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## Workplace Safety and Health Policies: A Qualitative Study in The Context of Telangana State

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### Abstract

The core area of this paper is to know and understand the safety issues of the people working in an organization (Radhika, 2020). The aspect of safety directly affects our health and routine. Organizations today are very dynamic and continuously change their policies based on the requirements of people. Workplace safety is one of the sectors which should be concentrated in every organization. This study can help to remove some of the unfair practices as well as add some new policies to the organization's culture. It is a fact that, when employees feel safe and comfortable, then there can be more productivity and the duties can be performed in a perfectly organized manner. So, in the organization, if the employees feel difficulty, it is necessary to take measures for their safety. Safety measures depend on how large the company is, and the nature and type of business it operates. With proper and respectful communication, people will feel happy and there will be zeal to work harder. Therefore, safety policies should be implemented and monitored on regular basis. The goal of these policies should be to eliminate the hazardous elements which disturb the peaceful working culture of the company and help it in its development as well as in growth. Overall, it should create a positive and safe atmosphere for all individuals. Individual personalities are also analyzed as their perception of the respective company (Clarke and Robertson (2005, 371)).

### 1. Introduction

Human resources professionals are required to

perform the crucial task of taking responsibility for the well-being of the employees. One of the important roles of the

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human resource manager is to combine the various policies and strategies of the organization for the goodwill of the company. Safety means freedom or being free from any dangers and hazards (Antonsen, T. K. (2009)). In addition, results indicated that HR practices, specifically structural training, and development and retention-oriented compensation, were related to various measures of firm performance (Gottfredson et al., (2005)). Physiological and psychological factors are considered while thinking about the safety of employees. Moreover, human resource management has to make sure that the higher-level management is aware of the importance and situation in which the workers are putting efforts for being successful (Lincy, 2017). This does not have to end only with larger organizations because these safety policies will benefit all sorts of small and middle-sized firms and organizations.

The clear idea of workplace safety is the prevention of accidents, disturbances, and hazards in the workplace of employees (Subbiah, Krishanna moorthy, Rahim basha, 2018). The process should reduce the losses incurred by internal along with external sources.

Workplace safety analyses and removes the risks relating to the safety, health, well-being, and personal development of the employees. Organizations regularly develop their safety standards due to several reasons like making the workers comfortable, obeying the laws, and regulatory requirements, etc.

An unhealthy workplace and illness caused by working premises lead to heavy losses, and lawsuits and could damage the image of the company. Sometimes few people commit suicide due to improper safety management, few are blackmailed, tortured and others are forced to resign. Safe work conditions create an atmosphere of a positive vibe that helps in achieving targets. Employees should be comfortable enough for effective results. The

organization should create conditions and situations which can change employees' past negative habits and create a secure and confident environment for effective and more productive work (Garcie-Herrero, S. (2012)). How employees work should neither harm them nor the company in which they stand.

## 2. Need for Health

The condition in which one is physically and mentally fit without any diversions or deviations is known as health. Moreover, the concept of employee health describes a way of people's health and solutions that should be present in the industry itself. Some elements should be taken care of such as maintenance of social well-being, physical, and mental, a factor leading to disturbances, illness, pollution, etc. The reduction in productivity and functioning due to work-based improper health in some regions results in a loss between 15-20% of GDP (Allender, Derek, Peter, 2006).

The methods applied in this policy help the individuals to understand the political illness and disturbances in the organization and to be aware. Training should be properly given to newly recruited employees so that they would recruit the next batch effectively without any mistakes.

The value of life was once again revised during the time of COVID-19. During the arrival of covid, numerous organizations became aware of employee safety, because they knew if employees are affected then they won't be able to run their companies successfully. Some of the organizations allowed work-from-home culture and some vaccinated the workers by providing sanitation, and gloves; maintaining social distancing, wearing masks, using sanitizers most of the time, etc. Breathing problems should also be considered during specific work locations such as textile or cement manufacturing companies (Jaiswal, A. Kapoor

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A.K., Kapoor S., (2011)).

### 3. Organizational duties for safety management

Research never stopped on this topic from the beginning of the industrial sector. Safety was always a part of concern in history (Grace, Rosemary, 2016). It didn't originate on its own and was developed by humans to secure them. Investigation and analysis are necessary for the workplace for the wellness of everyone (Haines, D. J. Davis, L., Rancour, P., Robinson, M., Neel-Wilson, T., & Wagner, S. (2007))

This subject should be clear to all organizations because in this present generation there are still some organizations that don't provide safety affecting the health and life of the employees. Many people's dreams are being vanished due to safety issues in their work culture, and they feel that there is nothing they could do about their fate; therefore, they take wrong steps like suicide and being depressed.

Large numbers of resignations are also done due to this problem, but the reasons are hidden. While the confused people and victims of abuse, the persons who are responsible for their failure are unknown or resign from the company by taking huge sums of money. Therefore, it's in the hands of the organization to control the unfair practices for the benefit of workers and it.

There are various methods by which an organization can assure the safety of its employees.

**Set up a safety committee:** - a committee should be present within an organization which should ensure the safety of employees, covering all areas. The committee should keep a check on the policies as well as monitor the work culture. It should be accessible to all, i.e., there shouldn't be any restrictions for anyone to talk about their grievances in the organization. The committee should treat

everyone equally, moving from CEO to the lowest level of the worker. This committee should be dynamic and shouldn't be pressurized by higher authorities. It should have the right to take the necessary actions for unfair behavior. The title of "healthy work organization" should be the final goal (DeJoy, Robert, Kyoung (2000)).

**Focus on female safety:** - The participation of females is increasing daily, and they contribute to more effective work. Some firms entirely depend upon female workers, so the safety of women in such organizations is a crucial part. Late-night shifts should not be allowed for girls. In case any girl had to do the night shift then the company should take the responsibility for her protection by providing a cab, which should have pickup details and the driver is from the working company. The company should take responsibility for dropping the girl safely. In case of ragging and harassment in the organization, the committee should take necessary and severe actions regarding the inappropriate behavior against women. The organization should work in such a manner that it should be an inspiration to other companies (Baker, G., & Green, G. M. 1991). If female workers feel secure and comfortable, then there will be more productivity and the organization can see more profits.

**Encourage physical activities:** - (7 Ways to Promote Health and Wellness within Your Employees. (2019)) numerous fun and mind-relaxing activities should be carried out within the company. There should be motivation for the people who are inactive and help them to participate in the events. The activities shouldn't be related to the organizational tasks and should be fun based. It should create interest in the employees so that they can forget all the tasks and pressure, and put their 100% into winning the activities. Challenging activities will remove all the personal and professional life tensions, engaging them in a



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stress-free atmosphere. Winning in such games will increase the feeling of winning in other areas of life also. Confidence also increases at a high rate due to such activities, and such a positive attitude can be applied to day-to-day tasks. Cheerful activities will increase the bond between the workers and indirectly contribute to the productivity of the company. People will also stay fit without exercise through regular participation.

**Fixed and flexible hours of work:** - Long work hours directly affect the health of the individual. The maximum number of working hours for any worker should be 8. Exceeding the limit will slowly drain your life and affect the body in various ways. Research has already proven that individuals who work for very long hours are more likely to suffer heart attacks and increase cardiovascular disease, and sleep time fluctuations (Jaiswal, A. (2014)). So, organizations should not pressurize the workers to work for very long hours and must follow perfect work time, providing breaks at various intervals. Not only heart attacks but also long chair hours will affect personal lifestyle. Aggression and tensions will become a part of our life, and it will be tough to remove this if not diagnosed early. The organization must have a look at the timeframes of the workers and provide flexible work hours for their employees. With the perfect time for work, people will be happy with proper health. Five-day work culture is preferred to six-day work culture. In the present generation, working from home is also a good option for peaceful work.

**Avoiding unhealthy activities in the workplace:** - As air pollution is a significant reason for the majority of deaths (Jaiswal, A. (2013)), it is a known fact that smoking will affect the lungs and can be responsible for various cancers. Therefore, it becomes important that such practices should be out from the premises. No one in the company should be allowed to smoke in an open

environment. Passive smoking also has the same effects as active smoking, so in the workplace, it should be avoided. Females are mostly victims of such actions. Awareness should be created in the organization about anti-smoking policies. Ads and posters should be displayed all around the working premises, running along with the smoke-free campaign. It will be a good sign if numerous workers participate in this program and make the event successful. Motivational and emotional quotes will be very helpful in creating powerful affect. A smoking room can be installed in the company away from working places if found necessary, but without disturbing the other sections.

**Workplace safety surroundings:** - the people in the workplace should be comfortable enough to work with each other as well as have proper communication. Good interaction makes one feel safe and happy. The committee should generate awareness about the policies and strategies to create healthy environments. Some essential activities include, whether the machinery is working well, the climatic conditions, the quantity, and quality of raw materials, proper ventilation of the workplace, availability of all the basic tools, and much more. Thus, if the above conditions are satisfied, then workers will feel more secure and there will be good productivity.

To keep employees and workers safe we should follow some rules and regulations for example wearing protective clothing, helmets, gloves, shoes, spectacles, etc., are necessary. By breaking the rule, we are putting ourselves as well as others in danger.

Having awareness of our Surroundings in the workplace, we have to check the emergency exit way, fire alarm, and also first aid kit. Moreover, when we are in a workplace with hazards in the ongoing job, one should be more careful of the premises. And it would be the best act to turn off your mobile phone so that you are not disturbed by calls or texts.

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This is more important because distraction can cause injuries.

Some proper dressing styles could avoid workplace casualties, and also helps one to stay comfortable in the work area. This means having some essential equipment will reduce the surrounding danger. Especially when we work across highly risky objects like construction sites, cement, and brisk manufacturing, we have to consider some essential rules such as: -

Unnecessary metal ornaments when working with machinery or power tools. Appropriate clothing according to the work site (avoid tight clothes).

Avoid dragging clothes on the floor and wear shoes or boots properly.

If your worksite is marked by broken equipment or hazardous materials, we have to report it to the employer, and it may help your subordinates to be safe from unknown accidents.

If the difficulties are unknown then it would be tough to create a healthy environment and the committee or organization which looks after such troubles should ensure and make everyone believe that all under the company are free to work without any physical and mental stress.

Some of the companies have very hectic night shifts; therefore, it is the responsibility of the organizations to provide additional incentives. When any new person joins as an employee, the company should provide him/her medical and life insurance on a compulsory basis. It is good to know that few organizations provide insurance to the family members of the worker. In the case of an audit in an organization, the inspection should also include a check on the safety measures and whether the employer has provided all the basic and necessary safety measures in the

working premises (Logasakthi, Rajagopal, 2013). If they are not cautious about the safety measures, then the audit department should hold a counselling session for the higher authorities.

There are situations in which workers get injured in the work area. At such times the company should take the responsibility of first aid, taking the injured to the hospital if necessary, and bearing the entire hospital fees (Health and safety guide for HRP). There should be a fun zone installed in the company so that people can engage themselves in playing virtual and outdoor games in groups for better interaction and relaxation. This is a stress-reducing method that is very beneficial. All activities should be carried out to minimize the risk and accidents in the work area (Suparna, Ajeet, 2021).

## 4. DATA SOURCES

**Primary Data:** The main source of data collected was from the employees and industrial workers. The method used was an interview, with having few questionnaires to understand their perspective about Employee Health and Safe workplace policy in their respective domains.

**Secondary Data:** Additional data was collected through past research papers (Ms. Lincy Joykutty, 2017)

**Number of responses:** 10 (5 males and 5 females)

This is completely "Descriptive research". Descriptive research contains various findings through interviews and fact-providing sources.

## 5. ANALYSIS: -

The below data is collected by interviewing 10 persons respective to their domain.

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**TABLE SHOWING THE MALES EMPLOYEES' PERSPECTIVES REGARDING THE SAFETY ATMOSPHERE IN THEIR ORGANIZATIONS**

SAFETY MEASUREMENTS	PERCENTAGE (%)
Health insurance	95%
Alert & Exit system	85%
Working hours	90%
Unhealthy activities	80%

## DESCRIPTION

From the above table, we can say that many organizations provide health insurance to keep their employees healthy. Now Alert & Exit systems (fire alarms, emergency exits) are provided for the protection of employees. It also detects a fire, which is so important in buildings/sites. So, our interview proves that a

maximum number of employees are working 8 hours a day. If they are working more hours, they suffer from health issues. For unhealthy activities, employees should avoid smoking in public areas. If they want then they can use the smoking zone area, and they cannot disturb others (making sounds/unwanted things)

**TABLE SHOWING THE FEMALES EMPLOYEES' PERSPECTIVES REGARDING THE SAFETY ATMOSPHERE IN THEIR ORGANISATIONS**

SAFETY MEASUREMENTS	PERCENTAGE (%)
Night shift (cab for females)	100%
Games zone (reduce stress)	95%
Incentives For the night shift	90%
One-to-one interaction (females' safety)	80%

## DESCRIPTION:

According to the interview, results indicate that so many companies are providing cab facilities for females on night shifts for their safety. We can say that some organizations are installing games zone for their employees to reduce stress-level and

to generate new ideas. For night shift work, they are getting more incentives as compared to other shifts. So, for female employees' safety as well as to reduce harassment cases, companies started one-to-one interaction with HR/ team leaders to inform their problems.

**TABLE SHOWING THE INDUSTRIAL WORKERS' PERSPECTIVES REGARDING THE SAFETY ATMOSPHERE IN THEIR ORGANISATIONS**

SAFETY MEASUREMENTS	PERCENTAGE (%)
Safety dress kit (helmet, jacket)	98%
Regular inspection	70%
Safety training	85%
Medical insurance/ free health checks up	90%



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## DESCRIPTION

Moving forward to industrial workers, we can say that they need safety dress kits to protect them from industrial accidents like helmets, safety jackets, and shoes should be provided. Now, some safety management teams are conducting regular inspections of materials and equipment to reduce industrial damage. From our interview process, we know that safety training is so important for industrial workers to get the awareness of workplace safety, and they could know how to protect themselves from dangers. The value shows that 90% of workers accept that they are getting medical insurance/ free health check-ups. The insight which was gained said that companies preferred worker safety more than industrial work.

## 6. Conclusion: -

The information aims in developing and maintaining the safety culture across all the corporates. This paper doesn't consider any major or minor organizations but focuses on the health of all the workers working anywhere. While one is out of the home, safety is the prime aspect of concern. History says that workplace safety is not a present concept; the pillars for this topic began in the 18<sup>th</sup> century in Europe. Coming to India, this policy started in 1948. According to this policy, it is believed that the responsibility for workers' safety was dependent on the company in the past.

Various methods should be updated from time to time in this policy as being dynamic. If one has to provide duties for subordinates then it is a must, he/she shall feel secure and safe to obey the orders and complete the task effectively. Especially women in corporate or firms should think that are safer in the workplace. Any unusual activity which disturbs the senses of the females should not be carried out in the organization. It is not only the females who are harassed, but it can also

be the males. Men can also come across tough situations through various sources, therefore stress relieving activities should be carried out, dinners and parties should be arranged surprisingly, and incentives and bonuses should be announced for hard work. When not managed, the stress can cause a variety of medical and psychological health problems (Quick, J. D., Horn, R. S., & Quick, J. C. 1986).

Separate policies related to safety and health should be present in every organization working completely for the employees' benefit because without the employees there can't be any organization. The measures taken will make the workers happy, reduce absences and stress, avoid unnecessary tension, create a friendly atmosphere, improve work culture engagement, and remove harmful activities.

The observation indicates that some smaller firms don't follow the basic rules regarding the safety and health of employees. In some companies' insurance is not provided for roles/interns. They are provided with PF. It was found that some organizations are not present in the pleasant or appropriate area. Interaction is very crucial for development, growth, and problem-solving, but the results showed that interaction was very less and poor for newly joining candidates. The interaction was limited to 1- 6 months only and later the session ended. The regular inspection was also not conducted in a few companies, and it was done on monthly basis. So, inspection should be taken care of in some firms daily or weekly because workers' safety is a higher priority than any other thing.

The remaining sections of the interview had good numbers like health insurance, night shift concerns, dress kits, game zone, etc. Altogether, the majority of the organizations are following healthy workplace safety measures (almost 90%). Every company is aware of the safety measures in this present generation. Workplace safety was from the

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beginning of the industrial revolution, with the coming centuries it kept on updating, and it should never be stable. Only a few firms and newly arising companies should know the safety policies and implement them accordingly. With such companies also concentrating on safety measures, then the atmosphere will completely become healthy and safe.

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