



-Workshop Report-

Occupational safety and health in relation to Workers in Small Scale Industries under SFRUTI Cluster programmes of Government of India.

A one day workshop on reducing occupational health hazards among small scale industries was hosted by JeevanRekha Parishad (JRP) in Bhubaneswar on October 22, 2022 with the financial support of DWOI/MSNS , USA . The aim was to analyse the wide variety of situations at work that can lead to occupational safety and health (OSH) risks related to workers in small scale industries under MSME department of Government of India under SFRUTI Scheme. The workshop also looked at the role that the many stakeholders from different sectors can play in reducing risks and discussed many potential solutions available for their prevention. Attended by 44 Managers, Machines Operators and Supervisors of small scale industries under SFRUTI scheme, the programme was inaugurated by Dr (Ms) Usharani Panigrahi, Additional Director, Health Services, Government of Odisha. Dr (Ms) Panigrahi informed that an occupational hazard contributes to severe health problems among workers due to unhygienic conditions and lack of safety at the workplace. Economic growth and productivity can be well achieved by promoting health, safety, and improved quality workplace. Others who participated in the workshop as resource persons are Mr. C.R.Pattnaik, Regional Director, Entrepreneurship Development Institute and Consultant SFRUTI programmes of MSME Department, Government of Odisha , Bhubaneswar , Mr. Gouri Sankar Mishra, Senior Consultant , DFID – Bhubaneswar, and Mr. Biraj Satpathy, Consultant, Odisha Pollution Control Board , Government of Odisha . 44 Employees directly or indirectly involved in the small scale industries actively participated and expressed their concern and gave opinion on how to reduce occupational health hazards in small scale industries especially in SFRUTI Cluster programmes under MSME department.

After inauguration, the members were divided in to four working groups to find out challenges being faced by the workers in small scale industries. The Groups found following **Challenges** which should be addressed by NGOs through Government of India.

- lack of in-house safety and health personnel;
- lack of access to external OSH services;
- limited experience on the part of employers and workers since SMEs tend to start up and go out of business relatively quickly;
- limited knowledge of what constitutes “safe” equipment and machinery;
- lower unionization rates since the presence of trade unions in a workplace is associated with better OSH conditions;
- perceived cost of improvements since SME employers often fail to make the link between, on the one hand, accidents, ill health and their associated costs and, on the other, OSH, productivity and profits;

- limited access to information and training opportunities

The Group members also expressed following Challenges in terms of their **Knowledge and Skills on OHS-**

- 1-Poor Knowledge of safety measures among workers.
- 2 -Ignorance on OHS.
- 3 Substitution of Work
- 4 Segregation of materials during work.
- 5 Lack of Personal protection
- 6 Training of safety before job
- 7 Training of safety during job
- 8 Training after injury
- 9 Provision of PPE
- 10 Use of PPE
- 11 Accident rate at work
- 12 Avoidable accidents
- 13 Unavoidable accidents
- 14 Major injury rate
- 15 Minor injury rate

Results of workshop- Recommendations

There was a discussion with participants at a workshop in each SFRUTI MSME Cluster selected. The focus was on '**healthy workplaces**', 'raising awareness among SSI workers and policy makers', 'prevention' and 'further research.' Participants said that healthy workplaces and permanent plots were indispensable. They also emphasized the need for legislation of the informal sector and distribution of study findings to raise awareness among other workers and residents. The need for health information on work related exposures, accidents, respiratory symptoms and availability of protective devices was expressed. Also, the necessity to provide treatment for affected persons, screening of workers, tetanus vaccination and first aid boxes, and to make protective equipment available was emphasized. It was also recommended to request DWOI to sponsor a study to assess the knowledge, attitude, practices and current situation on OHS system adopted by SFRUTI Small Scale Industries supported by MSME department Government of Odisha where JRP is one of the partners of SFRUTI Cluster programmes.

Decided to submit a technical research project to DWOI by November 1, 2022.

Discussion

We found during our discussion that workers in SSI were exposed to a variety of work-related hazards, were not using protective equipment and had health complaints perceived to be related to their work. Workers and employers were both aware of occupational and environmental health hazards, but absence of a clear policy on the informal sector and the lack of permanent workplaces do not encourage investment in occupational health and safety. The different data collection tools complemented each other. Workers perceived themselves to be exposed to many occupational and environmental health hazards.

. Workers and employers were more concerned with acquiring permanent workplaces. The temporary nature of many SSI reduces the priority of occupational health and safety. Further research into the health of SSI workers and the environmental conditions of the living areas is warranted.

SOME PICTURES OF THE WORKSHOP-











MEDIA COVERAGE-

The workshop news were circulated in print and electronics media besides in Social media like Twitter , FB and Instagram.