

Assessing Occupational Safety and Health Practices under Industrial Labour Welfare Measures in Palakkad District

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Abstract - Occupational safety and health (OSH) practices play a pivotal role in promoting industrial labour welfare by ensuring safe, healthy, and productive working environments. This study assessed the level of occupational safety and health practices and identified the major underlying OSH dimensions among industrial workers in organized manufacturing units of Palakkad District, Kerala. A quantitative cross-sectional research design was adopted, and primary data were collected from 400 industrial employees using a structured questionnaire comprising 18 measurement items. A One-Sample t-test was employed to assess the overall level of occupational safety and health practices, while Exploratory Factor Analysis (Principal Component Analysis with Varimax Rotation) was used to identify the latent dimensions influencing industrial labour welfare. The findings revealed that the overall implementation of occupational safety and health practices was significantly higher than the established benchmark. Factor analysis confirmed excellent sampling adequacy (KMO = 0.914) and extracted three meaningful dimensions—Workplace Safety Management, Occupational Health and Hygiene, and Personal Protective Measures and Accident Prevention—which collectively explained 73.84% of the total variance. The study concludes that occupational safety and health practices are multidimensional and require an integrated approach to strengthen labour welfare. The findings provide practical insights for industrial managers and policymakers to develop targeted workplace safety strategies, improve employee well-being, enhance regulatory compliance, and foster sustainable industrial productivity

Key Words: Occupational Safety and Health, Industrial Labour Welfare, Workplace Safety Management, Occupational Health, Personal Protective Equipment

1. INTRODUCTION

Occupational safety and health have become a fundamental component of industrial development and labour welfare, particularly in manufacturing industries where employees are frequently exposed to physical, chemical, ergonomic, and mechanical hazards [1]. A safe and healthy workplace not only protects employees from occupational injuries and diseases but also contributes to higher productivity, improved organizational performance, and sustainable industrial growth. As industries continue to adopt advanced technologies and complex production processes, ensuring effective occupational safety and health practices has become increasingly important for maintaining workforce well-being and achieving organizational competitiveness [2]. Consequently, organizations are expected

to integrate safety and health measures into their daily operations as an essential aspect of responsible human resource management and labour welfare.

Industrial labour welfare extends beyond the provision of statutory benefits and encompasses working conditions that safeguard employees' physical and psychological well-being. Occupational safety and health practices such as safety training, emergency preparedness, workplace hygiene, accident prevention, occupational health services, and the use of personal protective equipment are integral elements of labour welfare programmes [3]. These measures reduce workplace risks, minimize absenteeism, improve employee morale, and foster a positive safety culture within organizations. Moreover, effective implementation of occupational safety policies enables organizations to comply with labour regulations while strengthening employees' confidence and commitment towards their work.

In recent years, increasing emphasis has been placed on proactive workplace safety management rather than reactive responses to occupational accidents. Organizations are recognizing that investments in occupational safety and health not only reduce compensation costs and operational disruptions but also improve employee engagement and long-term organizational sustainability [4]. Similarly, government agencies and regulatory authorities continue to strengthen occupational safety standards to ensure safer workplaces and promote decent working conditions across industrial sectors. Despite these initiatives, the effectiveness of occupational safety and health practices often varies among organizations due to differences in management commitment, employee awareness, workplace infrastructure, and resource availability. Therefore, continuous assessment of occupational safety practices is necessary to identify strengths, address existing gaps, and support evidence-based improvements in industrial labour welfare.

The organized manufacturing sector in Palakkad District, particularly the Kanjikode Industrial Area, has experienced steady industrial expansion and provides employment opportunities to a large workforce engaged in diverse manufacturing activities. As industrial operations become more sophisticated, maintaining high standards of occupational safety and health is essential for protecting employees and ensuring uninterrupted production [5]. Understanding the key dimensions that influence workplace safety can assist industrial managers and policymakers in designing targeted interventions that promote safer working environments and enhance labour welfare outcomes. Against this background, the present study focuses on assessing occupational safety and health practices and identifying the underlying occupational safety and health dimensions influencing industrial labour welfare among

employees of organized manufacturing units in Palakkad District.

2. RELATED WORKS

Oladetan et al. [6] examined the relationship between employee welfare facilities, employee performance, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment in the Nigerian manufacturing industry. Using Pearson correlation analysis on data from 100 employees, the study found significant positive relationships between welfare facilities and employee outcomes, concluding that comprehensive welfare provisions enhanced organizational commitment, job satisfaction, performance, and overall organizational effectiveness. Nagalakshmi and Selvendran [7] investigated employees' perceptions of labour welfare and safety measures in the Tamil Nadu State Transport Corporation using survey data from 252 employees. The findings indicated that welfare schemes improved job satisfaction, while positive employee attitudes enhanced productivity. Safety education strengthened workplace safety, whereas employment status and promotion opportunities showed no significant influence.

Priyanka and Mathavan [8] examined the influence of employee welfare schemes and demographic factors on employee satisfaction, loyalty, and career development using correlation and regression analyses. The study revealed that salary was the strongest predictor of career progression, whereas age and gender had no significant influence on employee loyalty. Welfare-oriented compensation practices significantly improved employee satisfaction and commitment. Reddy and Sravanthi [9] assessed job satisfaction among employees at Bharathi Cement Corporation through a survey-based study. The findings revealed positive employee satisfaction supported by favourable working conditions, medical benefits, retirement schemes, HR allowances, and organizational policies. The study concluded that improved welfare facilities contributed to enhanced production performance and organizational efficiency.

Lachan and Shome [10] explored job involvement and employee motivation among public and private tea garden employees using standardized scales with data from 564 respondents. Statistical analyses revealed significant differences in motivational dimensions between employee groups, highlighting that welfare facilities, organizational support, and developmental opportunities positively influenced employee motivation, productivity, and organizational commitment. Frencia and Velmurugan [11] evaluated the effectiveness of labour welfare measures at New Fresh Company using descriptive research, percentage analysis, and chi-square tests. The study found that safety measures, medical services, workplace cleanliness, drinking water, and favourable working conditions significantly improved employee satisfaction, motivation, productivity, and overall organizational performance.

Akhila et al. [12] investigated the implementation and effectiveness of employee welfare practices at Infosys Limited using structured questionnaires and secondary organizational data. The findings indicated that welfare initiatives improved employee satisfaction, commitment, and retention, while awareness gaps, geographical disparities, and unequal resource utilization limited the overall effectiveness of welfare programmes. Suganya and Sakthi [13] examined safety and welfare measures provided to contract employees at Andrew Yule & Company Limited using a descriptive research design. The findings showed high employee awareness and satisfaction with welfare facilities, while working conditions had the

strongest influence on employee satisfaction, industrial relations, workplace well-being, and organizational productivity.

Pandey [14] investigated the role of work-life balance in shaping employees' perceptions of organizational support in public and private sector banks. The findings demonstrated that welfare benefits, career development opportunities, managerial support, and recognition significantly enhanced employee satisfaction and psychological well-being, although higher workplace stress was reported among private sector employees. Chauhan and Sharma [15] examined the influence of labour welfare practices on employee productivity in Small and Medium Enterprises using a descriptive-cum-analytical approach. The findings revealed that statutory and non-statutory welfare measures significantly enhanced employee motivation, job satisfaction, work efficiency, and productivity, whereas inadequate welfare provisions reduced organizational effectiveness and employee performance.

Although previous studies have established the positive influence of labour welfare and occupational safety measures on employee satisfaction, motivation, organizational commitment, and productivity, several methodological limitations remain. Most studies primarily relied on correlation, regression, chi-square, or descriptive analyses to examine welfare outcomes, while limited attention was given to identifying the underlying dimensions of OSH practices. Furthermore, existing research predominantly focused on employee satisfaction and organizational performance rather than systematically assessing the level and multidimensional structure of OSH practices

3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- i.
- ii. What is the current level of occupational safety and health practices among industrial workers in Palakkad District?
- iii. What is the major occupational safety and health dimensions contributing to industrial labour welfare?

4. OBJECTIVES

- To assess the level of occupational safety and health practices among industrial workers in Palakkad District.
- To identify the major occupational safety and health dimensions influencing industrial labour welfare.

5. PROPOSED HYPOTHESES

- H01: The level of occupational safety and health practices among industrial workers does not significantly differ from the expected standard.
- H11: The level of occupational safety and health practices among industrial workers significantly differs from the expected standard.
- H02: There are no significant underlying occupational safety and health dimensions influencing industrial labour welfare.
- H12: There are significant underlying occupational safety and health dimensions influencing industrial labour welfare.

6. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

$$n_0 = \frac{Z^2 \cdot p \cdot (1-p)}{e^2} \quad (1)$$

6.1 Conceptual Framework

In the proposed research, the conceptual framework positions occupational safety and health (OSH) practices as the central construct representing a key dimension of industrial labour welfare. The framework comprises six major components: personal protective equipment (PPE), safety training, emergency preparedness, workplace hygiene, accident prevention, and occupational health services, each contributing to the overall effectiveness of workplace safety. These components collectively reflect the extent to which industries provide a safe and healthy working environment for employees. By identifying the underlying dimensions of OSH practices and assessing their implementation levels, the framework offers a comprehensive understanding of workplace safety as an essential element of labour welfare in industrial settings. Figure 1 presents the conceptual framework of the proposed research.

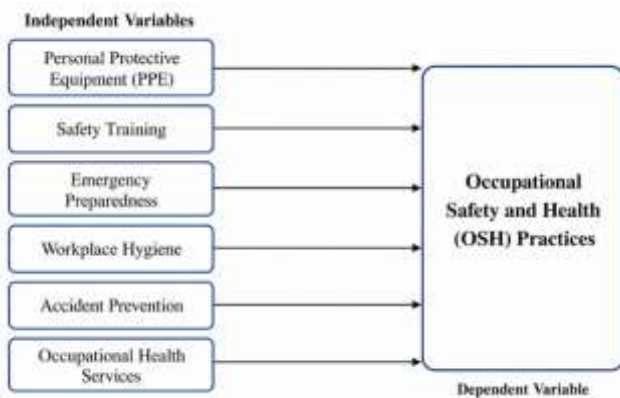


Fig -1: Conceptual framework of the proposed research

6.2 Research Design

The study adopted a quantitative, cross-sectional survey research design. The design facilitated the systematic assessment of workplace safety conditions at a single point in time and supported the identification of the underlying dimensions of OSH practices through empirical analysis. This approach provided a robust framework for achieving the research objectives while ensuring methodological rigor, objectivity, and reliability in evaluating occupational safety as an essential component of industrial labour welfare.

6.3 Population and Sample

The population for the proposed research comprises industrial workers employed in organized manufacturing units across Palakkad District, Kerala, India. The district was selected due to the presence of the Kanjikode Industrial Area, one of Kerala's major industrial clusters, accommodating diverse manufacturing industries where occupational safety and health practices are integral to labour welfare. The study targeted employees from production, maintenance, quality control, operations, and administrative departments to obtain comprehensive insights into workplace safety practices. A stratified random sampling technique was employed to ensure proportional representation of different departments and job categories. The sample size was determined using Cochran's formula for large populations, as presented in Eq. (1). Assuming a 95% confidence level ($Z = 1.96$), an estimated proportion ($p = 0.5$), and a 5% margin of error ($e = 0.05$), the minimum required sample size was 384. To accommodate possible non-responses and incomplete questionnaires, the final sample size was increased to 400 respondents, ensuring adequate statistical power for the planned analyses.

6.4 Data Collection

The proposed research utilized primary data collected from industrial workers in organized manufacturing units through a self-administered questionnaire. The instrument was developed based on established occupational safety and health literature and comprised items measuring personal protective equipment, safety training, emergency preparedness, workplace hygiene, accident prevention, and occupational health services. The questionnaire was reviewed by subject experts and refined through a pilot study to ensure clarity, validity, and reliability. Secondary data from labour legislation, government reports, and scholarly publications were used to support the theoretical foundation of the study.

6.5 Data Analysis

The data analysis was performed using IBM SPSS Statistics Version 29.0 to achieve the study objectives. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the demographic characteristics of the respondents. A One-Sample t-test assessed the overall level of OSH practices among industrial workers, while Exploratory Factor Analysis (Principal Component Analysis with Varimax Rotation) identified the underlying OSH dimensions. All statistical assumptions were verified to ensure the validity, reliability, and robustness of the research findings.

7. ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

7.1 Analysis of demographic profile

Figure 2 and Table 1 present the demographic profile of the industrial workers selected for the study. The gender distribution reveals that male respondents constitute 69.5% of the sample, while female respondents account for 30.5%, reflecting the predominantly male workforce commonly observed in manufacturing industries. The age profile indicates that the largest proportion of respondents (35.5%) belongs to the 31–40 years category, followed by 27.0% in the 20–30 years group, representing an experienced and economically active workforce.

Table -1: Demographic Profile of Respondents

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	278	69.5
	Female	122	30.5
Age (Years)	20–30	108	27.0
	31–40	142	35.5
	41–50	96	24.0
	Above 50	54	13.5
Educational Qualification	SSLC/Secondary	74	18.5
	Higher Secondary	126	31.5
	Diploma/ITI	112	28.0
	Graduate and Above	88	22.0
Department	Production	162	40.5
	Maintenance	74	18.5
	Quality Control	48	12.0
	Operations	66	16.5
	Administration	50	12.5
Work Experience	Less than 5 years	96	24.0
	5–10 years	134	33.5
	11–15 years	92	23.0

	More than 15 years	78	19.5
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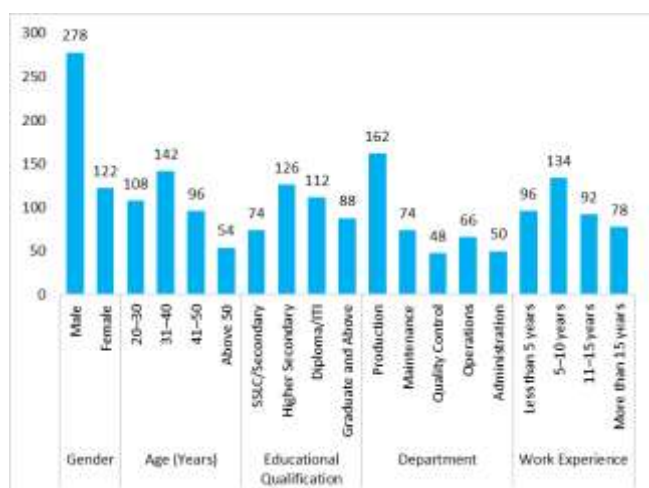


Fig -2: Illustration of Respondent Demographics

Regarding educational qualification, 31.5% of the respondents had completed higher secondary education, while 28.0% possessed Diploma or ITI qualifications, indicating a technically skilled workforce. Department-wise, the majority (40.5%) were employed in production, followed by operations (16.5%) and maintenance (18.5%), where occupational safety measures are particularly critical. Furthermore, 33.5% of respondents had 5–10 years of work experience, providing sufficient exposure to workplace safety practices and organizational health initiatives. Overall, the demographic profile represents a diverse industrial workforce, enabling a comprehensive assessment of occupational safety and health practices across different employee groups.

7.2 Assessment of Occupational Safety and Health Practices among Industrial Workers

The assessment encompasses key workplace safety components, including personal protective equipment, safety training, emergency preparedness, workplace hygiene, accident prevention, and occupational health services, to determine whether the overall level of implementation exceeds the expected standard.

A One-Sample t-test was conducted to determine whether the overall mean score of occupational safety and health practices significantly differed from the benchmark value of 3.00 on the five-point Likert scale. As presented in Table 2, the mean OSH practice score was 3.96 (SD = 0.58).

Table -2: One-Sample Statistics for Occupational Safety and Health Practices

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Occupational Safety and Health Practices	400	3.96	0.58	0.029

The results shown in Table 3 indicate a t-value of 33.10, which is statistically significant ($p < 0.001$), with a mean difference of 0.96. The positive mean difference and narrow confidence interval demonstrate that industrial workers perceive occupational safety and health practices to be implemented at a

level significantly above the expected standard. These findings suggest that organized manufacturing units have established satisfactory workplace safety systems through the provision of protective equipment, regular safety training, effective emergency preparedness, hygienic working conditions, accident prevention mechanisms, and occupational health services.

Table -3: One-Sample t-Test Results

Variable	t	df	p-value	Mean Difference
Occupational Safety and Health Practices	33.10	399	< 0.001	0.96

The results confirm that occupational safety and health practices are implemented at a level significantly higher than the benchmark value. Accordingly, the findings reject H01 and support H11, indicating that organized manufacturing units in Palakkad District maintain a satisfactory level of occupational safety and health practices as an essential component of industrial labour welfare.

7.3 Identification of the Underlying Dimensions of Occupational Safety and Health Practices

Since occupational safety practices comprise multiple interrelated workplace activities, Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was employed to identify the underlying latent dimensions represented by the questionnaire items. EFA facilitates the reduction of a large number of observed variables into a smaller number of meaningful factors, thereby providing a comprehensive understanding of the principal occupational safety and health dimensions.

7.3.1 Relative Contribution of Labour Welfare Dimensions

Before extracting the factors, the suitability of the data for Exploratory Factor Analysis was assessed using the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Measure of Sampling Adequacy and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity. The results presented in Table 4 indicate a KMO value of 0.914, which exceeds the recommended threshold of 0.70 and confirms excellent sampling adequacy. In addition, Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 4876.352$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that the correlation matrix was appropriate for factor analysis. These findings confirm that the dataset possesses sufficient interrelationships among the variables to justify the application of Exploratory Factor Analysis.

Table -4: KMO and Bartlett's Test

Test	Value
KMO Measure of Sampling Adequacy	0.914
Bartlett's Test Approx. Chi-Square	4876.352
df	153
Sig.	< 0.001

Following the confirmation of sampling adequacy, Principal Component Analysis (PCA) with Varimax Rotation was performed to extract the underlying dimensions of occupational safety and health practices. As shown in Table 5, three components with eigenvalues greater than one were extracted based on Kaiser's criterion. These three components collectively explained 73.84% of the total variance, indicating that they adequately represent the observed occupational safety and

health practices. Among the extracted components, Workplace Safety Management accounted for the highest proportion of variance (34.26%), followed by Occupational Health and Hygiene (22.41%) and Personal Protective Measures and Accident Prevention (17.17%).

Table -5: Total Variance Explained

Extracted Dimension	Eigenvalue	% of Variance	Cumulative %
Workplace Safety Management	6.17	34.26	34.26
Occupational Health and Hygiene	4.03	22.41	56.67
Personal Protective Measures and Accident Prevention	3.09	17.17	73.84

The factor retention decision was further supported by the Scree Plot presented in Figure 3. The plot exhibits a distinct elbow immediately after the third component, followed by a gradual flattening of the curve, indicating that only the first three components possess substantial explanatory power. Furthermore, only the first three components recorded eigenvalues greater than one, while the remaining components exhibited eigenvalues below the recommended threshold. Therefore, the scree plot corroborates the three-factor solution obtained through Principal Component Analysis and provides additional evidence supporting the retention of three meaningful occupational safety and health dimensions.

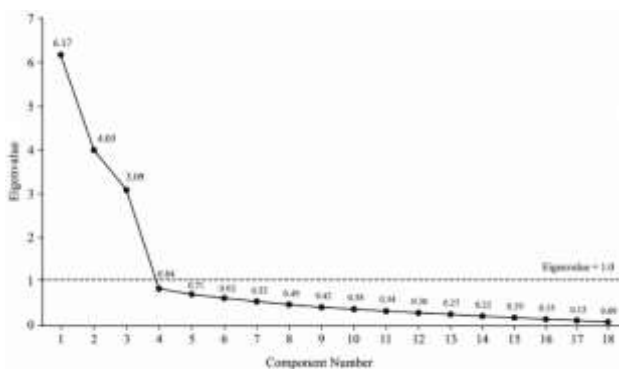


Fig -3: Scree Plot of the Extracted Components

The rotated component matrix presented in Table 6 demonstrates a clear and interpretable factor structure. All retained questionnaire items recorded factor loadings above 0.70, indicating strong associations with their respective components and confirming the construct validity of the measurement instrument. Moreover, no substantial cross-loadings were observed, suggesting that each questionnaire item was strongly associated with a single underlying factor. Based on the rotated factor loadings, the extracted components were labelled as Workplace Safety Management, Occupational Health and Hygiene, and Personal Protective Measures and Accident Prevention, reflecting the conceptual nature of the grouped questionnaire items.

Table -6: Rotated Component Matrix

Code	Questionnaire Item	Component 1	Component 2	Component 3
S T1	Regular safety training programmes are conducted.	0.861		
S T2	Safety instructions are clearly communicated to employees.	0.845		
S T3	Refresher safety programmes are organized periodically.	0.823		
E P1	Emergency exits are clearly identified within the workplace.	0.807		
E P2	Emergency evacuation drills are conducted regularly.	0.791		
E P3	Employees are aware of emergency response procedures.	0.764		
W H1	Workplace cleanliness is consistently maintained.		0.854	
W H2	Hygienic drinking water facilities are available.		0.837	
W H3	Sanitary facilities are adequately maintained.		0.814	
O HS1	Periodic medical examination		0.803	

	ns are conducted.			
O HS2	First-aid facilities are easily accessible.		0.787	
O HS3	Occupational health services are readily available.		0.771	
P PE1	Appropriate personal protective equipment is provided.			0.882
P PE2	Personal protective equipment is replaced whenever required.			0.864
P PE3	Employees consistently use the prescribed protective equipment.			0.847
A P1	Machines are regularly inspected to prevent accidents.			0.821
A P2	Safety warning signs are displayed at hazardous locations.			0.804
A P3	Accident reporting procedures are effectively followed.			0.781

Accordingly, the findings reject H02 and support H12, confirming that significant underlying occupational safety and health dimensions influence industrial labour welfare.

8. DISCUSSIONS

The identification of three distinct occupational safety and health dimensions highlights the multifaceted nature of workplace safety within organized manufacturing units. Rather than viewing occupational safety as a single organizational

practice, the findings suggest that effective labour welfare depends on the integration of safety management initiatives, occupational health support, and preventive protective measures. This multidimensional perspective emphasizes that improvements in one area alone may not be sufficient to establish a safe and healthy work environment. Industrial organizations should therefore adopt a comprehensive approach that combines continuous safety training, well-defined emergency preparedness systems, hygienic workplace conditions, accessible occupational health services, and the consistent provision and use of personal protective equipment. Strengthening these dimensions can enhance employee well-being, reduce occupational risks, improve regulatory compliance, and foster a proactive safety culture. The findings also provide valuable guidance for industrial managers and policymakers in prioritizing workplace safety interventions and allocating resources more effectively. Furthermore, the extracted dimensions offer a practical framework for assessing occupational safety and health practices in future studies and may support the development of evidence-based labour welfare policies aimed at improving organizational sustainability and workforce productivity.

9. CONCLUSION

The present study assessed occupational safety and health (OSH) practices among industrial workers in organized manufacturing units of Palakkad District and identified the underlying dimensions influencing industrial labour welfare. The findings indicate that the overall level of OSH practices was significantly higher than the established benchmark, reflecting a positive safety orientation among the surveyed industries. Furthermore, the factor analysis confirmed that occupational safety and health practices are represented by three meaningful dimensions, which together explained more than 70% of the total variance, demonstrating a robust and comprehensive measurement framework. These findings reinforce the importance of integrating safety management, occupational health initiatives, and preventive protective measures as complementary components of labour welfare. From a practical perspective, organizations should strengthen employee participation in safety programmes, periodically review workplace health policies, and continuously improve preventive safety mechanisms to sustain a safe working environment. The study also provides a validated framework that can assist industrial managers and policymakers in designing targeted occupational safety interventions. Future research may extend this framework by including unorganized industries, comparing different industrial sectors or geographical regions, employing longitudinal research designs to examine changes in safety practices over time, or incorporating advanced analytical techniques such as Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) and Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to validate and expand the proposed occupational safety and health model.

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