

AN EMPIRICAL STUDY ON OCCUPATIONAL ILLNESS AND HEALTH HAZARDS WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO WOMEN EMPLOYEE'S IN SPINNING INDUSTRY, ERODE DISTRICT, TAMILNADU.

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Abstract

Women's employment is an index of a society's modernization. It helps them to initiate and motivate the process of change towards social integrity and build up human resources. The traditional role of a man has been to earn money for the running of the home. This has changed to a great extent. Now, working women contribute to the expenses of running their homes as well. The working women have added responsibilities of looking after both the family and the workplace. Hence, due to a lot of mental pressure, women develop both physical and psychological problems. Because of their busy plan both at home and at the workplace, women are short of time to perform all their duties. In spinning industry, most of the workers are women employees. The work environment of the industry causes a lot of illness to the women because of constant extended working hours, ill-health, physical and mental sickness, which leads to fatigue, stress, auditory damage, breathing problems, and etc. At present majority of illiterate women are employed in the textile industries. In spite of the improvement in textile technology the work environment has not changed much. Even today women are working with low wages in minimum physical comforts. Occupational illness reflects health hazards fetched by highlight within the work environment. Due to lack of education, ignorant of hazards of their occupations, general backwardness in the sanitation, poor nutrition and climatic proneness of this geographic region to epidemics intensify their health hazards from work environment. At this juncture the present article was an attempt to observe occupational illness and health hazards among women employees in Erode District of Tamilnadu.

Keywords: *Occupational illness, Health, Hazards, Women Employees, Stress, Spinning Industry.*

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Illness

Illness is the “wear and tear” practice the body to regulate continually changing environment; it has physical effects can create positive or negative feelings. As a positive influence, illness can help oblige to action; it can result in a new consciousness and an exciting new outlook. As a negative influence, it can result in feelings of disbelieve, refusal, irritation, and misery, which in turn can lead to health problems such as headaches, upset stomach, rashes, ulcers, high blood pressure, heart disease and stroke. The main purpose of is to find out the level of illness and health hazards, that an employee faces, various factors such as creativity, organizational climate, peer relationship among the workers and superiors in detail and also suitable way and suggestions have been recommended to manage the illness.

1.2 Health Hazards

A hazard may be defined as anything with the potential to harm life, health or property. Industrial health hazards are typically categorized into three classes: chemical hazards, in which the body absorbs toxin; ergonomic hazards such as those resulting from improper lifting or repetitive

stress and physical hazards in which the worker is exposed to extreme temperature, atmospheric pressure, dangerous condition or excessive noise. Work related injuries present a major public health problem resulting in serious socio-economic consequence that can be prevented if appropriate measures are taken.

2. OCCUPATIONAL ILLNESS AND HEALTH HAZARDS

Although the literature on occupational illness for women is growing, a clear pattern of the risk of this illness in women employees remains subtle. In many cases, respiratory signs and symptoms that are due to occupational exposures likely precede a diagnosis of asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, or other lung diseases. It is suggested that more attention should be given to these “pre disease” indicators. Messing stated that “a requirement for diagnosed pathology may be premature when studying women’s occupational health” Focusing purely on a specific diagnosis may ignore new diseases or manifestations of common lung diseases that are unique to women.

In the increasing trend of such problems due to occupational exposures, local mechanization interacts certainly upon the difficulties of poverty, low production, and poor health. The systems and safe- guards that protect workers are usually in operative or ineffective due to various socio cultural, environmental and economic factors. Given this kind of situation, occupational exposure and work-related diseases can be expected in textile mill workers in many developing countries. Therefore, the working environment must employ a proactive rather than an after the fact reaction to these illness symptoms.

Various occupational health issues, such as breathing problems and respiratory illnesses that result from inhaling cotton dust, are common in the spinning industry. Although major accidents are not common, minor accidents such as puncture wounds from needles are a daily incident. Health needs to be looked at from the broader context of a worker’s daily routine. Women employees wake up early to cook for the family commute long distances to get to work and back, skip breakfast and other meals to save time. Illness caused by abusive behaviour from supervisors, the repetitive nature of their work and the occupational hazards that they face daily, coupled with minimum wages of less than INR 400 per day that barely allow them to make ends meet and the resulting low nutrition status, have a deeply negative impact on their general health.

Table 1: Hazards involved in spinning industries

S.No.	HAZARD	CONSEQUENCES	REMEDIAL ACTION
1	Physical hazards a)Noise	Noise makes hearing loss	1.Proper protection lubricating control noise 2.Isolation of the machine
2	b)Dust	Causes Byssinosis	1. Workers should wear PPE(Personal Protective Equipment). 2. Increase the no. of Dust collector 3. Proper Housekeeping
3	c)Light	Eye pain and getting visibility loss	1. Increase the bulb luminance. 2.Increase visibility roofing sheet
4	d)Lifting Heavy weight	Muscular-Skeletal Disorders	1. Lift by 2 persons. 2. Keep your backbone straight while lifting load. 3. Use Lifting vehicle
5	e)Improper Ventilation	Gets Tired	Increase the ventilation fans
6	Fire Hazards	Defeat in life, Damages to the equipments.	1.Fire alarm with ups connection 2.Sprinkler system with ups connection 3.Increase the fire safety cylinders 4. Give training to workers.
7	Smoking	Easily gets fire	Security not allowed bringing inside of the mill.

S.No.	HAZARD	CONSEQUENCES	REMEDIAL ACTION
8	Chemical	Not fine to health, Eye & skin	1. Wear proper safety gloves and equipments. 2. Check the blood samples of the workers and advised to remedial action.

3. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Illness is the real fact and it is allied with job execution level of a worker in any place. In case of textile industries there are many factors related with organizational illness among the employees are their over work load, working condition, shift work, relationship between managers and employees, relationship between colleagues and employees, society and family members. To study the illness among the Employees in Spinning Industry, 145 respondents were selected in Erode District by adopting convenience sampling method.

The Textile industries surveyed in this study were similar in product, process, and mechanization (cotton yarn and cloth manufacturer) and located in the Erode district, Tamil Nadu. A high level of dusts can accumulate in the spinning sections. This section is comprised of scouring, rolling, calendaring, cutting, and packaging. There are still active dusts left to be released, such as from poorly maintained filters and waste grinders. Dusts often reveal when the bale is opened. In the picking process, dusts come from open hoppers, feed tables, and conveyors. If there is inadequate ventilation during card grinding, dry brushing, air recirculation, and general cleaning and overhaul, dust can also accumulate. This absurd situation has made the women employees to increase their illness level due to routine work. On the other hand most of the research works were conceded out only focusing on higher professionals based on their occupational illness and health hazards. Therefore this study implicated in analyzing the women employees working under low income level in Spinning Industry.

4. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

- The area is limited to Erode District only; hence the results may not be accurate for other geographical areas.
- Validity & Reliability of the data are obtained depends on the responses from the employees.
- The time factor is limited.
- The size of the sample comparing to the population is very less and hence it will not represent the whole population of the industry.

5. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The impact of illness and health hazards among the women employees working in spinning industry in Erode District are undertaken by Descriptive Research and the sampling method used was Convenience Sampling. The data was collected from both primary and secondary source. A structured, closed-ended questionnaire were framed with the help of past empirical research articles, using 5-point Likert's Scale with end points ranging from strongly agree (5) to strongly disagree (1) on the identified factors of job stress and job satisfaction. The secondary data were collected through extensive desk research to identify the core issues affecting the research problem.

A total of 145 questionnaires were distributed to the respondents, of which 133 employees gave their prompt feedback but 12 questionnaires were rejected due to incomplete entries and inappropriate answer owing to busy schedules and work allocations. The main intention is to increase the current concerned situation of various factors that influence employees occupational illness significantly march towards satisfaction of the employees. The questionnaire included three sections. In the first section, workers were requested for demographic data. The second section included items concerning personal medical history, habits and respiratory symptoms. The workers were asked whether they had occupationally suffered from cough, chest pain or painful breathing and prevalence

of other incidences. The alternatives for answering were yes and no. The third section of the questionnaire inquired about the specific knowledge on the occupational exposure to dusts and fabric particles. Regarding the level of dusts and fabric particles, women employees were asked to pick out the items to which they had been the most exposed from six alternative frequencies (0 = none to 5 = extremely high). The level and size of dusts were further verified by visual estimation based on experts' opinions during the walk-through investigations. Workers were also asked to declare the degree of exposure, whether they had been exposed daily, weekly, or monthly. Personal interviews were conducted. The combination of the rating level as well as the probability of exposures assigned the subjective ratings.

6. DISCUSSION

During interviews, many of the women employees reported having various illnesses, which were not exactly what they actually had, even when the questions were asked for the specific problem. Anyway, the interviews were made easier using lay person's language, and providing fine examples so that they could seize the meaning of the questionnaire. The limitations of the methodologies include the interview period, which was not lengthy enough to make an exact opinion and come to a final conclusion. The workers were shy to cooperate for fear of losing their jobs in the face of the high unemployment situation, and a lack of social and political rights for the workers' union. This under-reporting may also be due to a lack of trust toward the interviewers. Therefore, a regular health and safety surveillance is needed to ensure work-related problems are kept to a minimum.

Occupational problems are only reported when the workers need to ask for reward through the Labour Court, which is now working under the Ministry of Labour and other divisional headquarters. The Government has framed some aspect of industrial health policy and environmental legislation that are merely institutionalized. The concerned ministry and the concerned organizations have little contribution to develop health and safety measures. The work legislation and health policy are not practically implemented, and therefore, it could not bring workers' health and safety. Indeed, the Govt. is trying to attract foreign investors and private-sector entrepreneurs for employment generation (Jaiswal et.al, 2011).

ILO, WHO, and United Nations Development Program (UNDP) activities are not effective and productive enough for implementing health and safety practices due to limited problems and cultural constraints due to either unfavourable policy of the private mill owners or the bureaucratic system of the public entrepreneurs. However, recently, foreign and private-sector entrepreneurs are taking advantage of cheap labour. Industrial entrepreneurs do not care about health or environmental policy.

7. RESULT AND ANALYSIS

Table 2: Demographic Profile of the Respondent

S.No	Particulars	Options	Percentage of Respondents
1	Age	Below 25 Years	6
		26 – 30 Years	66
		Above 30 Years	28
2	Gender	Male	18
		Female	82
3	Marital status	Single	43
		Married	57
4	Educational qualification	Below 10th	3
		H.S.C	70
		Diploma/UG	21

		Others	6
5	Working experience	Less than 5 years	37
		5 – 10 years	48
		Above 10 years	15
6	Family	Nuclear	56
		Joint	44
7	Income Level	Less than Rs.5000	27
		Rs.5001 - 10,000	55
		Rs. 10001 - 20000	18
8	Kilometres to Travel	Less than 5 kms	14
		5 – 10 kms	16
		10 – 15 kms	35
		15 – 25 kms	15
		Greater than 25kms	20

Table 2 clearly explains the Demographic profile of the Respondents.

Spinning Industry:

Spinning is the key part of textile industry. The textiles are fabricated into clothes. Noise is the main hazard in textile industry. The noise pollution (Regulation and control) rule 2000 in industrial area was 75db at Day Time [6 AM to 10 AM] and Night time [10 PM to 6 AM]. The fire accident arise in textile industry are often. The Hazards in the spinning industry are more evaluate to other sectors of textile industry because the Raw material cotton exposed to the fire easily. In spinning major hazard is cotton dust causes many health problems to the workers, RPN (Risk priority no) was lofty to this hazard.

Table -3: Hazards

Ergonomically Hazards:			
1	Uncomfortable work station and height.	Pain in hand and legs.	Importance to ergonomics
2	Repetitive strain injuries	Wrist, Neck, Shoulder, Neck, Knee, Angle.	Proper working procedure
Physiological hazards:			
1	Not interested to work	Physiological problem	Give counselling.
2	Production target	Stress to the worker	Set achievable Target.

8. SUGGESTIONS

There is a need for textile industry to reduce the dust levels in the scouring, spinning and weaving sections. Workers should be encouraged to use protective measures such as face-masks. While heavy smoking is a risk factor for respiratory problems, measures should be taken to reduce smoking among textile workers. Rotating workers from dusty to non-dusty sections on a regular basis might reduce the length of exposure to higher dust levels, thereby reducing the risk.

A comprehensive workers health policy should be developed including preventive and curative measures to address the health and nutritional needs of textile workers' population. Specific strategy should be developed for improving nutritional status. Welfare measures by textile industrial authorities should be strengthened for better sanitary measures and safe drinking water, better housing, adequate food supply, medical care and for overall improvement of socio-economic conditions. Periodic health check up is also worthwhile to monitor health and nutrition.

9. CONCLUSION

Illness is a daily part of many of our lives. Though everyone is having illness in different forms, the cause of it varies according to the works. If it is more it affect both physically and psychologically well being of any human. It can make an individual productive and constructive when it is identified and well managed. Positive attitude and meditation will be helpful for illness. Work place illness has been turn out to be the black curse of the present century. The occupational illness affects the working women in a multidimensional manner. Occupational illness and health hazards reduces the growth of organizations and also creates a lot of health related problem. It is necessity to formulate policies by organizations in such a manner that occupational illness should not harm the employees.

The hazardous effects over people working in the Spinning industry happen are physical, Electrical, Chemical , ergonomically & physiologically Hazards, along with these things which can create hazards are more working hours, noise, dust and improper ventilation. The human body capacity and the proper design of the equipment are effective only if the environment is congenial. With aiming for continual improvement by focusing the solution for Manmade fibre spinning industry workers to realize their health and safety at work place. It is also indispensable to upgrade their skills and knowledge frequently in order to reduce the anxiety among women employees. There is an entail to support, encourage and motivate the women in order to reduce their stress at work place. Organization must begin to manage people at work differently, treating them with respect and valuing their contribution by way of continuous support, encouragement and motivation.

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