

Appraising The Difficulties Faced by Factory Workers of Agro-Inputs Manufacturing Companies in Sri Lanka

W. R. W. M. A. P. Weerakoon^{1,2*}, P. M. N. Mihirani³, J. P. U. Samaraweera³, M. W. C. Dharmawardhana

This study assessed the status of workers at agro-inputs manufacturing factories in Sri Lanka, where the major objectives were to (1) assess the problems faced by workers at factories, and (2) assess the extent to which firms have identified and solved those problems. Data was collected from 180 workers of 10 companies during 2012 and 2015. Both qualitative and quantitative aspects were assessed through descriptive and inferential statistics. Results revealed that factory workers were poorly paid where 78% of the women in factories were underpaid compared to men. Most employers haven't yet identified the skills, knowledge and potential of workers. Over 85% of the workers experienced frequent job rotations without any foreseeable career path. Over 63% of the companies had not maintained proper training plans or employee records except the records on wages and simple workshops. Nearly 70% of the companies haven't maintained occupational health and safety records of individuals. Although several standards were implemented, occupational safety, health training, and welfare weren't among the top priorities. Although accidents were rare among women, occasional accidents among men indicate that the risks of calamities haven't wholly curtailed. Cafeteria facilities, restrooms, sickrooms and sanitation were often below standards where first-aid or medical assistance weren't readily available. Job insecurity, issues on family welfare such education and health of children were among the severe burdens that workers, especially women required support, but haven't yet received. Participation in unions and raising complaints were limited among women due ignorance or lack of awareness. The study highlights the need of a national policy and a monitoring system to assure that basic needs of workers at factories are fulfilled with a cautious focus on health, nutrition, reverence, family welfare, work milieu, remuneration and career development with regard to both permanent and contract-based workers irrespective of the gender. Moreover, a mix of proper human resources functions is suggested with a robust involvement of the top level management where the burdening issues of workers are focused.

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¹ Institute for Multidisciplinary Research *ashoke_weerakoon@yahoo.com

² The Open University, Sri Lanka

³ University of Colombo, Sri Lanka
