

Workers' Awareness of Health, Safety, and Welfare Provisions in Accordance with the Factories Act, 1948

Tanaya Wageshwari

Assistant Professor, RNB Global University, Bikaner, Rajasthan

Abstract

This study investigates the awareness of workers regarding health, safety, and welfare provisions outlined in the Factories Act, 1948. Employing an exploratory cum descriptive research design, the research focuses on lower-class employees (N=750) within the industrial sector of Northern India (Haryana, Punjab, and NCR). Primary data is collected through a questionnaire survey method. T-test and ANOVA tests are utilized to analyze the awareness levels among workers based on age, experience, gender, and marital status. The findings indicate a moderate level of awareness among workers regarding the Factories Act. Additionally, awareness tends to increase with age and experience. Female and married workers exhibit higher awareness levels compared to their male and unmarried counterparts, respectively.

Keywords: Age, Awareness, Experience, Factories Act, Gender, Marital Status, Workers.

Introduction

Government of India has passed Factories Act, 1948 to ensure a fair deal to employees and employers regarding various aspects of health and safety measures at the workplace after Independence. The regulation in working conditions was done by the state Government in India in 1881. It was the time when first Factories Act passed. Afterwards, amendments were done under this act in 1911, 1922, 1923, 1926, 1931, 1935, 1940, 1945, and in 1946. In 1947, Government of India introduced a bill, which becomes law after certain modifications on 1st April, 1948. The main objective of this act is to protect workers employed in the organization against industrial and occupational hazards. This act is applied to factories all over India included the state of Jammu and Kashmir. It provides minimum statutory welfare amenities for the workers which will improve their working conditions. It came into force on the 1st day of April, 1949.

Factories Act, 1948 was enacted to regulate the provisions of the basic minimum requirements for health, safety and welfare of the workers as well as regulating the annual leave with wages, holidays, employment of young persons and women at dangerous machines etc. Mainly health, safety and welfare facilities have been included in the study. Labour is an important constituent which plays a crucial role in the economic development of the nation. Gone are those days of ill-treatment of labour and the prosecution of the rights of labour. They should be kept satisfied to work for the organization and ultimately the nation as a whole. Hence, employers have started expanding welfare activities for their employees. If all those amenities are provided to the workers in a fair manner, then they will be motivated and do more work at the workplace. It will lead to more profitability and productivity of the organization. All the provisions under Factories Act, 1948 are very important for the workers.

Review of Literature

Upadhyaya (2006) examined awareness and implementation of statutory and non-statutory labour welfare measures in Garment and Hosiery industry falling under the jurisdiction limits of local office of the Directorate of the factories in Noida, Uttar Pradesh. The study was

confined only to the industrial units from Garment and Hosiery Industry registered under Factories Act, 1948. The awareness level of workers regarding canteen, lunch rooms, rest rooms, shelter rooms, crèche facilities was very low but high for educational facilities. The study observed that lack of job security reduces the chances of unionization of workers and the piece rated employees were not getting some benefits like payment of overtime, casual leaves, annual leaves, earned leaves etc. Murty and Abhinov (2010) studied relationship between canteen facility and healthy physical work environment of the industrial units at coastal districts in Andhra Pradesh. A sample of 290 respondents was taken for the study. The findings of the study revealed that the bigger organization in the public and private sectors were providing clean and hygienic food items to their workers at minimum prices. Overwhelming proportion of the respondents were frequent visitors to the canteen in private sector units than that of public sector units. Majority of the workers in public sector units were satisfied with the cleanliness in the canteen. The study suggested that management of public and private sector units should provide clean and hygienic food items at minimum prices.

Garg and Jain (2013a) evaluated awareness and satisfactory level among workers regarding welfare measures at Cotton Textile Industry in Punjab. A sample of 250 workers was selected from Textile Mills. The study observed a strong relationship between gender and the awareness level of workers regarding welfare measures. Positive association is found between experiences and level of satisfaction of the employees regarding welfare facilities. Majority of the respondents were moderately aware and highly satisfied with the welfare measures provided by the company. Female workers were less aware about the statutory welfare measures. The study suggested that improvement is required in the field of grievances handling procedure. Management should formulate a problem solving committee for better solution of the welfare problems of the workers so that they can do work effectively and efficiently.

Garg and Jain (2013b) studied awareness, implementation and level of satisfaction regarding welfare provisions at Cotton Textile Industry in Punjab. A sample of 250 respondents was selected for the study. The results revealed that majority of the respondents were aware of the welfare measures. Overwhelming proportion of the respondents was having average level of satisfaction with the implementation of employees state insurance (ESI) welfare provisions. The study suggested that management should formulate a problem solving committee for conducting hearings from the workers so that it can solve their problems. Organization should differentiate the satisfying factors from dissatisfying ones for taking effective steps to improve the labour welfare facilities which in turn would increase the efficiency of the workers.

Logasakthi and Rajagopal (2013) highlighted the employees' satisfaction level regarding health, safety and welfare measures at Chemical Industry in Salem region. The sample size of study was 100 employees. Majority of the respondents were satisfied with disposal of wastes in the proper way and periodical health check-up facility provided by the organization. Chi-square test showed significant relationship between the experience and safety office work. While, there was no significant relationship between age and periodic health checkup facilities in the organization. The study suggested that industry should concentrate towards settlement of funds internally for the medical reimbursement facilities. There was also provision of mask and overcoat to avoid health hazards. Various training programs should be conducted to motivate the employees and improving their performances.

Pandey and Agarwal (2013) studied health and safety provisions with respect to Factories Act, 1948 at Godawari Power and Ispat Limited of Siltara, Raipur (GPIL). A sample of 50 respondents was selected for the study. Majority of the respondents were satisfied with the health and safety provisions of the Factories Act, 1948. The study suggested that health and safety standards of the organization should be improved by adding some more value added services like advancement on safety provisions. Monthly or quarterly health checkup camp should be scheduled by the organization.

Objectives of the Study

To assess awareness of workers regarding Factories Act:

- To examine awareness of workers on the basis of age regarding Factories Act.
- To examine awareness of workers on the basis of experience regarding Factories Act.
- To examine awareness of workers on the basis of gender regarding Factories Act.
- To examine awareness of workers on the basis of marital status regarding Factories Act.

Hypotheses

H_{a1}= There is significant difference in awareness level of workers on the basis of age regarding Factories Act. **H_{a2}**= There is significant difference in awareness level of workers on the basis of experience regarding Factories Act.

H_{a3}= There is significant difference in awareness level of workers on the basis of gender regarding Factories Act.

H_{a4}= There is significant difference in awareness level of workers on the basis of marital status regarding Factories Act.

Research Methodology

Exploratory cum descriptive research design has been used in present study. The population of interest in present study is workers of industrial sector of Northern India (Haryana, Punjab and NCR). Stratified random sampling has been used in the study as the population divided on the basis of four demographic variables i.e. age, experience, gender and marital status. The study is based on primary data which has been collected through questionnaire filled in by 750 workers. Responses have been evaluated on five point Likert scale "poor-1, below average-2, average-3, good-4 and outstanding-5". Statements included in the analysis have been shown in **Appendix A**.

Table 1: Sample Description

Demographic Variables	Category/ Class	N=750	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Age	Below 25 years	324	43.2	43.2
	25-35 years	258	34.4	77.6
	Above 35 years	168	22.4	100
Experience	Less than 5	324	43.2	43.2
	5-10	222	29.6	72.8
	More than 10	204	27.2	100
Gender	Male	678	90.4	90.4
	Female	72	9.6	100
Marital Status	Married	447	59.6	59.6
	Unmarried	303	40.4	100

Source: Primary

Mean, standard deviation, percentage (descriptive statistics) and ANOVA have been used to analyse the collected data with the help of SPSS (Version 18). Cronbach's alpha coefficient (reliability) has been used to check the internal consistency of the data collected for the study. ANOVA has been performed on the questions under survey regarding respondent's awareness regarding Factories Act applicable in the industry. T-test and ANOVA test have been

used to compare the awareness of workers on the basis of age, experience, gender and marital status regarding various amenities under Factories Act. Table 1 shows the sample description of the respondents.

Data Analysis

Awareness of Workers regarding Factories Act

The overall awareness of workers regarding Factories Act has been determined with the help of descriptivestatistics (Table 2).

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation of Factories Act

Variables	Mean	*Descriptio n	Standard Deviation
Overall F	3.15	Moderate	1.04
F1	3.11	Moderate	1.43
F2	3.18	Moderate	1.33
F3	3.10	Moderate	1.33
F4	3.21	Moderate	1.33
F5	3.20	Moderate	1.33
F6	3.13	Moderate	1.33
F7	3.14	Moderate	1.35
F8	3.11	Moderate	1.34
F9	3.24	Moderate	1.36
F10	3.18	Moderate	1.33

*High: Mean>3.5, Moderate: 2.5to3.5, Low: Mean<2.5.

The overall mean score of awareness of workers regarding Factories Act is 3.15 which reflects that workers have moderate level of awareness to the Factories Act. They are not highly aware to the facilities under Factories Act provided in the industry. Workers have awareness above to the average level to the all facilities under Factories Act mentioned in the study. Workers are the most aware to the F9 (obligations of employees) under Factories Act, 1948.

Awareness of Workers on the basis of Age regarding Factories Act, 1948

Ha1: There is significant difference in awareness of workers on the basis of age regarding Factories Act.

Table 3: Awareness of Workers on the basis of Age regarding Factories Act

Age	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6	F7	F8	F9	F10
<25	2.76	2.91	2.79	2.90	2.91	2.81	2.80	2.79	2.87	2.85
25-35	3.30	3.32	3.22	3.39	3.34	3.32	3.26	3.30	3.39	3.32
>35	3.50	3.52	3.52	3.52	3.54	3.45	3.61	3.44	3.73	3.58
F	19.1	13.9	19.2	16.2	15.1	17.4	22.7	17.9	25.6	2.02
p	0.00*	0.00*	0.00*	0.00*	0.00*	0.00*	0.00*	0.00*	0.00*	0.00*

Note: *Significant at 0.05 level

Statistically significant differences (Table 3) have been found in F1 (health provisions), F2 (safety provisions), F3 (welfare provisions), F4 (annual leave with wages provision), F5 (employment of young persons & women at dangerous machines), F6 (working hours & holidays for adults), F7 (obligations of employers), F8 (rights of employers), F9 (obligations of employees) and F10 (rights of employees) on the basis of age of workers ($p < 0.05$). Post hoc

analysis (LSD) cleared the differences on the basis of age of workers. It has been examined that workers above 35 years have highest mean scores with respect to all amenities under Factories Act mentioned in the study. Workers in the middle age group (25-35 years) have higher mean scores than the workers below 25 years and less mean scores than the workers above 35 years. The awareness level of workers increases as the age increases. Old aged workers are the most aware to the Factories Act. Lower aged workers are the least aware to the facilities provided to them under Factories Act. Hence, it has been concluded that upper age group workers (>35 years) are more aware to the Factories Act as compared to the workers in the other age groups.

Awareness of Workers on the basis of Experience regarding Factories Act

H_{a2}: There is significant difference in the awareness of workers on the basis of experience regarding Factories Act.

Table 4: Awareness of Workers on the basis of Experience regarding Factories Act

Experience	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6	F7	F8	F9	F10
< 5	2.76	2.91	2.79	2.90	2.91	2.81	2.80	2.78	2.87	2.85
5-10	3.32	3.37	3.25	3.42	3.36	3.38	3.30	3.27	3.45	3.38
>10	3.44	3.43	3.45	3.46	3.49	3.36	3.50	3.45	3.59	3.48
F	18.4	12.8	17.6	15.8	14.4	16.8	20.2	18.3	22.7	18.4
P	0.00*	0.00*	0.00*	0.00*	0.00*	0.00*	0.00*	0.00*	0.00*	0.00*

Note: * Significant at 0.05 level

Statistically significant differences (Table 4) have been found in F1 (health provisions), F2 (safety provisions), F3 (welfare provisions), F4 (annual leave with wages provision), F5 (employment of young persons & women at dangerous machines), F6 (working hours & holidays for adults), F7 (obligations of employers), F8 (rights of employers), F9 (obligations of employees) and F10 (rights of employees) on the basis of experience of workers ($p < 0.05$). Post hoc analysis (LSD) cleared the differences on the basis of experience. It has been observed that workers having experience more than 10 years show highest mean scores in F1 (3.44), F2 (3.43), F3 (3.45), F4 (3.46), F5 (3.49), F6 (3.36), F7 (3.50), F8 (3.45), F9 (3.59) and F10 (3.48) as compared to workers having experience less than 10 years. Workers having experience 5 to 10 years are more aware to the different provisions under Factories Act, 1948 than the workers having experience less than 5 years. Workers having experience less than 5 years are aware below to the average level to the various provisions in Factories Act mentioned in the study. Hence, it can be concluded that with experience, workers become more aware to the provisions under Factories Act. It means that highly experienced workers are more aware than the less experienced workers to the provisions of Factories Act.

Awareness of Workers on the basis of Gender regarding Factories Act

H_{a3}= There is significant difference in the awareness level of workers on the basis of gender regarding Factories Act.

Table 5: Awareness of Workers on the basis of Gender regarding Factories Act

Gender	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6	F7	F8	F9	F10
Male	3.10	3.16	3.09	3.19	3.18	3.12	3.13	3.09	3.23	3.16
Female	3.21	3.37	3.19	3.37	3.36	3.22	3.18	3.26	3.36	3.30

T	-0.61	-1.27	-0.60	-1.10	-1.06	-0.62	-0.28	-1.03	-0.78	-0.85
P	0.54	0.21	0.55	0.27	0.28	0.54	0.77	0.30	0.43	0.39

Source: Primary

No statistically significant differences (Table 5) have been found in the various provisions of Factories Act mentioned in the study on the basis of gender of workers ($p < 0.05$). It has been found on the basis of mean scores that female workers are more aware to the provisions of Factories Act i.e. F1 (3.21), F2 (3.37), F3 (3.19), F4 (3.37), F5 (3.36), F6 (3.22), F7 (3.18), F8 (3.26), F9 (3.36) and F10 (3.30) as compared to female employees. Male workers are less aware to the provisions under Factories Act i.e. F1 (3.10), F2 (3.16), F3 (3.09), F4 (3.19), F5 (3.18), F6 (3.12), F7 (3.13), F8 (3.09), F9 (3.23) and F10 (3.16) as compared to the female workers. Hence, it has been concluded that female workers are more aware to the health, safety, welfare, annual leave with wages provisions, compensation to workmen in case of closure of undertakings and rights/obligations of employees/employers.

Table 6: Awareness of Workers on the basis of Marital Status regarding Factories Act

Marital Status	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6	F7	F8	F9	F10
Married	3.25	3.32	3.26	3.36	3.33	3.26	3.31	3.28	3.46	3.34
Unmarried	2.90	2.99	2.88	2.99	3.02	2.94	2.89	2.85	2.92	2.94
T	3.33	3.32	3.84	3.77	3.11	3.31	4.20	4.40	5.36	4.09
P	0.001*	0.001*	0.00*	0.00*	0.002*	0.001*	0.00*	0.00*	0.00*	0.00*

Note: *Significant at 0.05 level, t=t-value, p=p-value

Statistically significant differences (Table 6) have been found in F1 (health provisions), F2 (safety provisions), F3 (welfare provisions), F4 (annual leave with wages provision), F5 (employment of young persons & women at dangerous machines), F6 (working hours & holidays for adults), F7 (obligations of employers), F8 (rights of employers), F9 (obligations of employees) and F10 (rights of employees) on the basis of marital status of workers ($p < 0.05$). It has been found on the basis of post hoc analysis (LSD) that married workers are more aware to the provisions of Factories Act i.e. F1 (3.25), F2 (3.32), F3 (3.26), F4 (3.36), F5 (3.33), F6 (3.26), F7 (3.31), F8 (3.28), F9 (3.46) and F10 (3.34) as compared to unmarried workers. Unmarried workers are less aware to the provisions of Factories Act i.e. F1 (2.90), F2 (2.99), F3 (2.88), F4 (2.99), F5 (3.02), F6 (2.94), F7 (2.89), F8 (2.85), F9 (2.92) and F10 (2.94) as compared to unmarried workers. Hence, it can be concluded that unmarried workers are less aware due to having less responsibilities on them as compared to married workers.

Discussion

When the comparison is made on the basis of age of respondents, it is observed that workers in the upper level age group (above 35 years) are more aware to the provisions of Factories Act as compared to the workers in the other age groups. Workers in the middle age group (25 to 35 years) are more aware than the workers in the lower age group (below 25 years). Workers in the upper age group are more conscious to the facilities provided to them at the workplace because they are at highest risk with age. It has been analysed that highly experienced workers are more aware to the provisions of Factories Act under study as compared to the workers having less experience. With respect to the awareness level of workers on the basis of gender, female workers are more aware as compared to male workers due to more responsibilities on them in relation to personal and professional life. As far as marital status is concerned, differences have been found in the awareness level of workers regarding provisions

under Factories Act. Unmarried workers are less aware than the married workers regarding provisions under Factories Act mentioned in the study. Performance of employees depends upon the awareness of workers regarding provisions under Factories Act morale, health and wellbeing. If they have good awareness of facilities come under Factories Act, then they will do work more efficiently and effectively.

Conclusion

It is concluded that workers possess awareness at the moderate level to the provisions under Factories Act mentioned in the study. Old age and highly experienced workers are more aware than the young and less experienced workers respectively. As the age and experience of workers increases, the awareness level of workers also increases. They are aware to the provisions of Factories Act with age and experience. It has been observed that female and married workers are more aware to the provisions under Factories Act as compared to the male and unmarried workers. There is a huge scope in the improvement of awareness of workers regarding Factories Act, 1948 on the basis of age, experience, gender and marital status.

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Appendix A: Provisions under Factories Act

F1	Awareness of workability of health provisions under Factories Act, 1948.
F2	Awareness of workability of safety provisions under Factories Act, 1948.
F3	Awareness of workability of welfare provisions under Factories Act, 1948.
F4	Awareness of annual leave with wages provision under Factories Act, 1948.
F5	Awareness of employment of young persons & women under Factories Act, 1948.
F6	Awareness of working hours & holidays for adults under

	Factories Act, 1948.
F7	Awareness of obligations of employers under Factories Act, 1948.
F8	Awareness of rights of employers under Factories Act, 1948.
F9	Awareness of obligations of employees under Factories Act, 1948.
F10	Awareness of rights of employees under Factories Act, 1948.