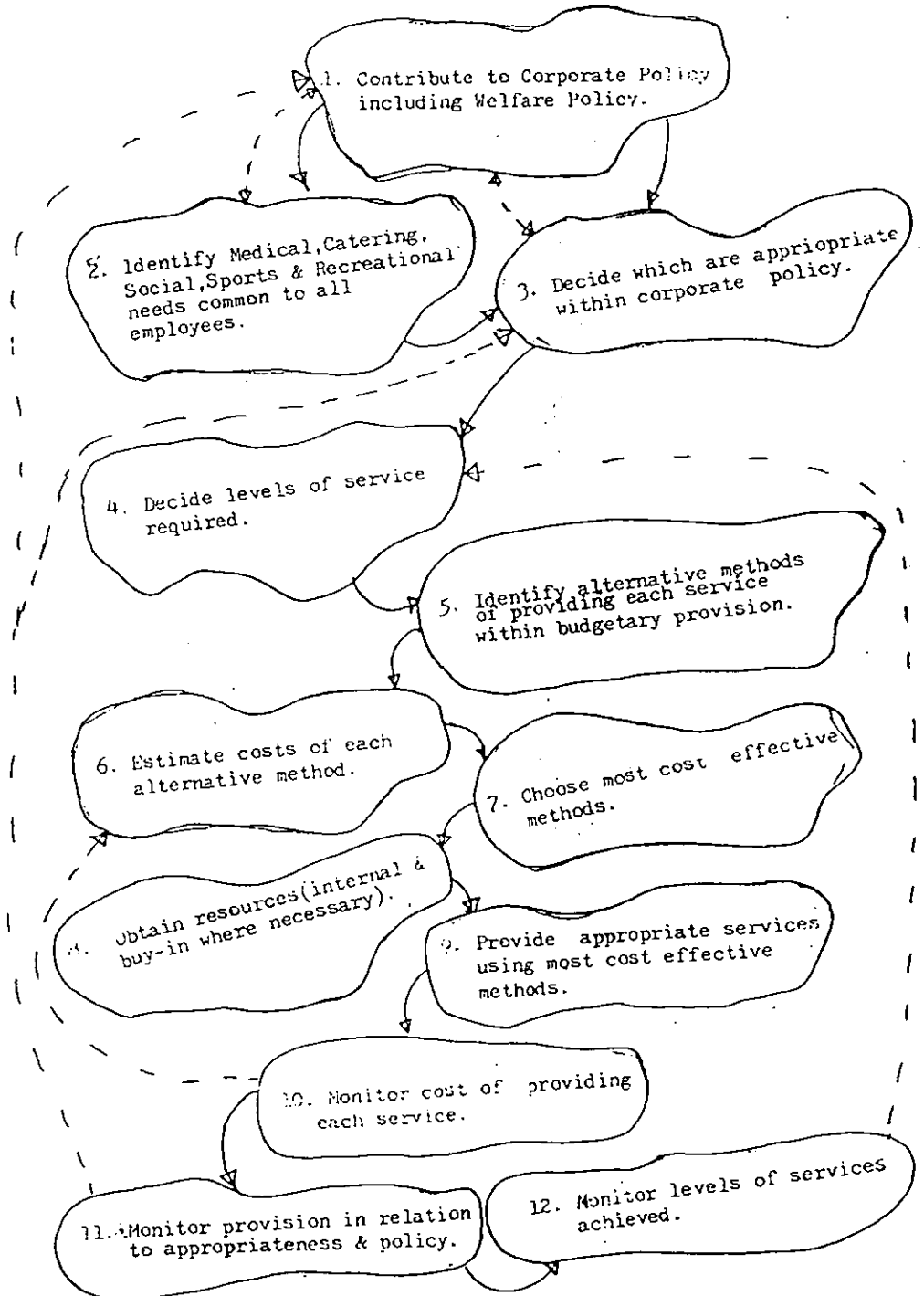


FIGURE 9. AN EXAMPLE OF A MODEL OF BT WELFARE SERVICE SYSTEM.



AN ILLUSTRATIVE SUB-SYSTEM MODEL.
A GROUP WELFARE SERVICE PROVISION SYSTEM.

KEY: The broken arrow-heads denote the logical dependency of on-going activities, while the unbroken arrow-heads denote the logical dependency of one activity on the other.



AN ILLUSTRATIVE SUB-SYSTEM MODEL
A GROUP WELFARE SERVICE PROVISION SYSTEM

The model views a group welfare service provision system as having one primary aim, which is

'To ensure that appropriate services are provided by the employer to meet medical, catering, social, sports and recreational needs common to its employees at the most cost effective method and in accordance with its welfare policy.'

The activities derived from this statement which express how the aim can be achieved together with the controls needed are shown in the diagram on page 162a.

Activity 1: Contribute to Corporate Policy including welfare policy.

This is the starting point. It is considered to be of fundamental importance to have a welfare policy which is part of a broad corporate plan. The significance of this policy is that it will provide the foundation for either an effective or ineffective welfare service. For more discussions of welfare policy, please refer to chapter 5.1.

Activity 2: Identify Medical, Catering, Social, Sports and recreational needs common to all employees.

this can be facilitated by carrying out an attitude survey of employees to determine what their needs are.

Activity 3: Decide which are appropriate within Corporate Policy.

Because employees would have a wide variety of needs in relation to these areas, it would be necessary to decide as a matter of corporate policy which are the priorities of the system.

Activity 4: Decide Levels of Service required.

This would involve the specification of standards which to a large

extent would be determined by what is provided or available elsewhere and how much the organisation and employee are prepared to put into it.

Activities 5, 6, & 7. Identify alternative methods of providing each service within budgetary provisions. Estimate alternative cost methods choose most cost effective methods.

These activities would necessitate a critical analysis of identified alternative methods of providing services, considering the cost effectiveness of adopting any of the methods and choosing the most cost effective methods of providing the level of services required.

Activity 8: Obtain Resources (internal and Buy-in where necessary).

This activity would ensure that adequate resources of people, money and equipment are available for the entire system to function. Particularly important is the assessment of internal availability and needs and the decision to buy-in as necessary. Resources are the most important inputs required in the system.

Activity 9: Provide appropriate services using most cost effective methods.

This activity ensures the primary objective is carried out. The preceding activities ought to be performed first.

Activities 10, 11, & 12. Monitor cost of providing each service. Monitor provision in relation to appropriateness and policy and monitor levels of services achieved.

These activities emphasise the use of measures of performance to control levels of service achieved, costs of providing each service and to ensure that provision is appropriate and in accordance with policy.

These measures would indicate deviations from planned performance and initiate corrective action within the system.

for obtaining essential inputs and for the discharge of its system outputs. By its very nature as an organisational subsystem that has been analytically separated from other subsystems, an occupational welfare system must be seen as lying exposed to influences deriving from the other subsystems in which empirically it is embedded. From them, there flows a constant stream of events and influences that shape the conditions under which the members of the system must act.

Environmental Systems

In interpreting the diagram in Figure 8, it shows an occupational welfare system surrounded by four types of environmental systems.

These are:

1. The departmental systems: consist of those systems in the same organisation as the occupational welfare system from which it obtains most of its inputs. They include first and foremost the personnel department with respect to which the occupational welfare system at the focus of attention is itself a component. The personnel department constitutes a source of many influences that create and shape the conditions under which the occupational welfare system must operate. In the two organisations studied, the personnel department is the immediate wider system embodying the occupational welfare system which exerts power and authority in determining its functions and operations; then the other functional segments of the organisation (for example, production, marketing, technical department, etc.), which provide the welfare

system with most of its clients and to which they will return and provide feedback to/or information and results for controlling the system. This relationship with the functional departments through the employees and managers which pass through the system and the services it offers puts an occupational welfare system in a position in which it plays an integrating role in an organisation - a function which should be recognised as contributing indirectly to the success of an organisation.

2. The political and legal systems: Their influence on the welfare system may evolve from their ability to determine the effectiveness and efficiency of State welfare services and the kinds of legislation affecting the provision of welfare services by organisations. For example, if by virtue of political action social welfare services are neglected and become inadequate as happened in Nigeria, industrial and commercial organisations will assume some of the responsibilities which otherwise should have been borne by the government. An example of this is the provision of medical care by organisations in Nigeria. This has already been discussed in part three of this thesis. In this case the welfare system could find itself having to take on more responsibilities in providing services. Similarly if the legal system makes the provision of certain facilities compulsory (as it happened when law requires employers to provide adequate lighting, fume extraction, air conditioning, facilities for washing, rest breaks

in Nigeria and the U.K.), these services cease to be welfare services (reference to definition of welfare provided in part one of the thesis).

3. Social System: This consists of the statutory and voluntary organisations to which the welfare system can refer its clients for specialist advice and assistance in certain problem cases and difficulties. They are important to the welfare system because they take care of its referral functions and are a source of information on the extent and level of services that can be offered by the statutory and voluntary organisations.
4. Economic and technological system: This is composed of the resource markets, i.e. labour and money markets which determine the supply of human and financial resources to the organisation and hence to the welfare system. The availability and amount of financial resources determines the investment in welfare facilities and services while human resources can determine the existence or non-existence of the system. The welfare services provided by other organisations also influence the growth of the system.

The communication of the many events that occur between the environments and the welfare system are represented by the solid lines connecting the environments with the system. The arrowheads show the direction of flow into the system.

INPUTS

There are two major inputs in an occupational welfare system - Resource Inputs and Problem Inputs. Through them, a wide range of activities may be channelled into the system. In this sense, they are key indicators of the way in which environmental influences and conditions modify and shape the operations of the occupational welfare system.

The resource inputs are listed herein as managers, employees, families of managers and employees, retired staff, welfare officers and finance. The managers are the senior members of staff who have a primary responsibility for the welfare of their junior members while at the same time having welfare needs of their own. The employees are the junior members of staff who may have various problems about which they need help and advice. Retired staff are ex-employees who for the reasons of goodwill and good relations still retain links with the organisation. Together they represent the problem owners of the system.

As inputs to the system, specialist welfare officers play a unique role in an occupational welfare system. Where they are made neither part of senior management, nor within the employee groups, they portray a kind of neutrality which makes them valuable as helpers in the wider social problems which society faces. The personal problems experienced are sometimes so serious that they need to be

discussed with someone outside the chain of command. A neutral welfare officer as part of the problem-solving system, can bring to the system useful contacts with outside help and the benefits of their specialised experience which will enable them to recognise problems more readily.

Finance is money inputed by the organisation into the system which is transformed into services and facilities. Without it the essential services of a welfare officer and sports and recreational facilities cannot be purchased. Top management decides on the amount of finance the system needs taking into consideration the overall levels of finance available, the size of the organisation, the kind of welfare service it plans to provide and what competitors are doing.

The problem inputs of an occupational welfare system derived from an outline of BT's welfare service classification are of five main groups which frequently inter-relate and must themselves be approached in systems terms:

1. Domestic problems: are those arising out of the context of an employee's home and involve mostly family affairs such as problems of elderly parents and single parenthood, illnesses of dependants, matrimonial difficulties, bereavement, and housing difficulties, etc.
2. Financial difficulties concern money matters such as debt, loss of money, etc..

3. Employment problems are those arising out of the work situation and can be anything from inter-personal relations, feelings of inadequacy to promotion problems.

4. Retirement problems can occur due to voluntary, age or medical reasons.

5. Sickness problems arise mainly from accident or due to prolonged illness and can give rise to a number of other problems such as pay, convalescence and concern about the job.

These inter-related groups of problems are important because together, they constitute the very rationale of a personal welfare service. They affect the private affairs of employees and their outside of work interests, their solution is necessary because of humanitarian considerations and also because the worried worker is an unsafe worker.

PROCESSES.

The processes ^{are} the problem solving subsystem in an occupational welfare system. It is during these stages that activities necessary to transform the input elements into outputs are carried out. The processes of converting inputs into outputs in an occupational welfare system would involve the carrying out of the following activities:

1. Employee Counselling: This activity has already been discussed in part two in which its importance to the existence of the welfare system was emphasised. Based on the case study of the British

welfare service, what should make a modern occupational welfare make a modern occupational welfare service is the provision of counselling and advice service to assist employees in solving their problems. Counselling is a specialist activity which needs the appointment of a specialist to carry it out. It is the cornerstone on which the occupational welfare service is based. It can result in the resolution of problems, improved performance and growth in relationships and hence a major contributor to organisational success.

2. Referral to external agencies Referral services are the main avenues of contact with the state welfare services. Such services help employees to find their way through to the appropriate state or voluntary service, without getting too tangled up in the bureaucracy which inevitably surrounds state services. Thus less time is wasted and the appropriate agencies who have the expert knowledge to deal with the problem can be contacted more easily.

3. The provision of various services and facilities to meet medical, catering, recreational and social needs of employees, is particularly useful for bringing employees together and inculcating a spirit of togetherness within the organisation. For example, playing in the company football club can help the employee to identify more closely if not with his employers, then at least with his fellow employees. Because these services deal with some of the most

individual problems such as health and catering and recreation and because they are expensive to provide, they enable the human resource inputs in the total system to feel that they are regarded as human beings rather than just numbers on a clock card. Their importance as a means of transformation is centred around the assumption that their provision can improve morale and a sense of unity and belonging with an organisation.

4. The provision of aid to disadvantaged groups such as the sick, disabled people etc., is more a matter of individual conscience which can be translated into company policy, usually to the ultimate benefit of both company and employees. These services are necessary to cater for the special needs of equal rights within the work force.

OUTPUTS AND FEEDBACK

The primary output of an occupational welfare system should be an identifiable contribution towards their perceived well-being by managers, employees and their families and retired staff. Such a contribution can only be achieved through a positive approach to the welfare of people at work involving the adoption of a systems approach to occupational welfare service. It is hoped that such a contribution should enable managers and employees to be more satisfied with their work. This element of satisfaction, though difficult to measure, may be best observed by a comparison of attitudes and performances

before and after the contribution has been made. Also even though contributing towards employees' well-being might not necessarily make them productive; it could help to prevent them becoming less productive and above all can help them to operate at maximum effectiveness. The outputs of the system have the characteristics of feeding back upon the system and shaping its subsequent behaviour. Two types of feedback can be distinguished - 'positive feedback' causes the system to repeat or amplify an adjustment or action, while 'negative feedback' seeks to dampen and reduce fluctuations around a norm or standard. In figure 8 on page 161, the feedback is depicted by the line that shows the effects of the outputs moving directly back to both the environmental and input subsystems. Two types of feedback are generated in this case, - managerial and employee feedback which are channelled into the system in the forms of information and results.

Information can take many forms, for example complaints, increased use of facilities and services etc.. The results can be increased efficiency and productivity and hence profits which can be ploughed back into the organisation to provide further financial input and so ensure the survival and growth of the system. The information and results may re-shape the environment in some way, that is, they influence conditions and behaviour there. In this way, the outputs are able to modify the influences that continue to operate on the inputs and thereby the next round of inputs themselves. Feedback therefore enables corrective changes to be made to keep the system on course.

4.3 THE WHOLEPERSON CONCEPT.

British Telecom have adopted the whole-person concept which is derived from humanistic psychology. It is primarily a logical approach for tackling the personal welfare problems of employees and should be found easy to apply in any organisation that values the welfare of its employees highly. Its philosophy is based on a simple consideration of an employee in terms of his or her numerous everyday roles and their significance as the major sources of his personal welfare problems.

Background

This concept has its origin in two very useful concepts, namely, 'role-theory' with its ramifications as explained in sociology and 'holism' on which the systems approach is based.

Discussions of role theory by Boot, Cowling and Stanworth (1977) and Worsley (1977), [5], lend credibility to the claim that ideas about this concept are founded on sociological concepts. For example, Boot et al, refer to the different roles of a father and husband that a manager has to play in addition to his work role. Also they quote the work of the Pahls, (in 'Managers and their Wives') in which they examined in some detail the relations between managers and their wives and how these are affected by home and work roles. In conclusion, they make the point that many attempts at decision-making and problem resolution in the workplace often fail through

an incomplete understanding and analysis of the social relations concerned; and that role theory approach can be of considerable use both in aiding and understanding problems and in offering pointers for improvements. The notion of the whole-person concept agrees with Boot, Cowling and Stanworth's conclusion by seeking to analyse the roles employees play in everyday life in relation to their work roles. Through this analysis, it hopes to facilitate the understanding of personal welfare problems that prevent employees from working at maximum effectiveness.

Similarly, Vorsely designates the several roles anyone individual has to play as 'multiple roles'. He argues that while some of these roles are played in a sequence, some are played once and for all, others fleetingly and some over a period of years. That at a time of strikes for example, the role of the family man may conflict with the role of a unionist. He reaches the significant conclusion that role-theory can take account of social change and can be particularly useful in directing our attention to the complex links between different institutions, between the individual and those institutions and to the problems the individual may face in relation to other role-incumbents

The holistic concept is particularly useful as a source of ideas for this roll-theory concept because its emphasis and focus are similar.

Holism, first takes a broad view, then tries to take all aspects into account and finally concentrates on interactions between

the different parts of the problem - viewing the problem as a whole. In this context, the systems approach can provide the basis on which an employee's personal problems can be examined in their entirety which is what the concept of the whole-person is aiming to do.

Major theoretical elements.

This theory uses the methods of role-theory as a device for identifying the several roles anyone employee has to play in everyday life. The roles thus identified can then be used as a basis for determining the kind of welfare needs necessary. For example, as a machine operator in a factory, an employee will be playing one role in relation to his work while being a husband, wife, son, daughter, taxpayer, brother, citizen etc.. Recognising his or her capacity for such responsibilities involves a holistic concern for the employee, emphasising the importance of all the many facets of his personal life that are significant to the provision of a personal welfare service. Thus this approach can be useful as a means of predicting welfare needs of employees. The starting point would be for considerable attention to be given to perceiving the employee in many role contexts. From this, the task becomes one of first identifying the contexts, then assessing the roles played within the contexts and finally predicting the personal welfare needs on the basis of the roles.

So an employee has to be perceived in many contexts if his personal welfare problems are to be tackled effectively. It is difficult to isolate any of the roles played in one context from the role played in another. Since the employee is the only one actor, he carries with him the influences and ideas from one role to another. Examples of these contexts are; work, family and social contexts. Because of the different roles he plays within these contexts, various problems can arise which can affect his work performance. Problems can arise because the people he interacts with in these contexts make demands upon and have expectations about the role he plays. In addition, he has reciprocal expectations and demands (which could lead to problems) of them too. Ignoring problems of concern in these contexts could have adverse effects on his productivity and efficiency.

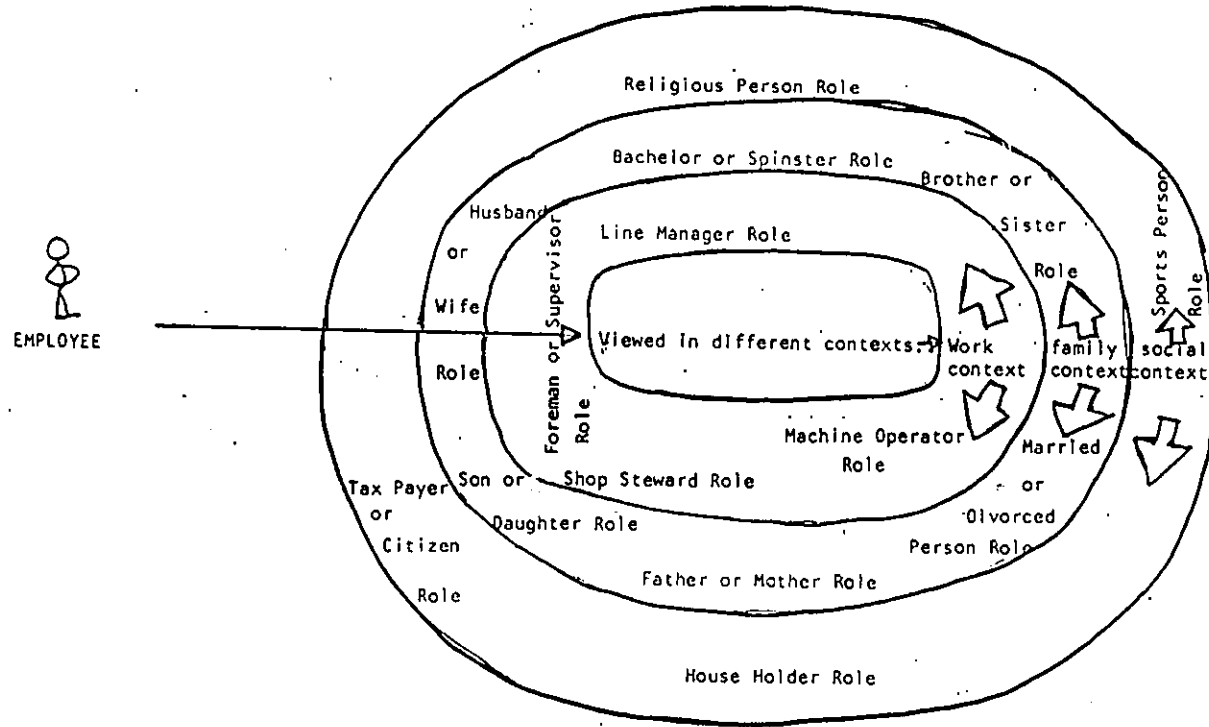
If these factors are genuinely recognised, a philosophy should be developed based on this understanding. Such a philosophy cannot be switched on one day and off the next. It should become a way of thinking about people or the employee in particular in order to help resolve his personal welfare problems that may be obstructing his work performance and general life.

A context-role diagram showing the key roles an employee has to play within each context is shown in Figure 10 (on page 177). It is based on diagrams of models of 'Open Learning Systems' which are shown in a report by Clarke, Wright and Costello (1986) (6). The roles can be classified into three main contexts as follows:

1. Work-Context: The primary concern is his working life and how the problems that will evolve as a result of playing the roles of for example, machine operator, line manager, shop steward, foreman, supervisor etc. will affect his roles in other contexts.
2. Family Context: Like the work context category, the focus is on his domestic life which can lead to marital problems, problems with dependants, relations, etc., which can affect adversely his roles in the work and social contexts.
3. Social Context: Within this context his roles as householder, taxpayer, sportsman, member of a religious or social group etc. can bring problems which can affect both his roles within the family and work contexts.

Using the systems approach the roles played in these contexts are complex and interrelated, and they influence one another. As such unless due consideration is given to them as a whole, attempts to implement welfare policies pertaining to employee personal problems will be ineffective. What this means in practice is for an employer when dealing with the personal problems of employees to 'consider him as a whole i.e. in all his contexts and to be prepared to deal with problems arising from his various role contexts rather than concentrate only on problems arising from his roles in the work context. This would necessitate the provision of a comprehensive welfare service which would deal with group welfare problems, physical welfare problems and personal welfare problems.

FIGURE 10. A CONTEXT-ROLE-MODEL OF THE WHOLEPERSON CONCEPT.



4.4 AN EMPLOYEE COUNSELLING SYSTEM.

Introduction

Employee counselling (though generally recognised as a new development in counselling), according to Bates(1;986)[7], is becoming more prevalent in industry and commercial organisations in the U.K. From my study of British Telecom welfare services, this form of counselling seems to have become well established as the most appropriate method of identifying and reaching agreement on how best to assist an employee in resolving his or her personal problems. In this sense, it can be described as the cornerstone of personal welfare service provision because it provides the main foundation for knowing and tackling personal welfare problems.

It is closely associated with the provision of various forms of advice and assistance to employees on all personal and job-related problems; the overall aim being to help him understand and resolve his problem, improve his behaviour and make appropriate plans for the future. It also involves advise and direction from a counsellor which should result in fewer mistakes and better adjustments by the employee seeking advice. It is primarily based on an interview or a discussion between an employee and a counsellor in order to help the employee to solve any social, emotional or human relations problems which may be preventing him from working at full efficiency. Some of the main advantages to be gained are that through this form

of counselling, an employee would gain insights and understanding about himself and others, develop meaningful behaviour changes and arrive at appropriate decision making.

Various Counselling Approaches.

There exists a great many models of counselling; client centred approach, trait-factor approach, rational-emotive approach and many others[8]. Although no one school of counselling is the best, a counsellor will likely be more effective if he draws information and ideas from several theories.

However, on the basis of the knowledge gained from the British Telecom and the Nigerian External Telecom studies, most employee counselling in industry seem to be based on the client-centred counselling approach. This is because of the focus given to the employee being counselled and the freedom granted him or her for decision making. Similarly, under the client-centred approach, the client is the main focus and the counselling is structured to give him or her considerable responsibility in the relationship. The themes and major concepts of this theory stress the importance of feelings, faith in a person, purposefulness of behaviour and client responsibility. The techniques of the counsellor reflect the philosophies underlying the theory with the reflection of feeling as the principal technique. Careful, attentive listening with considerable encouragement for an expression of feelings is another technique.

The core concepts according to Downing(1975)(9), stress the notion that a person is basically good, that he or she has the capacity to solve his or her problems and that much of his growth is dependent upon insights. The client is expected to assume considerable responsibility for himself, to eventually see the irrationality of behaviour and to gain therapeutic benefits from the relationship.

The role of management

There are various opinions as far as the role of the line manager is concerned under a client-centred counselling approach. Margaret Attwood(1985)in her book(10), thinks that 'the relationship between manager and subordinate often will not be amenable to the development of a counselling relationship. The manager may be concerned with his own status and thus unwilling to put himself into the subordinate's shoes. Also there may be a tendency to be protective of information, which might be useful, such as the employee's real prospects of promotion. The employee is likely to find it difficult to seek counselling from his boss. For example, a disclosure of domestic problems may hamper promotion prospects. Nevertheless, the problems of trust and fear of confidentiality so far as employees are concerned will always arise'. I agree with this view, it can be argued that there is no point in offering help or advice to someone if he thinks that his personal problems are going to be revealed to others, possibly to the detriment of his future career. This is the

argument for having specialised welfare officers in organisations large enough to be able to afford them. They can be detached in a way that line managers or personnel managers cannot be.

In a workshop, on the role of the counsellor in industry arranged by the British Psychological Society (1986), Bates (1986), argues that recent writing on management perhaps adds to the confusion as it implies (e.g. Hopson, 1981) that the manager can adopt the role of counsellor. A recent article (Baxter and Bowers, 1985), carried this to ridiculous extremes by suggesting that logotherapy was a viable management tool. The manager, charged with objectives of effectiveness and productivity, cannot truly counsel any of his or her employees'.

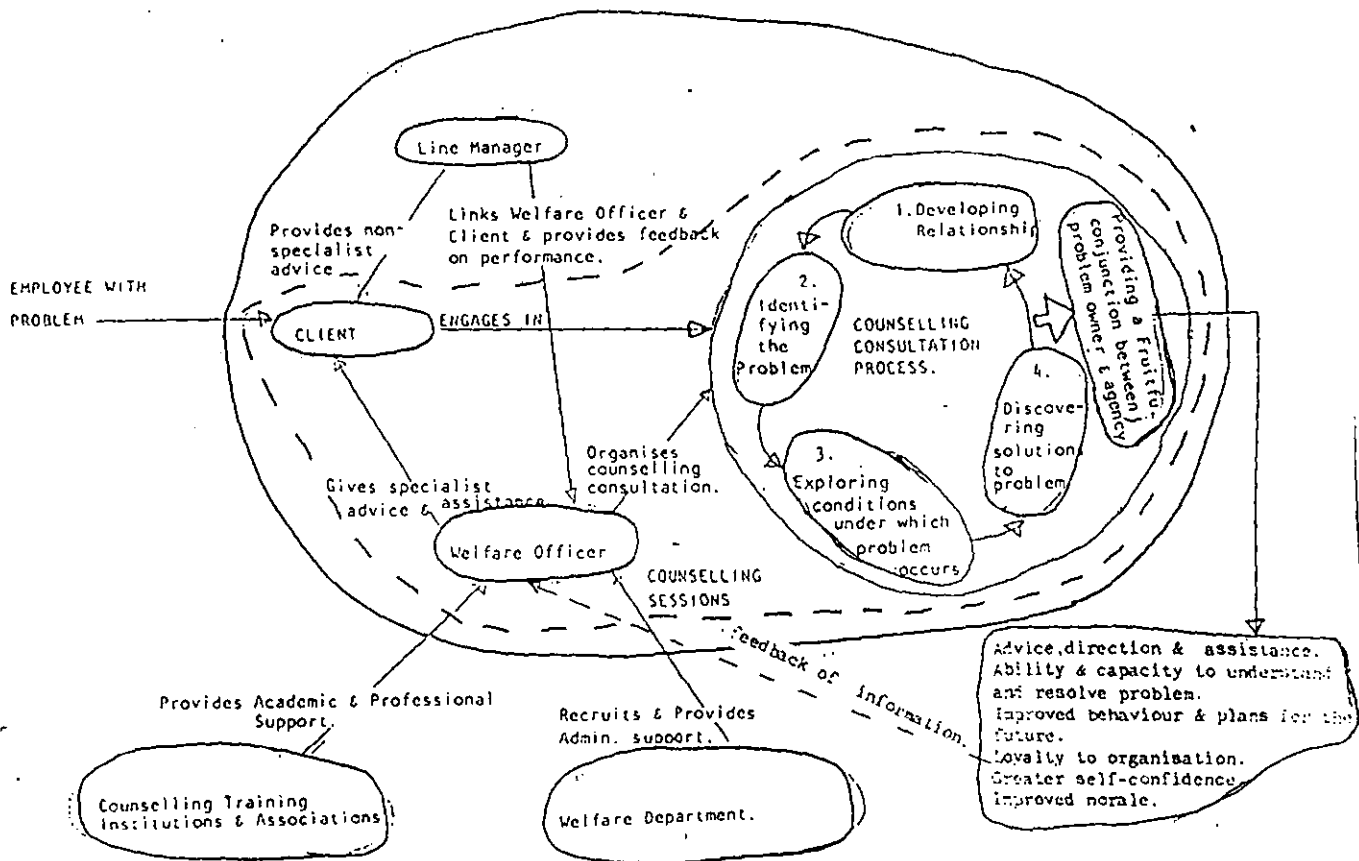
'Further confusion arises from the fact that certain skills that can be useful in a range of managerial activities, such as problem solving, appraisal and coaching are also used in counselling. These skills (e.g. listening use of open questioning) can be learned. Whether empathy or unconditional positive regard can be learned, however this is debatable, and it is these latter conditions that are necessary for effective counselling. My experience suggests that some people are just not empathetic and never will be, but they may still make effective managers. Hopson suggests that counselling should be demystified but there are real dangers in implying that the use of some relative simple communication and helping skills is actually counselling. In the light of these problems, the workshop decided that 'Managers cannot counsel their staff'.

With the role of the manager expressed above, it would obviously be advantageous for professional welfare officers or other specialists on counselling to undertake employee counselling in industrial organisations. Nevertheless, it is certain that both managers and personnel specialists will take on the role of counsellor from time to time. In order to carry out this effectively, they must be trained.

The model.

A model of an employee counselling system based on the client centred approach is illustrated in figure 11. It is based on a systems view of employee counselling in which all actors and activities in the counselling process are seen as interrelated and forming a whole process. This process depicts a general structure of counselling activities or sessions in which the employee, line manager, welfare officer, counselling institutions and associations and the welfare department play various roles and undertake different functions which are coordinated into a counselling consultation process. The consultation process is the transformation stage during which the problems and difficulties are properly identified and analysed and appropriate action taken towards their resolution. The employee finally emerges from the system, armed with advice and assistance on how to solve or tackle problems and difficulties.

FIGURE 11 AN EMPLOYEE COUNSELLING MODEL.



The starting point in the system is the employee with problem(s). When he is inputted into the system, he becomes the client'. The label client is used as an encouragement to the employee to see himself as being involved in a neutral process in which he is not accountable to his employers, and also as a professional jargon by welfare officers. Two ways the client can get involved in the system are either by recommendation from his line manager or by direct contact with the welfare officer himself.

The welfare officer is the counsellor and the main actor in charge of the system. He is backed up in providing his specialist service by both the welfare department which recruits and provides him with administrative support and counselling institutions and associations which provide him with academic and professional support. As main actor, he gives specialist advice and assistance to the client. This he does through a 'Counselling Consultation process'. The counselling consultation process is the vehicle the welfare officer uses to help the employee to problem solve. It is organised around five main stages of activities which are discussed below. Stages 1 to 4 are cyclical, not discrete, while stage 5 is an outcome, not part of the 1 to 4 process.

Stage 1: Developing a Relationship.

An essential first stage in the process can be achieved by presenting an acceptable image to the employee both in environment and in manner. A friendly, warm manner can quickly

make an interview effective. The physical surroundings are also important. They should present a pleasant and relaxed atmosphere. It is important at this early stage that the question of confidentiality is discussed and the contract made.

Stage 2: Identifying the Problem.

This requires a non-directive approach, using open-ended questions which allow the problem owner to explain his problem, listening and not offering advice or evaluate comments. The counsellor must remain neutral at this stage. To allow the employee to talk about topics which are highly sensitive. It is important that he be given time to think and express himself - thus silences should be allowed, and techniques for opening up the problem should be used; for example, reflecting back key phrases to elicit some further expansion of issues.

Stage 3: Exploring the conditions under which problem occurs.

By exploring the conditions under which the employee experiences the problem, the boundaries of the problem can be found. The conditions include the feelings of the problem owner. These feelings are facts. By allowing the problem owner to reveal to himself what his feelings are, he will come to accept his own part in the problem. By knowing the conditions under which the problem occurs if it is a work problem for example, changes within the job can either be made to alleviate problems thus relieving pressures for a temporary period or a subordinate encourage to use his workmates in helping to resolve the problem.

Stage 4: Discovering solutions to the problem.

Solutions to problems can only be real solutions if the employee who believes he has a problem also believes in the solution. It is most likely that he will believe in the solution if he puts it forward himself. The employee should be encouraged to look at all possible outcomes of the differing decisions he might wish to take, and the steps that would be necessary to implement them. The stress involved in each course of action should not be forgotten. The role of the welfare officer would be to get the employee to evaluate his own solution rationally.

Stage 5: Providing a fruitful conjunction between the problem owner and the expert agency.

If a problem is identified which requires expert help, it switches its focus to the problem of how to achieve a fruitful conjunction between the problem owner and the expert agency (e.g. drug addiction centres, legal aid centre, marriage guidance centre, etc.). Various kinds of supportive behaviour will assist - for example, giving time off, respecting confidentiality, accompanying a nervous employee on his first visit, etc..

OUTPUTS AND FEEDBACK

1. Advice, direction and assistance.
2. Ability and capacity to understand and resolve problem.
3. Improved behaviour and plans for the future.
4. Loyalty to organisation (this presumes increased job satisfaction).
5. Greater Self-confidence and responsibility for own action.
6. Improved morale.

The welfare officer gets a feedback of information from these outputs with which he or she can improve and adapt the system.

4.5 CONCLUSIONS.

A systems view of an organisation enables occupational welfare to be viewed as a subsystem with all the advantages as outlined in earlier chapters of this part of the thesis. This view is necessary if occupational welfare is to be considered seriously as a discipline and a profession in its own right. The significance of systems thinking for occupational welfare practice is too great to be left unexplored. Systems theory according to Schoderbeck et al (1980) [12] 'has revolutionalised management science, communications and planning; it has been responsible for the development of entire areas of study within physiology and ecology, philosophy, geography, economics, political science, sociology, psychology and psychiatry are among the disciplines directly affected'.

Occupational welfare is in fact exceptional in having failed to come to grips with a set of concepts which have now been part of the scientific thought for a generation. The reason why systems is not readily recognised as a legitimate subject is that it is different in kind from most other disciplines. Its concern is not a particular set of phenomena, as in the case with chemistry and physics, for example, neither is it, like biochemistry, a subject which has arisen at the overlapping of existing subjects. Nor is it a subject which exists because a particular problem area is recognised as important, and requires the bringing together of a number of different streams of knowledge - as do town planning or social administration, for example.

What distinguishes systems is that it is a subject which can 'talk about the other subjects or be used to discuss the other subjects'. It is therefore not a discipline to be put in the same set as other disciplines, it is a 'meta-discipline' whose subject matter can be applied within virtually any other discipline. It is on these strengths of the systems approach that occupational welfare should call for an injection of inspiration in order to illuminate its study and guide the design of its techniques.

Like most disciplines therefore, occupational welfare should have the benefit of some theoretical underpinnings upon which to depend. The systems approach provides this basis as has been explained and illustrated by the models discussed. It is from such a position and under such framework that its practitioners can apply those techniques which seem more suitable for them and their clients. The guidelines provided within such a systems view of occupational welfare ensure a systematic approach and avoid the inefficiencies and ineffectiveness of a haphazard and unorganised approach. A systems view lends practicality to occupational welfare as it permits the use of logical and realistic concepts and techniques by its practitioners.

Such concepts and techniques such as the 'wholeperson concept' and the 'employee counselling system' model discussed in earlier chapters have provided the basis for viewing employee problems both in their entirety and in a systematic manner in order to

tackle them effectively. These two models are in fact extensions of the general model of an occupational welfare system discussed Chapter 4.2.

For example, the whole person concept through its techniques, enables the human resource inputs to be analysed in relation to their everyday functions at work, in the family circle, and within the environment in order to determine their welfare needs correctly. The employee counselling system can be seen as a process sub-system of the general model and as such is also a major activity in the transformation process. Considering therefore the inter-disciplinary nature of its work and services, occupational welfare viewed as a system would play an important role as a unifying force in the solution of inter-departmental conflicts that are common organisations of all kinds.

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For references to recent extensions of Counselling techniques,

see addendum on page 235.

PART FIVE

CONCLUSIONS RELEVANT TO THE
FUTURE DEVELOPMENT AND
APPLICATION OF OCCUPATIONAL
WELFARE.

SUMMARY

Having effectively disproved the null hypothesis proposed in the first objective of this thesis, the stage is set to consider the theoretical and practical evidence relating to the second aim - 'to evaluate how far occupational welfare can contribute to the successful management of large modern telecommunications service organisations. The task therefore is to highlight firstly the important contributions occupational welfare has made and can make to the everyday management problems encountered in organisations, and secondly, those areas which are seen to make the provision of welfare services indispensable in the management of modern telecommunications service organisations and by extrapolation to other industries which are also being affected by technological change.

The discussion of the conclusions is structured as follows:

- 5.1 The basis of welfare policy in an organisation.
- 5.2 Why welfare is necessary.
- 5.3 Employee Counselling as the cornerstone of good welfare practice.
- 5.4 A wider role for welfare in industrial organisations.
- 5.5 The future development of the welfare function.
- 5.6 References.

5.1 THE BASIS OF WELFARE POLICY IN AN ORGANISATION.

Introduction

A welfare policy should ideally be a written statement of an organisation's plan of action on matters affecting the well-being of the people in the organisation. This statement like any statement on policy matters, should be in broad, long-range terms that express or stem from the philosophy or beliefs of the organisation's board of directors. It should be integrated into the broad corporate plan which in part will be affected by legislation, and should also take account of the nature of the environmental systems[1] in which the company exists. A welfare policy, should in addition be expressed in terms of the three main areas of occupational welfare activity - physical, group and personal services, and may be elaborated in the form of a number of subsidiary policies under each heading. Associated with these headings will be rules and regulations to ease the interpretation and application of policy by junior managers who rely on documentary guidance when dealing with particular kinds of problems.

Being expressed in terms of the three main areas of welfare activity such a policy must emphasise the need to provide a comprehensive welfare service system incorporating these areas in an organisation. Once this policy statement has been made in respect of the welfare function, the actions to be taken will have to be guided by what has

been laid down. The significance of this statement of policy lies in the fact that it will provide the foundation for either an effective or ineffective welfare service. Any policy adopted however, will have to be reviewed from time to time to keep it in tune with changes within and outside the organisation.

Some Welfare Policies

For supposedly confidential reasons, British Telecom refused to provide a statement of welfare policy. According to the Chief Welfare Adviser and the statements contained in the welfare department's brochure on the British Telecom Welfare Service, the organisation has somewhere a written statement of welfare policy as part of its corporate plan which commits it to take an active interest in the personal well-being as well as the efficiency of its staff. At Board level, the interests of the welfare department are represented by the Board member of personnel and corporate services[2].

By way of contrast, the Nigerian External Telecom has a mixed bag of statements of policies on welfare services. These are fully published in the staff handbook and they cover specifically the commitment by the organisation to provide canteen services, sports and recreational facilities, medical, housing and transport facilities. The misleading aspect of such statements is that they give the impression that welfare services are the same as fringe

benefits. As such they contradict the basic proposition in the definition of occupational welfare provided in Part One of this study. Also having been published in the staff handbook, employees consider them as part of the terms and conditions of employment and therefore expected as a matter of course.

At board level, the Director of Personnel represents the interests of the welfare section and the personnel department in NET. As confirmed by him in person, one of the regular personnel topics for discussion at main board meetings in NET was company staff welfare and fringe benefits provision, followed by industrial disputes and pay systems. By contrast, manpower planning and labour markets were not as frequently discussed. However personnel policies as a whole are often discussed at board level. This seems to indicate the directors' concern for the huge costs involved in acquiring, developing and retaining the human resources necessary for the success of the organisation and provides evidence in support of the significance of welfare services in the management of the organisation.

Basis for a Welfare Policy - a Paradigm Case in the U.K.

One of the main principles upon which a successful welfare policy may be based is on a 'commitment to good human relations'. Such a policy has been tried and tested and works successfully in for example, Marks and Spencer, one of Britain's most progressive and

successful department stores. The following extract from a speech by its chairman, Lord Sieff serves to illustrate the point[3]. "Good human relations develop only if top management believes in, and is committed to their implementation and has a genuine respect for the individual. This is not something to be tackled from time to time, but demands continuous action. Human relations in industry should cover the problems of the individual at work, his or her health, well-being and progress, the working environment and profit sharing. Full and frank two-way communication and respect for the contribution people can make given encouragement - these are the foundations of an effective policy and a major contribution to a successful operation'.

Fostering good human relations with employees means more than just paying good wages. Managers must be aware of and react to the problems of employees. Top management must know how good or how bad employees' working conditions and amenities are. They must eat in the employees' restaurants, see whether the food is decent and well cooked, visit the washrooms and the lavatories. If they are not good enough for those in charge, they are not food enough for anyone. Our efforts have resulted in a stable staff, ready acceptance of change, high productivity and good profits in which all share - shareholders staff, retired staff and the community. Staff morale is high and the great majority care about the progress of the business whatever their jobs'.

Commitment to Good Human Relations

The above statement summarises the essence of Marks and Spencer's approach to human relations in industry. It is on this approach that their successful welfare services are based(4). The starting point is - human relationships not material things. The implication is that welfare is above all a manifestation of a concern for the needs and well-being of the individual, and it requires that line managers, personnel managers and top management are genuinely concerned about these issues.

A welfare policy based on a commitment to good human relations such as Marks and Spencer's goes a long way to enhance the success of an organisation. Lord Sieff in his speech gives the names of major organisations some unionised, some not, who implement successfully a policy of good human relations elaborated to suit their particular circumstances. G.E.C., United Biscuits, IBM, Standard Telephones and Cable are some of the examples provided.

Three significant attributes on which a welfare policy founded on this commitment to good human relations can be based are:

1. A respect for the individual employee, in terms of the acknowledgement of his or her needs, a tolerance of his views, consideration when he is affected by change over which he has no control and a confidential treatment of his or her problem.

2. A willingness to attend promptly to problems of employees;
 - whether at work or not help should be given to employees when they are encountering difficulties and managers should be delegated with authority to act sensibly and generously in dealing with them.
3. A commitment from top management; in terms of instituting a management system that elevates human relations as a cardinal value.

Without previous experience of a good human relations environment, it is difficult for individuals to envisage what such an environment can be like. But there are at least two sources of information that may enable one to judge situations in organisations. First of all, there are the more quantifiable indicators such as the ratio of personnel and welfare staff to employees, the number and range of facilities and the aggregate costs of these. As an example, in British Telecom the ratio is one personnel and welfare staff to every 719 staff, while in NET, it is one personnel and welfare staff to 135 employees. NET has a much smaller total labour force. By comparison, Marks and Spencer maintains a ratio of one personnel staff to every 50-60 employees in the stores. The main reason for using both personnel and welfare staff is based on the inescapable fact that welfare is an integral part of the personnel department in both organisations and that personnel as well as specialist welfare staff perform the welfare functions which in total contribute to the overall well-being of employees.

In terms of range of services, those provided by British Telecom cover comprehensively the main areas of welfare activity. Even though NET does not have an instituted personal welfare service, its line managers take on the role of employee counsellor from time to time. Both organisations (as has been shown in parts two and three of the study), spend large sums of money on the welfare of their employees which not only far exceeds statutory requirements but also goes well beyond what contemporary organisations are offering their employees.

The second source, relating to the more qualitative aspects requires a different kind of validation. This can best be approached by talking and listening to employees at different levels in the hierarchy in an organisation as was done during the studies of NET and BT.

In NET, there was a feeling of general discontent with the services provided. The general pattern of feeling was something like this; that the company does not look after its employees well enough, and the employees felt they were not being treated as individuals; that they were given too few opportunities continuously to train and develop themselves; that management was not on their side but against and above them, and that they saw a big gap between what top management preached and what it practised.

In BT the employees I spoke to were generally satisfied with the services the welfare department was providing though they might

refuse to comment on how these services affected their overall feelings towards their work and the organisation as a whole.

These sources of information point to a very important observation. That good human relations entails putting people first, treating them as individuals, recognising their capacity for responsibilities, trustworthiness, self-motivation, cooperative efforts, achievement and potential for development. It means significant investment by the organisation in terms of time, effort and money. The return on the investment is intangible and will materialise only in the long run. A long term perspective to human resources development is a sine qua non for good human relations.

The practice of good human relations also necessitates radical departures from conventional organisation and job design. The organisational structure must be designed in such a way as to minimise the number of levels in the hierarchy, facilitate face to face interaction and frank and two-way communication among different organisational levels, ensure the maximum horizontal cross-fertilization and integration, and make possible the effective direction and coordination of the diverse functions and activities in the organisation. In terms of job design the starting point is again the human element. Jobs are to be designed to fit people, not the other way round and this entails explicit consideration of the employee's intellectual and motor capabilities in work and workplace design as to make for a more human work environment compatible with personal needs and aspirations.

5.2 WHY WELFARE IS NECESSARY

Introduction

Few people would deny that an employer should take an interest in the welfare of his work people, but they may not accept that the most effective way of expressing this interest is by providing a comprehensive welfare service. What many people find difficult is to be able to justify the provision of a welfare service for humanitarian reasons and on the economic grounds which a business organisation must consider. A growing number of employers such as NET and BT are coming to accept, however, that the cost of such a service is fully justified by its effect upon productivity and morale alone, quite apart from any other considerations. They appreciate that employees who have serious problems inevitably adversely affect the well-being of the organisation in which they are employed, notably in the areas of productivity and morale. Conversely, the evidence of genuine interest by an employer can and almost invariably does lead to improved rates of sickness, absenteeism and turnover, as well as productivity.

Apart from humanitarian and economic reasons, evidence from the study of NET and BT and existing literature on welfare has shown that there are many more reasons why employers provide welfare services. These reasons are now discussed.

Two Schools of Thought

There appear to be two principal schools of thought concerning the provision of so wide a service such as welfare for employees. One school maintains that an employer should only provide what is required by law and not interfere or impinge on an employee's private life, while the second school believes that any assistance it can give with an employee's personal problems will help to make him a more efficient and satisfactory worker. Both strands of opinion were evident in WET and BT.

Arguments against welfare provision

The most common argument used against welfare is that welfare is synonymous with paternalism. It is perhaps unfortunate that in a modern technological age such as we now live in where the significance in industry of democratic principles is highly appreciated, an organisation can be accused of being paternalistic when looking after the well-being of its employees. Paternalism, according to Northcott[5], is a benevolent regard for human well-being which is based on three main principles.

The first principle is based in turn on the notion that, that which is given to employees may clearly be withheld or allowed only on conditions laid down by the giver.

The second principle is based on the concept that the employer shall assert his indisputable right to manage things in his own way in what he regards as his own business.

The third principle is based on the understanding that the employer shall expect both gratitude and acceptance of his own views and prejudices from his employees. Considering the strength of Trade Union activities, industrial competition and legislative enactments for the protection and regulation of employer-employee relations, it is difficult to envisage full-blown paternalism in modern day organisations. Paternalism is clearly out of date and it is therefore highly misleading to use it as a means of criticising welfare provisions.

Other criticisms of welfare are that the existence of the Welfare State absolves employers from responsibility for the welfare of their employees, and also it is selfish to maintain large playing fields and erect huge sports pavilions if they are going to be used by a minute proportion of staff for a very limited period of time - the space and facilities could be better used by the community.

Both criticisms can be effectively contained by examining the accessibility of the welfare state services in both the U.K. and Nigeria. Theoretically even though state welfare services are available to all in the U.K., in practice it is only those who can take the time to find their way round it that can use it for the

resolution of their problems. In addition very many employees are likely to be unaware of what it can provide and how these can help them. Moreover they may also be reluctant to absent themselves from work in order to find out. In Nigeria the welfare state system is non-existent and the social services provided by the state are often inadequate, as a result, companies accept general responsibilities for the welfare of their employees and their families as discussed in chapter 3.1 and 3.2.

In many organisations in both countries, the increasing interdependence of the company and local community as seen in the framework of national development programmes and the shift in industrial expansion from the individual large enterprise of the mine and plantations to modern sector manufacturing in large towns has very much changed the relationship of the employer to the employee, and to the wider community and government. This has helped to bring about a shift from independent employer actions to a greater cooperation and collaboration as far as the provision of various welfare services are concerned. For example, most BT restaurants are open to use by the public and even their Welfare Training Centre accepts as trainees, employees from other organisations in the community. Similarly, NET shares its sports and recreational facilities with the local community.

Arguments in favour of Welfare provision

The strongest philosophy on which most arguments in favour of welfare at work are based is one which sees industry as having a

social responsibility for people who work in them, i.e. as one part of what the worker is entitled to as a function of his work output. Its contention is that because an employee spends most of his active life in the work situation, he is entitled to something more than his pay, statutory fringe benefits, health and safety systems. This philosophy was well put by Martin(1967) when he wrote: 'Staff spend at least half their waking time at work or in getting to it or leaving it. They know they contribute to the organisation when they are reasonably free from worry, and they feel, perhaps inarticulate, that when they are in trouble they are due to get something back from the organisation. People are entitled to be treated as full human beings with personal needs, hopes and anxieties; they are employed as people, they bring themselves to work, not just their hands and they cannot readily leave their troubles at home(6)'.

The position of workers in the U.K. and similar countries with well developed state welfare systems, but also with high unemployment has put more pressure on statutory social services because it is those who are economically inactive who become the clients of the social services(7). In such a climate, occupational welfare is to be valued in its own right because statutory social services find it increasingly difficult to offer help to employed people for whom they have no statutory responsibility. Without welfare at work, the employee and dependents facing difficulties may well have nowhere to turn.

Logically, it would be expected that the relative absence of labour shortages in a recession would lead to a decline in the provision of welfare services. Such evidence as there is suggests that this may not be occurring. With technological change, more of an organisation's resources tend to be invested in plant and machinery. Hence payments to employees become a lesser proportion of overall operating costs, and so the provision of for example, welfare services or other benefits becomes a relatively smaller investment. As the ratio of capital invested per employee increases, management may become more aware of the need for employees to be fully effective, and one way of ensuring this is to invest seriously in their welfare.

Some organisations provide welfare services because they wish to be seen as the kind of employer who considers seriously the welfare needs of their employees. For example, the Trustee Savings Bank advertising for a Personal Services Officer to administer welfare activities included the following relevant statement in the advertisement; 'The Bank is particularly aware of the need for a welfare service for all members of its staff and the department provides a confidential counselling service in addition to regularly making more routine visits to the Bank's 228 branches'(8). Closely allied to this desire, is the wish of most organisations to attract the best possible workers to their payroll. Generous welfare services are thought to attract high-calibre employees to an organisation and also help retain them. This latent function of welfare is very well

recognised in NET. Most of the staff are aware and envious of the different services provided in contemporary organisations which are not available in their company. Even NET's managers believe the organisation ought to have been persuaded to provide some of the welfare services available in other organisations.

No matter what motives employers have for providing welfare services, they will always be disputed. On the basis of the NET and BT studies, most employees will always be compelled to look after the well-being of their staff for both humanitarian and economic reasons. Furthermore the development of a personal welfare service can ensure that employee's productive capacity is not handicapped by personal problems.

5.3 EMPLOYEE COUNSELLING AS THE CORNERSTONE OF GOOD WELFARE PRACTICE.

The Significance of Employee Counselling

Employee counselling has always been a basic welfare task in industrial organisations in the U.K. ever since the first Industrial Welfare Worker was appointed in 1896[9]. Although a survey carried out by the British Institute of Management in 1971 suggested that only 5 percent of firms in the U.K. offered personal counselling services[10]. A more recent study by Stewart(1983)[11], testified to its growing importance in industry when over a two year period from 1980 to 1982, it found that two-thirds of advertisements for personnel management positions mentioned counselling as part of the job. He concluded on the basis of this evidence that the dominance of counselling suggests it is the core of the welfare task. Even though this form of counselling has not been institutionalised in industrial organisations in Nigeria, my research confirms that it is carried out unprofessionally and informally by both line and personnel managers.

The case for introducing an employee counselling programme to deal with the personal problems of employees is supported by examples of figures demonstrating the extent to which personal and psychological problems impinge on an organisation in the U.K. In 1979, it was estimated that forty million working days were lost through minor mental illness such as depression and anxiety[16]. This compares

with ten million in industrial disputes and twenty-three million in industrial injury and disease. It may be argued that the forty million may have increased with the concern for personal job security endemic in the current economic climate.

Also it has been shown that at any particular time, up to 20 per cent of a company's work force will have a problem which is likely to affect their performance; perhaps an accident at home with a child, an argument with a colleague or a sudden increase in household expenditure. Some 8 per cent of employees will be experiencing something more major, for example an impending court case, a divorce or the death of a partner [12].

Given the impact which personal problems of employees can have on organisational effectiveness, it seems foolish for an organisation not to invest on a counselling programme as a means of combating the personal problems that could affect the effectiveness of an employee.

One method of integrating counselling into the workplace was suggested by Payne and Arroba (1979) [19], who among their conclusions in a study of what managers do about illnesses among their subordinates, stated that; 'perhaps responsibility for good health and the reduction of a stressful environment needs to be formally built into the managerial job specification so that a manager is judged on criteria relevant to them as well as on more conventional achievement criteria'.

Summary of potential benefits

If employee personal problems are tackled through an effective counselling programme, the welfare service may substantiate its credibility in the company by providing the following benefits:

1. A reduction in absenteeism,
2. An improvement in the quality of work,
3. A reduction in productive wastage,
4. A reduced number of workplace accidents,
5. An improvement in human relations and level of morale,
6. Reduced early retirement,
7. Reduced labour turnover,
8. Improved individual abilities in decision making and problem solving.

Within a department, employee counselling forms the nucleus of a welfare officer's job. His counselling role makes it possible to describe him as an agent of change, while not divulging confidences, the welfare officer in some cases may be able to use the information gained during counselling to encourage changes in problem areas for the better. Essentially, counselling needs to be seen as a positive agency, it facilitates change, particularly change determined by the individual for the individual, and since decisions through counselling are self-determined they are more likely to persist.

Trained employees are valuable and represent an asset which should be protected in the same way as plant and machinery are maintained through service contracts. Counselling would perform this role for the human assets of an organisation.

5.4 A WIDER ROLE FOR WELFARE IN ORGANISATIONS

Introduction

The systems analysis of welfare discussed in part four emphasises very clearly, the inter-departmental nature of the welfare task and its central coordinating function in helping to engineer all parts of the organisation towards the successful achievement of corporate goals. In this direction, the welfare department shares an organic relationship with other departments, the significance of which lies in the performance of its crucial role which is to promote and preserve the well-being of active and retired employees and their families.

It is the significant probability that this role will help bring about the achievement of organisational effectiveness which calls for the adoption of a broad approach to the concept of occupational welfare. This approach would encompass the recognition of various forms of relationships with the external and internal environments of the welfare department as enunciated in chapter 4.1. A broad or systemic view of this kind will involve welfare in having to play an integrating function both within an organisation and between it and its public.

Quite apart from this major role of welfare there are other roles which relate to its function in the problems presented by industrialisation, such as the allocation of responsibility for the

private and public costs resulting from the involvement of the employee and his family in the industrial process, the bearing of the real cost by the community of occupational welfare and more importantly, of the occupational 'dis-welfare' which is not avoided or at least compensated. There appears to be considerable opportunity for the employer to shift the cost of occupational welfare provision to the community at large but this appears to be neglected or to receive no attention. Furthermore, because of their lack of attention to the social costs, it seems clear that the employee and his or her family bear many of the unseen social costs of the industrial process. These costs are greater in countries such as Nigeria where the basic infrastructure of social services and social security is lacking or inadequate.

Occupational welfare for all workers in developing nations.

Many programmes of occupational welfare distract attention from the wider structural problems facing the majority of the less developed countries like Nigeria. For example, a concentration on canteen provisions may not be the most appropriate way to feed employees in view of the very serious malnutrition problems facing the larger numbers outside the labour force. This is even by economic criteria alone being short-sighted. The failure to provide now adequate nutrition for children, limits their productivity as workers later. Similarly, housing for employees does not necessarily indicate good homes for families. It may help an employer to maintain his labour

force in the short-term, but in the long-term it may serve to exacerbate the social problems of a community. In addition, the provision of services for employees in the larger and more technologically advanced firms would only increase or at least perpetuate, the inequalities between workers in different industrial sectors and help to add to the status of those modern industrial workers who form a new industrial 'elite' in a developing country with a standard of living often well above the poverty of the rest.

By contrast, a programme of occupational welfare that reaches all employees may well help to diminish inequality and promote greater opportunities for voluntary mobility. This can effectively be based on the following criteria which will be discussed in the following pages:

1. A total identification of the needs of the employee, his family and community,
2. A preparedness to share the social costs arising from the industrial process and development,
3. A recognition by industry of its social responsibility, and
4. An acceptance by Government of a much heavier community responsibility.

The needs of the employee, his family and community.

The needs of these people may be presented along two dimensions - participation in social growth and compensation for social costs.

In both Nigeria and the U.K., employees may need the benefits of welfare, not as increments to their standard of living but as partial compensation for dis-services, for social costs and social insecurities which are the product of a rapidly changing industrial - urban society(14). For example in a newly industrialising country like Nigeria, the rate and extent of change may be considerable, especially for certain groups. Many will experience within short periods of time, shifts of home and employment with little guarantee of a more permanent security. Their economic and political power, their social honour may remain at least uncertain, at worst they may lose all material belongings, together with any sense of psychological belonging. At the same time, access to welfare services may help to put education, health and social security more within the reach of the ordinary or less privileged group. Their standard of living may be lifted by the development of the community with social and economic growth.

The concept of social cost as part of the price we pay to some people for bearing part of the costs of other people's progress(15), seems particularly useful for considering the social effects of the industrial process and on a wider scale industrialisation - the adjustments to technological change, the shifts of population, the dislocation of established communities and the exchange of rural poverty for urban uncertainty.

The needs of the employee may be seen on the one hand as an intrinsic part of the industrial process but they will be affected by the stage of industrialisation the country has reached and the speed and way it has arrived at this level of economic development.

Programmes of economic and industrial development should therefore clearly be directed to pay more attention to the total needs of employees and their families. Unfortunately, failure to take the needs of these groups into account may often remain concealed while disservices are borne quietly and privately. Very little attention has been paid to the social needs of workers as revealed by the study of NET and BT. Also there is little in the literature to evaluate the costs the worker and his family have to bear. The failure to obtain adequate feedback on the working of services is felt first and hardest by those whom the agencies serve or are intended to serve. The important role of research as part of an early warning system which alerts society to unintended consequences and side-effects of the development process is clear. If the danger of an inadequate programme is not recognised in time, the impact on the community may well be irreversible.

The sharing of social costs

The fact that many of the costs of the industrial process and industrial development are borne by the employee, his family and the wider community should encourage a more rigorous consideration of

the share that industry should pay to community development and in compensation for costs borne socially.

The idea of a levy on those employers not providing a particular service, akin to the method of financing the Industrial Training Boards in the U.K. seems to have worked well in practice. It is one way of ensuring that all firms contribute to a service from which they may all with the community at large, derive some benefit. This may be one means of enabling smaller firms to share in the costs of a service for which they are unable or unwilling to make any initial investment or make any special provision. Their employees would then be entitled to make use of the services which might include not only training facilities but basic or special medical services, recreational facilities, canteen services or special transportation.

At all times however, there is the need to consider the community as a whole and not just the needs of industry and its workers. It might be worth considering a limit to some industrial welfare provision unless it were made available to all members of the community either free or at a basic cost. Firms should be required to contribute to some specific social welfare fund for the whole community and not be allowed to provide for their own workers alone those services which might be needed by all.

The social responsibility of industry

The awareness of the hidden needs of the employee, his family and community and the proposed sharing of costs calls for a new role for

industry in the welfare relationship. The objective should be for the community to involve the organisation in the general effort to promote the welfare of society and its members. The first responsibility is the improvement of the work setting, the work process and the job itself. Even though a firm may contribute to the community at large in voluntary activity and contributions or in tax payments and the wealth of its employment, if the quality of the workers' experience there is diminished by any form of exploitation, then this first and basic social responsibility will have been shirked.

Regrettably, not all organisations either in Nigeria or the U.K. will accept the importance of contributing to the welfare of the community. Also greater understanding of the nature of the social needs of individuals, families and communities has been slowly reinforcing the recognition of inter-dependence among industry and its workers and the wider society. Because of these views, two significant roles for organisations emerge. One is that of providing services within the total welfare system and the second is that of helping to plan and develop the community services. At the planning level, a main issue to be considered is that of the appropriate place, within a country's total network of social welfare services, of services administered under the direct auspices of industries or particular undertakings. A related issue is that of the nature and extent of an organisation's involvement in the planning and development of community based social welfare services.

5.5 THE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF THE WELFARE FUNCTION

Introduction

This final chapter is concerned with the future development of the welfare function. Although there are many ways of anticipating the future, the one most commonly used is to project current events and trends into a future time horizon. This differs somewhat from a forecast or prediction. A forecast often implies some prophecy not necessarily extrapolated from the present. Projections, however, are safer since their underlying assumptions are rooted in the present and one can keep certain elements constant while allowing other elements to evolve in a prescribed manner, usually a continuation of a current trend.

The aim here therefore is not to attempt to forecast future events or to outline the developments that are likely to come about; rather it is to discuss the manner in which future events or changes will affect the role of occupational welfare in the management of organisations. Some of the fundamental variables more likely to influence welfare policies (most of which have been referred to in earlier chapters) are discussed in the following pages.

The Changing Nature of British and Nigerian Societies.

In recent years people in Nigeria and the U.K. have experienced and are continuing to experience rapid changes in major aspects of their lives. Much of this upheaval has an impact directly or indirectly on

occupational welfare provision. The changes may be classified as political, economic, technological and social. They are seldom discrete but rather interact one with another.

Political changes are mostly manifested in the ways existing governments deal with matters affecting or relating to the welfare of employees. Successive governments that have ruled Nigeria over the last fifteen years have done very little to improve the provision of social services in the country. For example, in almost all the major cities where industries are located, it is almost impossible for employees to be able to afford decent housing transport to work, basic education and medical care for their families and dependants without the help of their employers. With inflation running at well over 100 per cent, it has become almost impossible for even highly paid executives to afford basic necessities. This state of affairs has involved almost every organisation that is interested in the well-being of its employees in the provision of all sorts of welfare services.

Similarly in the U.K., the continued cuts in public spending by the government over the last eight years and the following high unemployment have stretched the availability of social services almost beyond the reach of people who are employed; as a result, welfare at work has become the only hope for employees who have no place in state provided services.

Another source of political change can be manifested in the type and frequency of legislation affecting employee welfare provision. For example, when various legislations are passed in favour of certain aspects of welfare, they have the effect of making what used to be regarded as welfare services into employee benefits whose provision then either becomes compulsory or negotiable as terms and conditions of service. One good result of this kind of legislative intrusion is that it can tempt progressive employers into discovering new ways of expressing their concern for the well-being of their employees. An example of current trends in organisations in both countries is the fact that the provision of certain group welfare services such as canteen, sports and club facilities are now either being made compulsory by legislation or quoted as employee benefits in the terms and conditions of employment. As such, employers are now shifting their areas of provision of services from group welfare into personal welfare services.

The impact of economic changes on welfare service provision is most noticeable when there is a depression or boom in an economy. A continued high rate of unemployment has the effect of stretching the demand for social welfare services as discussed earlier and as a result, puts them beyond the reach of the economically active members of the population. The position of employees in Nigeria under a climate of high unemployment is much worse because of

inadequate state provided social welfare services. Under such conditions, organisations will always have to provide welfare services if the welfare of their employees is to be assured. The oil boom in Nigeria during the period 1970 to 1980, brought an unprecedented growth in the economy. The availability of so much liquid resources then tempted many organisations into providing personnel and welfare policies unrelated to personnel work practices. For example, the salaries of some workers doubled during that period, and the concerns of most employees in the country became, less work, longer breaks, approved casual leave or time-offs, the next annual leave, on-coming public holidays, etc., all these to be enjoyed with frequent salary increases, attractive allowances, accelerated promotions and benefits and bonuses. The dislike for work increased at the same time as preference for better conditions of service. Nigerian organisations only managed to accommodate these contradictions until breaking point when the oil boom disappeared(16).

With improved technology and automation, particularly in the telecommunications service organisations, large amounts of money are expended on training employees to acquire skills necessary for operating machines. It is unreasonable after such expenditure on training not to look after the well-being of such employees if only to encourage him or her to stay with the organisation. The provision of training in itself is part of looking after the welfare of

employees on the job and it is useful for promoting good morale and efficiency. High investments in technology should mean high expenditure on employee welfare because labour costs will be low. Technology, therefore, would affect welfare provision by bringing about changes in the relationship between employees and their methods of work and the awareness for higher safety measures and training on the job.

Perhaps the most significant of all for occupational welfare are social changes. These are changes in attitudes, values and beliefs which the majority of people hold in common and in social and economic institutions such as marriage, schools, business and governments. Among the social changes which the U.K. and Nigeria are experiencing and which have a direct effect on welfare provision are the demand for a shorter working week and flexible working hours, and an increase in sizes of family of employees wishing to qualify for some more welfare services.

Like holiday entitlements, the move towards an increase in leisure through a reduction in the working week has continued throughout this century. A thirty-nine hour week is at present the norm for wage-earners, while salaried staff are more commonly contracted to work 37½ or 35 hours per week in both countries. The pressures continue for a general reduction to 35 hours, without loss of financial reward. The likely effect on welfare of a shorter working

week is for an increased use of both company and state provided recreational, club and sports facilities. Similarly, with flexible working hours, employees have more time to attend to personal business - visits to solicitors, dentists etc., without disrupting their work. Flexible working hours effectively abolishes bad time-keeping if properly adhered to. It allows employees to control the pattern of their own lives, gearing their working arrangements round taking the children to school or getting home in time to cook a meal.

It seems evident that occupational welfare specialists will need to concern themselves increasingly with monitoring political, economic, social and technological changes and with preparing new welfare policies and modifications to existing welfare policies and modifications to existing policies if their task to look after the well-being of their employees is to contribute to the success of the organisation.

A new structural approach to welfare provision

In both Nigeria and the U.K., there is a clear intention among organisations to move away from the old or traditional paternalistic employers' approach to welfare towards what may be described as 'modern welfare management', involving a concern by an organisation for the personal problems of employees. Although this new trend

currently appears more in intention than practice among organisations in Nigeria, and it is particularly limited to the more modern industries in the U.K., it does seem likely that the trend will persist.

This shift in focus reflects an increasing awareness of the need for a more structural approach to the problems of people at work. There appears to be increasing acknowledgement that the basic relationship between an employee and employer and the position of the employee in society is much more important in determining the behaviour of the employee than particular aspects of welfare provision such as canteens or rest rooms. There is need for more attention to employee counselling as the basic tool for providing assistance in the area of personal problems, as well as an understanding of the psychological human nature, and the conditions that determine work-relationships. Within such a setting occupational welfare provision in its modern sense has an important role to play in fostering the successful management of organisations.

The significance of the systems approach

While the practising personnel and welfare specialist has for a long time been able if he so desired to make use of many of the theories and practical techniques of the behavioural scientist, it seems that until the late 1950's, he was unduly influenced by

an excessive concentration on the human relations philosophy, developed from the Hawthorne experiments conducted by Elton Mayo in the 1920's in America. The adherents of the human relations movement seemed to regard the social and psychological situation of people at work as being more important than the technical and physical aspects of work. At that time in America and the U.K., this was a welcome change from the extreme emphasis on the technical aspects of business and the view that people were simply an accessory to production, which epitomised much of the thinking of the followers of the scientific management principles school.

In recent years, however, there has been a shift towards the view that the best results are more likely to come from viewing organisations as systems as described in part four of this study. The welfare of employees is clearly an integral aspect of an organisational system. The methods of work used in an organisation and the accompanying welfare policies and procedures need to be integrated with the task and technological demands and constraints and opportunities created by the external economic, political and social environment. It is against this background that the behavioural scientists, particularly industrial sociologists and occupational psychologists are now providing important knowledge about people at work, some of which have been referred to in this study.

Both personnel and welfare specialists will need to keep themselves informed of developing concepts, insights, theories and validated search findings of the behavioural sciences if they are to do their jobs effectively. In particular, developments in the application of systems concepts can help their understanding of employee counselling and how to approach the provision of a personal welfare service which is now the heart of a good occupational welfare system.

'Welfare Management' instead of 'Personnel Management'

According to Tyson and Fell (1986) (17), the major recession which has affected Western Europe and the U.S.A. since the late 1970's has produced new difficulties for personnel management. In their view there are twin crises affecting the profession - one external and the other internal. Internally, there is a crisis in confidence among personnel managers themselves, which is related to the external crisis over their credibility among their managerial colleagues. They argue that evidence of this newfound uncertainty can be discovered in the pages of management journals, where articles seeking to justify the relevance of specialist personnel management work have become increasingly common. Also year on year increases in membership of the Institute of Personnel Management (IPM) were 14 percent in 1968 and 1969, rising to 15 percent in 1970, and 16 percent in 1971. The rate of increase then steadied to around 5

percent per annum until 1977, when membership fell to 18,106 from 18,554 in 1976. Membership of the Institute in 1984 was 23,332. This includes 5000, students and 3,400 affiliates.

Membership had only grown by 1,500 people in the previous four years. The 1982 report of the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) confirms this trend when it stated that 'the decline in the numbers and in the influence of personnel managers has gone a little beyond what might simply have been expected from the impact of the recession, and reversed a trend that had been a notable feature of industrial relations in the previous decade'.

Apart from these difficulties there are various other criticisms of the role of the personnel management function in organisations. For example, Northcott (1960) and Martin (1967) (18) agree with the views of purists by arguing that the personnel manager does not manage personnel and that it is the line manager who manages personnel. What personnel managers do in essence is performing an enabling function, where other functional managers see their role as providing a service to managers and departments. This view no doubt increases their difficulty in justifying their contribution to an organisation's efficiency and success.

Given these arguments, one might well agree with Tyson's proposal (19) that welfare is what personnel management is all about.

With the increasing popularity of welfare and employee counselling work as revealed in Stewart's study[20]. It would be right to speculate on the possibility of personnel management undergoing another change of name in the near future to reflect more the role it performs in organisations. Already, there are different job titles in existence which aim to epitomise the actual function being performed. For example, titles such as 'Human Resource Manager, Compensation Adviser and Welfare Services Manager are being used.

Occupational welfare management in the main, can be viewed as a system wherein all activities are designed in a unified, interlocking manner, not a series of unrelated events. Its suitability to displace personnel management can then be envisaged from the emphasis such a system will put on the potential value and productive contribution of the employee; its concern with the totality of the organisation and its focus on the achievement of the symbiosis which is seen to exist between an organisation and its goals and an effective use of the human resources, the organisation needs to achieve its goals.

Contribution of Occupational Welfare to Human Resources Management.

According to Tyson(1986)'Human Resources Management is concerned about the motivation and development of the individual employee and the performance and productivity of the organisation. What ties human resources management together is a belief in the potential value and productive contribution of the employee'.

Occupational Welfare Service provision in the main is predicated on the understanding that it will improve job satisfaction and morale and hence make the individual employee more efficient and productive. Its role in relation to human resources management is contained in its central substance - 'a concern for the well-being' of the individual at work. This it achieves through the provision of Group and Personal Welfare Services which unintentionally induce a reciprocal sense of obligation in the employee in response to the company's welfare actions.

It is this concern for the well-being of the employee as the most important asset of the organisation that secures it a place in human resources management. Occupational welfare sees a gap existing between an organisation, its goals and human resources, and directs efforts at achieving the symbiosis which is seen to exist between the organisation and its goals and an effective use of the human resources the organisation needs to achieve its goals. This is its strength within human resources management.

Through the studies of British Telecom and the Nigerian External Telecom, I have demonstrated the significance of welfare services in the management of organisations. They are necessary in the effective performance of the functions of acquiring, developing and retraining human resources.

The systems and sub-systems models of occupational welfare developed are useful in helping to find solutions to the human resources management problems confronting organisations. For example, the

'counselling model' presents a systematic step by step way of conducting an effective employee counselling service whose primary aim is to provide assistance and advice that will help the employee to help him or herself.

The 'General Model of Occupational Welfare' is a tool any organisation can use to set up, develop or improve its welfare service, - (thus promoting the well-being of employees in the interest of improved morale, job satisfaction and productivity). It provides a new way of thinking about welfare provision and management.

The 'wholeperson concept model', is also a useful reminder to the over-zealous line manager (particularly when the pressures of work and responsibilities tend to take control of situations) that employees are only human and that they should constantly be seen as such'.

Thus occupational welfare provides a basis for motivating and developing employees in order to help improve performance and productivity in organisations. This is its contribution to human resources management and the platform on which it should best be seen and judged.

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APPENDIX 1.

A DESCRIPTION OF THE GENERAL FORMAT OF DISCUSSION
WITH BT EMPLOYEES

The overall aim was to discover the roles various employee cadres play in promoting employee welfare in British Telecom. As a result a cross-section of employees within the following broad categories from all the divisions of the organisation were interviewed.

- a) Line Management
- b) Technical Personnel
- c) Administrative and Clerical Personnel
- d) Trade Union Officials
- e) Operatives
- f) Medical Personnel

Each discussion covered the following areas:

1. History of employee group or department's involvement in and relationship with the welfare department.
2. Perspectives on welfare as a function dependent or independent of the Personnel Department.
3. Part played in the provision, improvement and management of welfare services. Given BT's expenditure on welfare, is this enough?
4. Attitudes towards employee counselling as a necessary aspect of the welfare function.
5. Improvements considered necessary as a user of the welfare service.
6. Perspectives on the future direction of the welfare service in BT.

C O N F I D E N T I A L

QUESTIONNAIRE USED FOR THE N.E.T. SURVEY.

A SURVEY OF EMPLOYEE WELFARE SERVICES AT
THE NIGERIA TELECOMMUNICATIONS LTD. (NITEL)

FEBRUARY 1985

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Comprising the Schools of Accounting and Finance,
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INTROOUCTION

This survey is carried out in support of a doctoral research study which investigates the scope and significance of industrial welfare in the management of large modern telecommunications service organisations.

Its aim is to identify the employee welfare policy of the Nigeria Telecommunications Ltd.(NITEL) and to evaluate the perceptions, attitudes and opinions of management and staff towards welfare services provided.

In order to achieve this aim, I would like your views on the various aspects of welfare services provided by NITEL. A five part questionnaire containing a number of statements about these services is provided in pages 3 to 8. I should be very grateful if you could spare the time to answer all the questions, but if you do not wish to comment on all aspects, please just answer those questions which interest you. Please feel free to comment on any points not directly covered. There are no right or wrong answers and this is not a test of your intelligence or ability. I am interested only in your opinions and confidentiality will be observed.

Please return the completed questionnaire to Alhaji A.R. Garuba in the Department of Administration.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION.

EMPLOYEE WELFARE EXPLAINED

Basically, employee welfare refers generally to a company's or firm's support for its staff and particularly to the free or subsidised provision of certain facilities, benefits and services. Such facilities, benefits and services range from the provision of physical amenities and fringe benefits to personal counselling on a range of problems and difficulties.

Physical amenities include the provision of cloakrooms, lavatories, accommodation and hostel facilities, canteen, sports and social clubs, safety and first-aid arrangements; while fringe benefits include items such as holidays and sick pay, medical services, pension schemes; staff training and development opportunities and housing, car and motor cycle allowances. Personal difficulties involve counselling on domestic, financial, sickness, bereavement, retirement and resignation problems.

QUESTIONNAIRE

3.
For Office
Use Only

Serial No.

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 1-3

Card No.

1

 4

PART I. PERSONAL DETAILS

Please circle or fill in any of the boxes that applies to you.

1. What is your age?

--	--

 5 - 6

 2. Are you married?

1

Single?

2

 7
Divorced

3

Widowed?

4

Number of children

--	--

 8 - 9

 3. Sex: Male

1

Female

2

 10

 4. Do you work at:
Head Office

1

Branch/State Station?

2

 11
Other?

3

Specify ' _____

 5. How long have you been with organisation?

--	--

 years 12 - 13

 6. What is the title of your job?

--	--

 14 - 15
-

PART 2: The following questions will try to determine what you think about employee welfare services in general.

1. Do you think it is necessary for NITEL to provide a comprehensive employee welfare service as explained in page 2?

Please circle one: Yes 1 16
 No 2

2. If yes, should these services be handled by:

 (a) A welfare department under a Welfare Officer? 1 17
Please circle (b) The Personnel Department 2 18
appropriate (c) By a Joint Consultative 3 19
numbers: Committee?
 (d) By some other department 4 20

Please specify

3. What range of services other than those existing at the moment would you like to see provided? Please list them.

		21 - 22
		23 - 24
		25 - 26
		27 - 28
		29 - 30

PART 3: The following questions are concerned with what you feel about some physical amenities provided for employees in general.

1. Are canteen facilities available at the NITEL location where you work?

	YES	NO	
Head Office	1	2	31
Branch/State Station	1	2	32
Other	1	2	33

2. Are these canteen services

- fully subsidised?(ie free to all staff)	1	2	34
- partly subsidised?(ie at minimum charge)	1	2	35
- limited to sale of cold snacks only?	1	2	36
- limited to machine vending only?	1	2	37
- not subsidised at all?	1	2	38

3. Are social and sports clubs provided in the NITEL location where you work?

	YES	NO	
Head Office	1	2	39
Branch/State Station	1	2	40
Other	1	2	41

4. Are these clubs

Fully subsidised?	1	2	42
Partly subsidised?	1	2	43
Not subsidised at all?	1	2	44
Open to public use?	1	2	45
Open partly to public use?	1	2	46
Limited to staff use only?	1	2	47

5. Are housing and hostel accommodation provided in the NITEL location where you work?

	YES	NO	
Head Office	1	2	48
Branch/State Station	1	2	49
Other	1	2	50

6. Is the rent

Fully subsidised?	1	2	51
Partly subsidised?	1	2	52
Not subsidised at all?	1	2	53

7. In the case of housing, should their provision be extended to the granting of loans to staff to purchase or build their own properties?

YES	NO	
1	2	54

Please comment on your answer in the space provided below.

		55 - 56
		57 - 58
		59 - 60
		61 - 62
		63 - 64

PART 4: The following questions will try to determine what you feel about counselling on personal problems.

1. Do you think that NITEL should be involved in finding solutions to the personal problems of its employees?

YES 1

NO 2

65

If yes, give reasons: .

		66 - 67
		68 - 69
		70 - 71
		72 - 73
		74 - 75

Serial No.

				1-3
--	--	--	--	-----

Card No.

		2	4
--	--	---	---

2. Below is a list of some of the personal difficulties which can be encountered by staff. How important is it to you that your organisation tries to solve these problems. Indicate by circling appropriate number.

	Extremely Important	Very Important	Impor- tant	Slightly Important	Not Import- tant	
Domestic problems	1	2	3	4	5	5
Financial problems	1	2	3	4	5	6
Sickness problems	1	2	3	4	5	7
Bereavement problems	1	2	3	4	5	8
Employment problems	1	2	3	4	5	9
Retirement/Resignation problems	1	2	3	4	5	10

3. If you do not agree that NITEL should be involved in the personal problems of its staff please give reasons:

		11 - 12
		13 - 14
		15 - 16
		17 - 18
		19 - 20

PART 5: This part of the questionnaire aims to find out your satisfaction and dissatisfaction with the following services. . Indicate by circling appropriate number.

	Very Good	Good	Neither Good nor Bad	Bad	Very Bad	
1. Cloakrooms	1	2	3	4	5	21
2. Lavatories	1	2	3	4	5	22
3. Canteen arrangements	1	2	3	4	5	23
4. Sports and Social Club	1	2	3	4	5	24
5. Accommodation and Hostel facilities	1	2	3	4	5	25
6. Holidays with pay	1	2	3	4	5	26
7. Sick pay	1	2	3	4	5	27
8. First aid facilities	1	2	3	4	5	28
9. Pension Scheme	1	2	3	4	5	29
10. Housing, Car, Motor cycle loans	1	2	3	4	5	30
11. Medical services	1	2	3	4	5	31
12. Staff training and development opportunities	1	2	3	4	5	32
13. Safety at work arrangements	1	2	3	4	5	33

APPENDIX 3.

BREAKDOWN OF RESPONSE STATISTICS OF NET SURVEY

1. Senior Managers: Managing Director, and Heads of Divisions.
(e.g. Directors and Assistant Directors).
10 respondents = 5% of sample.
2. Middle Managers: Chief, Principal and Assistant Officers: (e.g. Chief Personnel Officer, Chief Medical Officers, Chief Engineer, Principal Accountant, etc.)
30 respondents = 15% of sample.
3. Junior Managers and Supervisory Staff: Senior and Ordinary Officer levels; (e.g. Personnel Officers, Senior Medical Officers, Admin. Officers, Technical Officers, Commercial Officers, etc.)
50 respondents = 25% of sample.
4. Junior Staff: Catering Officers, Computer Operators, Drivers, Plumbers, Messenger, Receptionists, Security Officers, Clerical Officers, Technicians, etc.
109 respondents = 55% of sample.

45% of the Management Team Responded while 55% of Junior Staff.

Grand Total: Respondents: 199 = 100%

