



# CRUSHED

# 2024

6th Annual Report on worker safety in the Indian auto sector, with special focus on research done by the workers themselves

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**



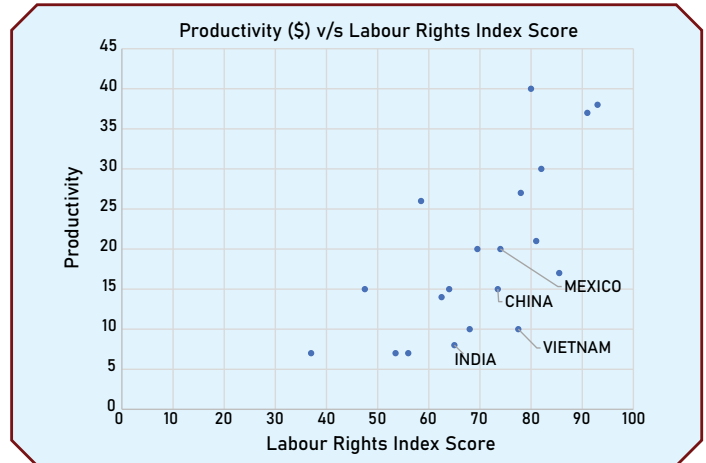
# Executive Summary

**CRUSHED2024, the sixth annual edition**, continues to not only find, and draw attention to, the ongoing thousands of disabling worker injuries in the supply chains of top 10 automobile brands, but now adds new insights on women workers' conditions in these auto component factories.

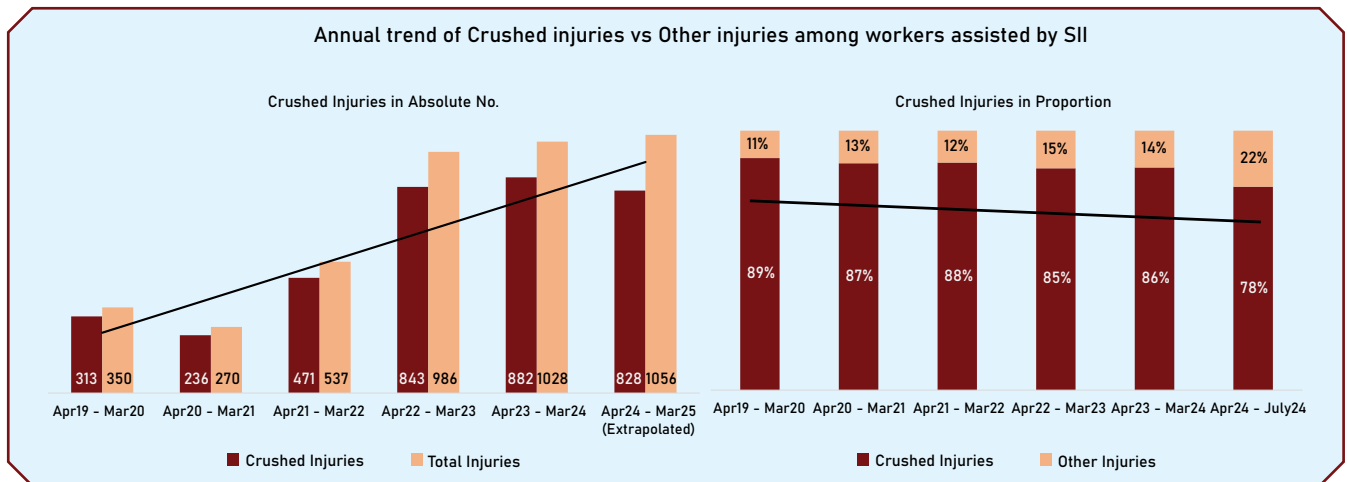
The report also, for the first time, includes a new section based on the Participatory Research, conducted by workers themselves.

1. There is a high correlation between labour productivity and working conditions. Better working conditions in Indian manufacturing, especially in the automobile sector will not only improve the lives of crores of workers but also enhance Indian Labour Productivity and boost the economy as India loses at least 4% to occupational injuries, deaths, and work-related illnesses (**more details in Chapter 1**)

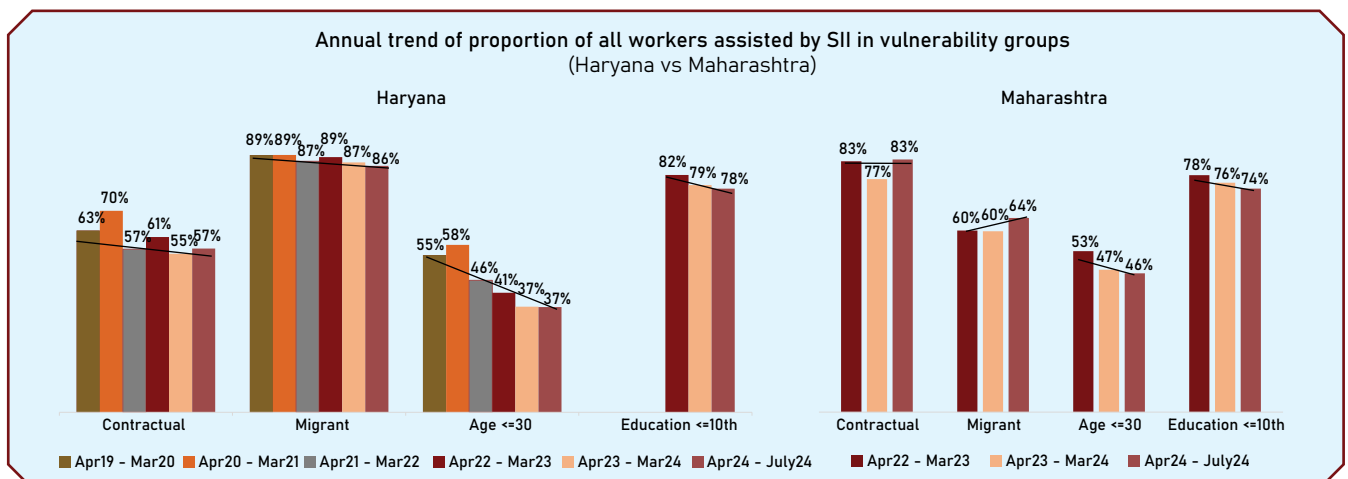
**Other key findings of the report based on the experiences of 6500+ injured workers in automotive sector supply chain, assisted by SII:**



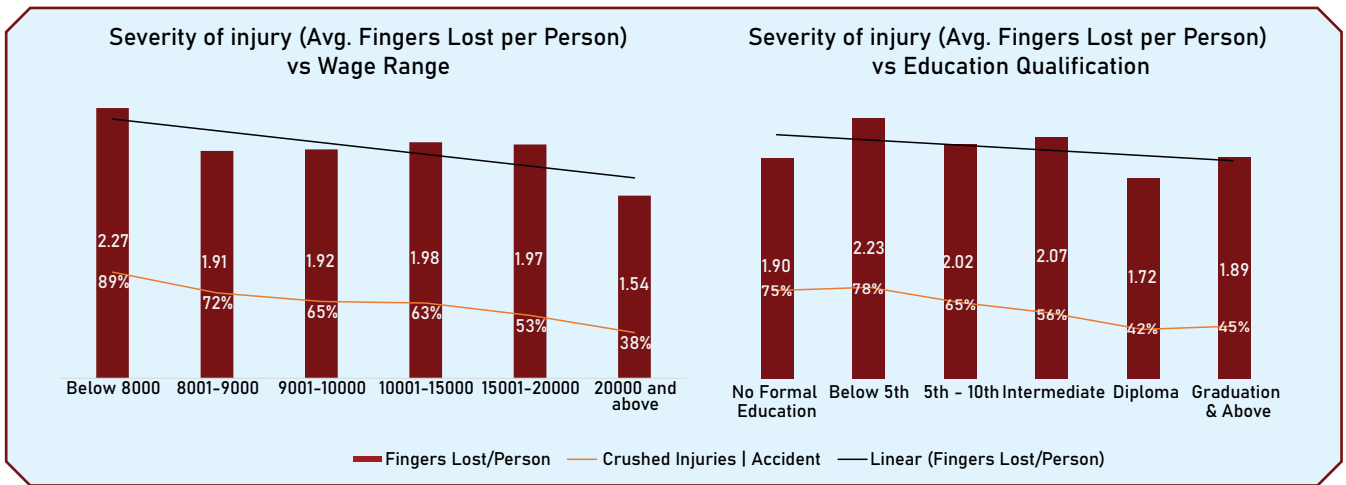
2. Thousands of workers continue to lose their fingers (crush injuries) in the automotive sector supply chain (Chapter 2)



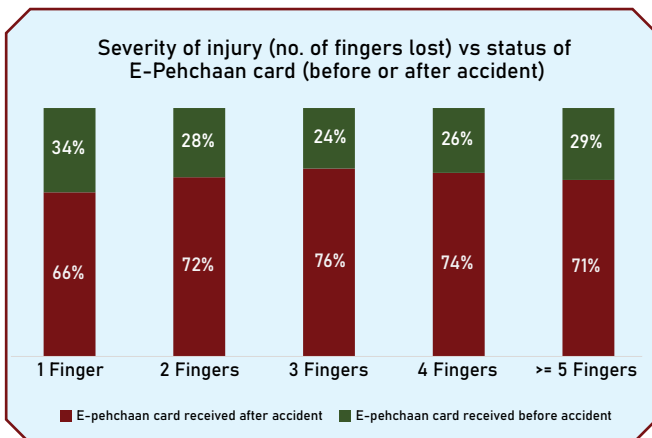
3. There is no significant change in the high vulnerability (migrants, lowly educated and contractual) levels over the years except for fewer injured being young, a good sign indeed (Chapter 2)



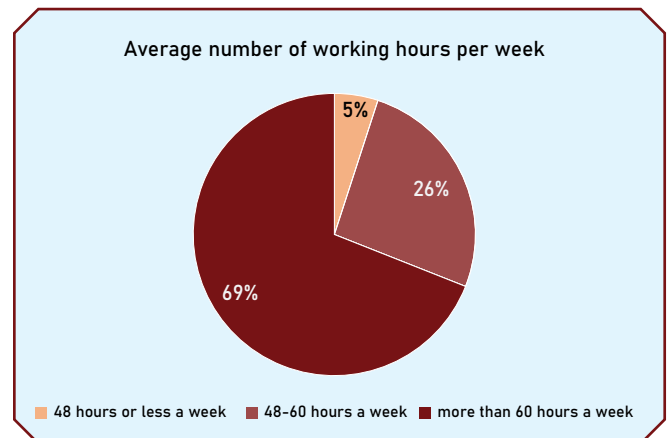
**4. The lower the wages and education, more are the fingers lost - probably because of lowly paid helpers being (illegally) used as (poorly kept) machine operators (Chapter 3)**



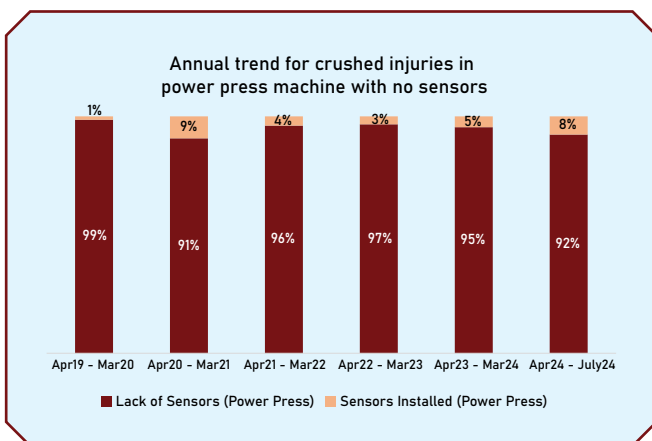
**5. Worse the ESIC compliance, worse the injuries - indicating lack of professionalism that also cause lower labour productivity (Chapter 2)**



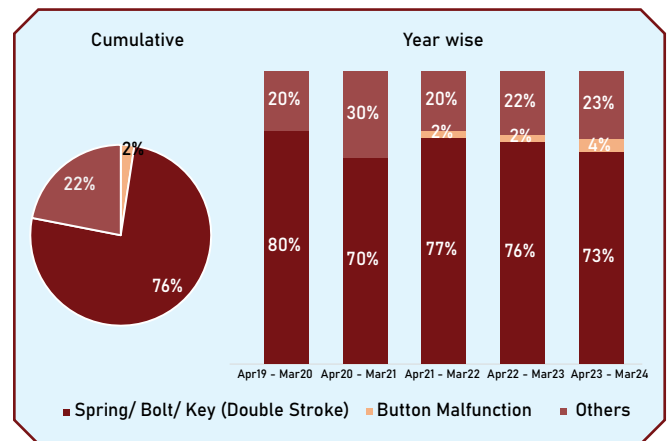
**6. Working hours are excessive - less than 5% work the legally mandated 48 hours pre week or less. 12-hour days six days a week is the norm (Chapter 3)**



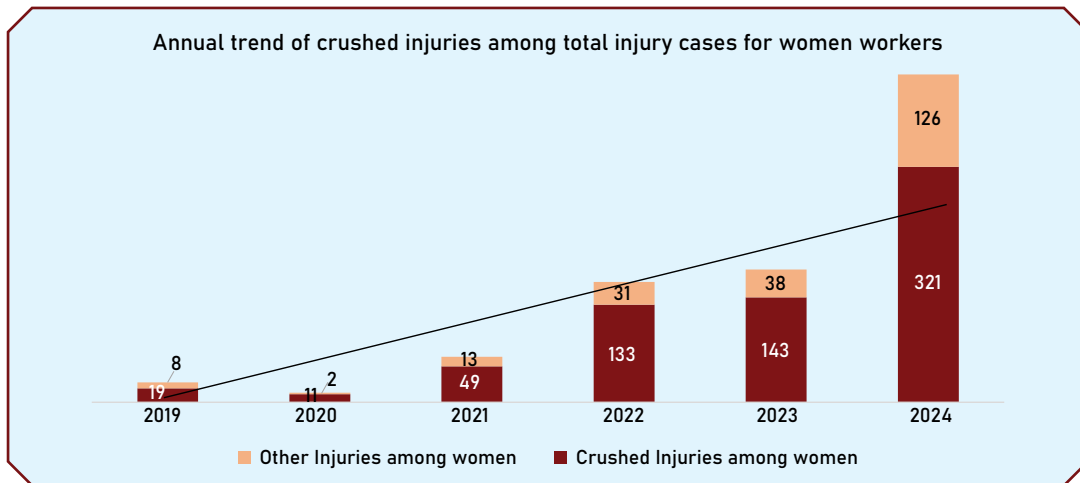
**7. Power presses, with poor maintenance and without the legally mandated safety guards/sensors, remain the bane of the industry (Chapter 3)**



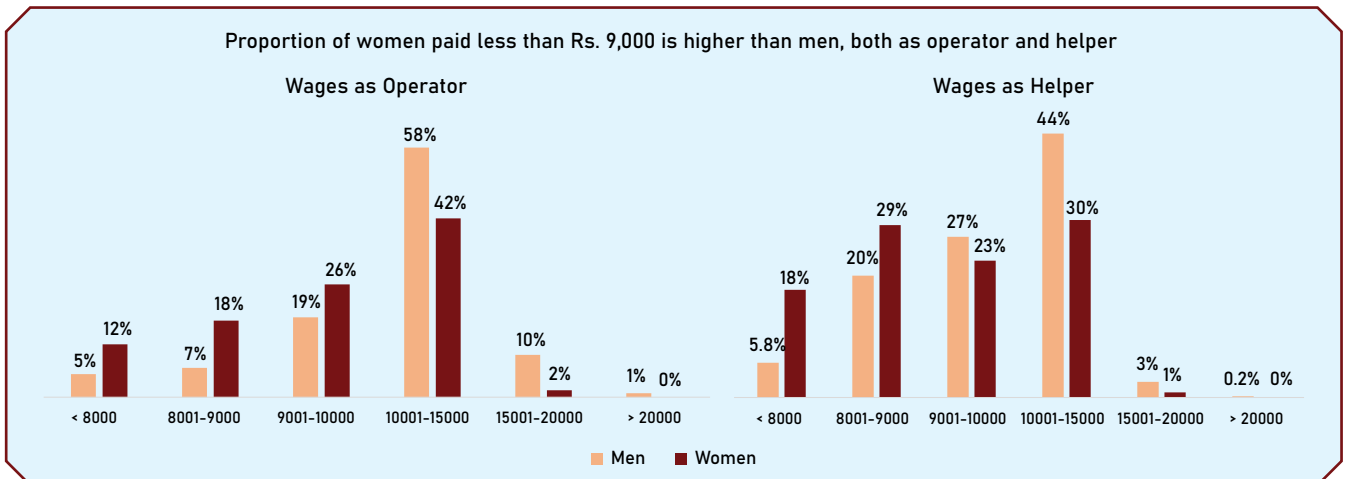
**8. 'Double Stroke' due to 'loose parts' in the power press are the most common causes of loss of fingers - low-cost interventions will make a big difference. (Chapter 3)**



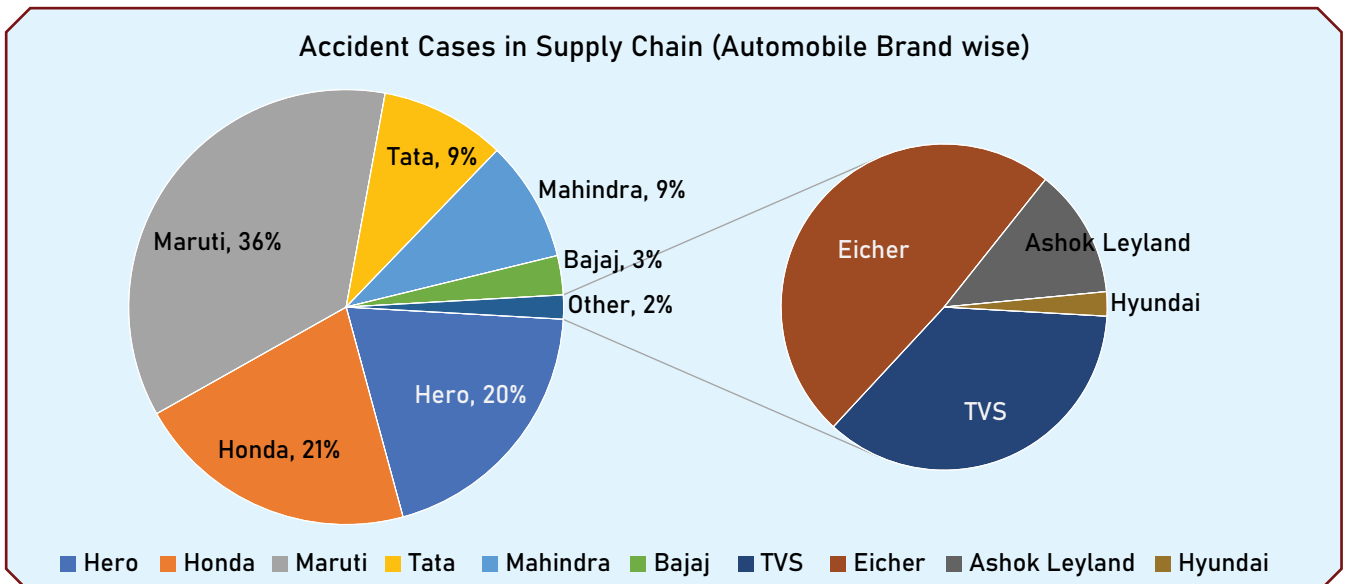
**9. More and more injured women workers are approaching SII for assistance and are getting disabled by operating the same 'dangerous machine' – power press (Chapter 4)**



**10. The often-dire financial circumstances of women has led the employers to pressurise them (more than men workers) to operate power presses and in a few factories more women run power presses than men, while earning much lower than men for the same job. (Chapter 4)**

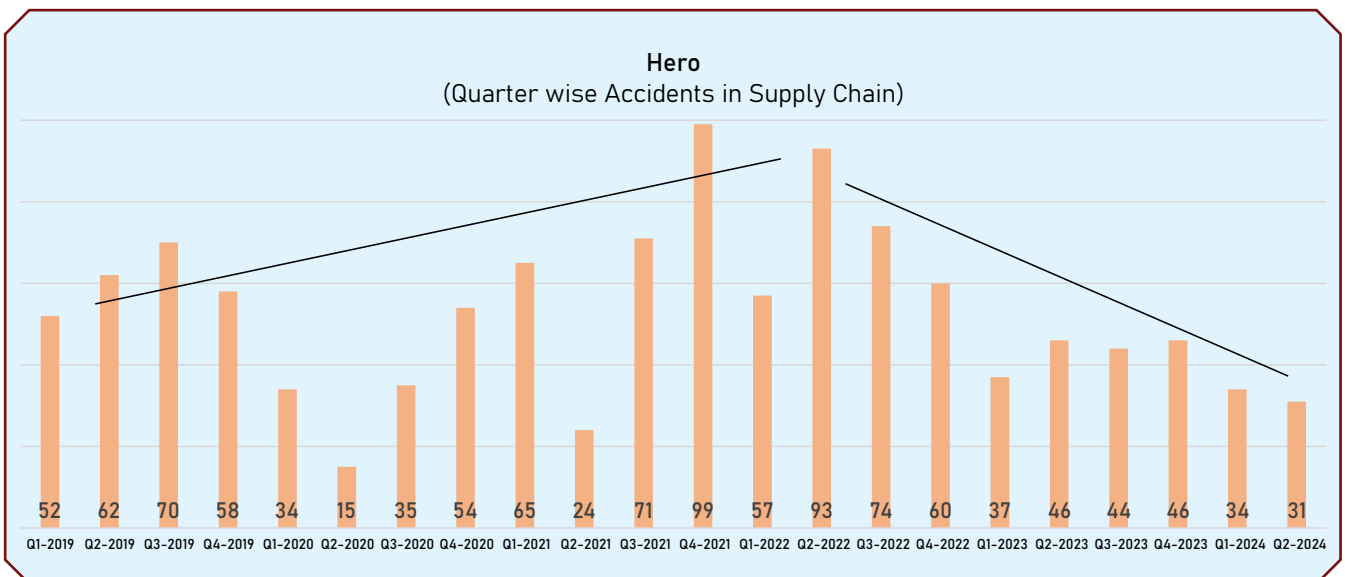
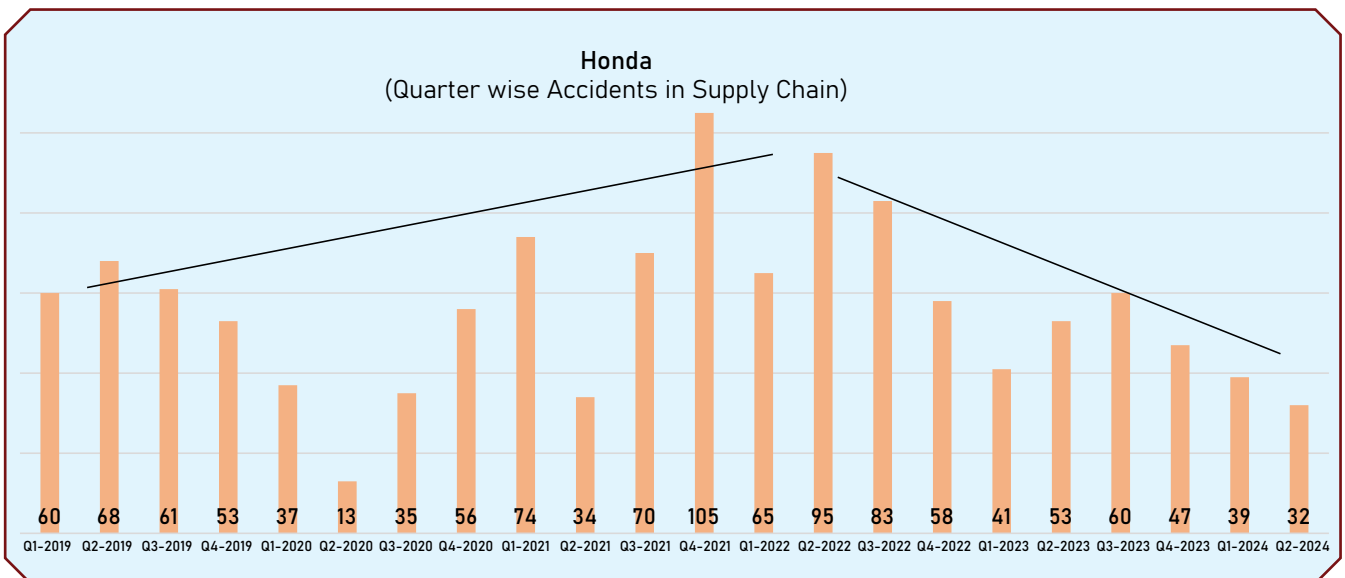
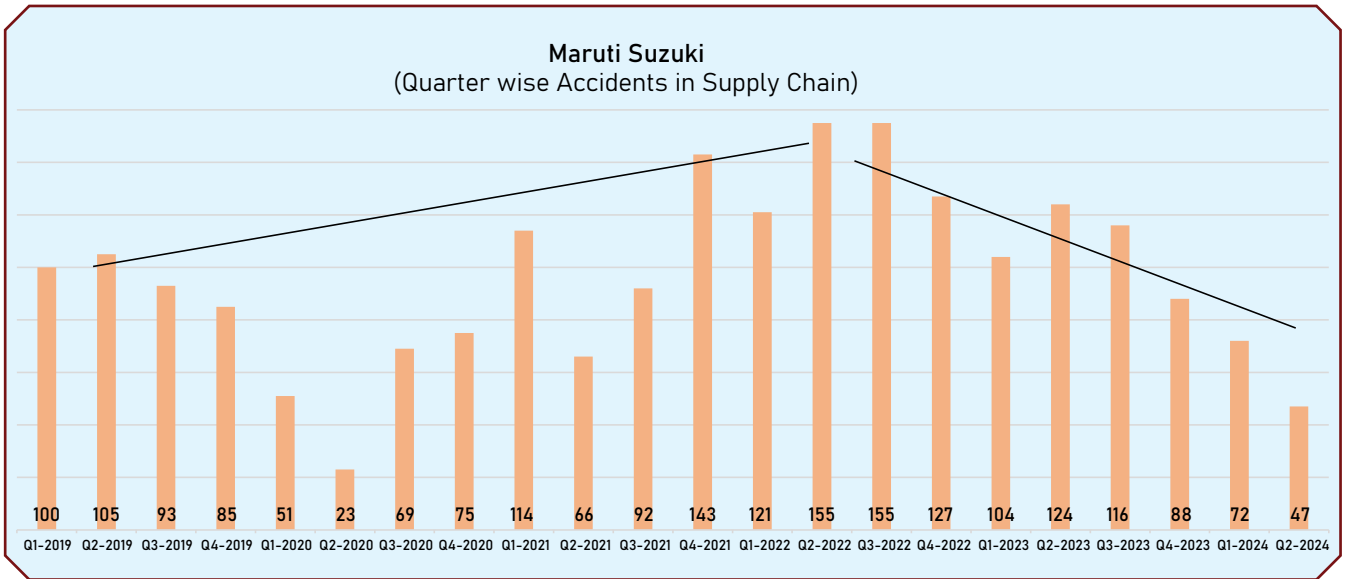


**11. Workers are getting disabled in the supply chain of all the top 10 automobile brands, although given SII's outreach mainly in Haryana and Maharashtra, 95% of the injured workers assisted by SII are from six brands: Maruti, Honda, Hero, TATA, Mahindra, and Bajaj (Chapter 5)**

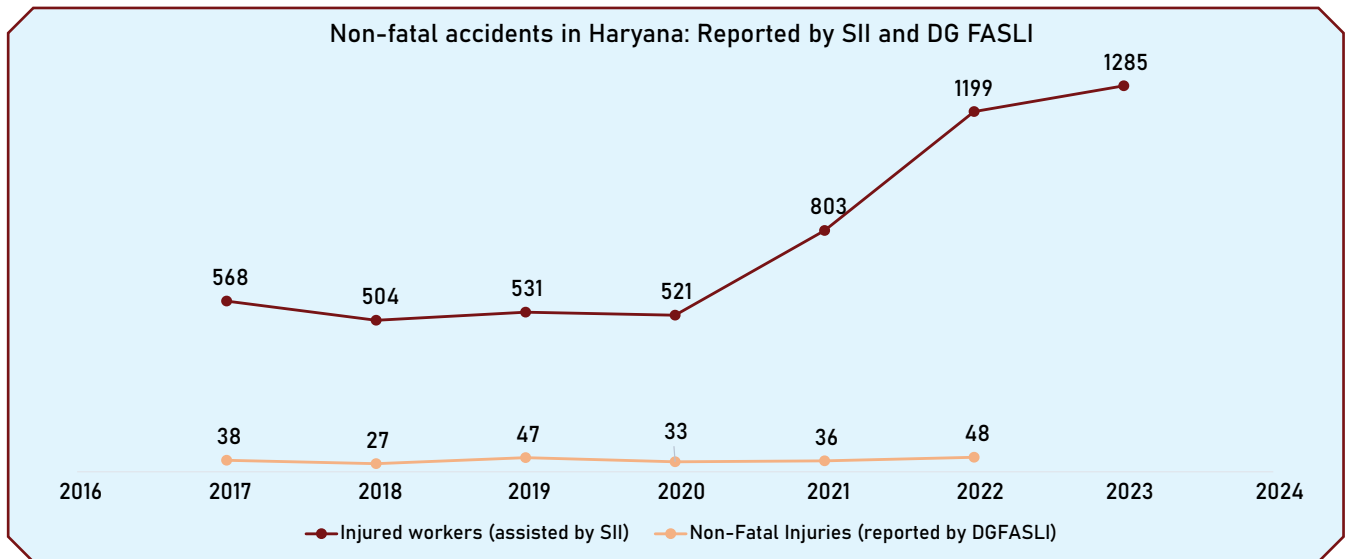




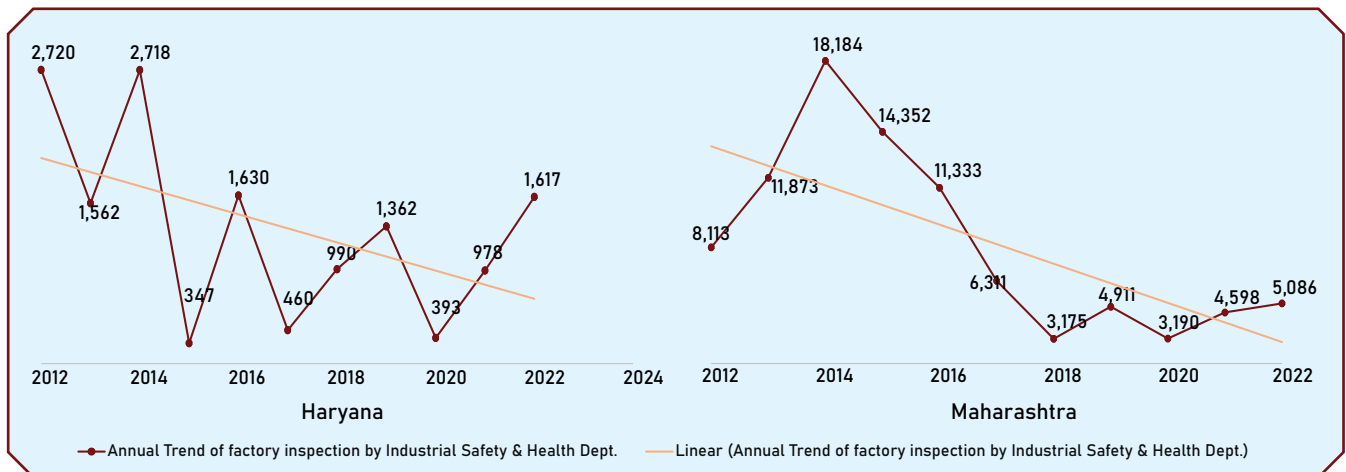
12. Good news: Maruti, Honda and Hero – three largest brands in SII’s database have shown a quarter-by-quarter improvement since Q3 2022 – But need to see three-year consistency and there is anecdotal evidence that pressure from brands may be leading to further under-reporting (Chapter 5)



**13. Factories continue to under-report accidents to the government: SII reports 20x the injuries than accidents reported to DG FASLI in Haryana (Chapter 7)**



**14. Factory inspection for Haryana and Maharashtra state's factory have been reducing for years (Chapter 7)**



**15. While the listed entities in the top 10 automobile brands are filing BRSRs to SEBI as mandated, all the questions relating to accidents in the supply chain which are voluntary, remain unanswered or minimal or incomplete, as are questions on social security and corrective measures for a second year in a row as the submissions for 2022-23 how (SafetyNiti2024 covered the submissions for 2021-22) (Chapter 7)**

**16. SII is grateful that nine of these top 10 brands, SIAM and ACMA are engaging in constructive discussions, albeit to varying degrees.** The status of their engagement and SII's recommendations to all the key stakeholders can be found in Chapter 9.

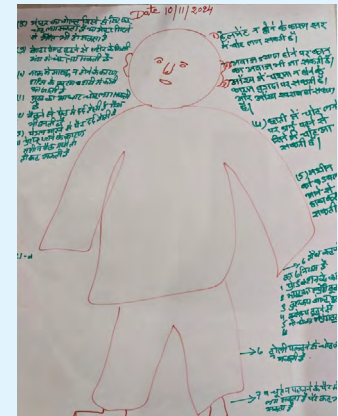
**17. The next steps Safe In India Foundation plans to include:**

- Additional Workers Assistance Centres (WACs):** Expansion of existing centres in Haryana and Maharashtra and/or new ones in Tamil Nadu and Karnataka.
- Strengthening Nudges:** Add two new key annual reports:
  - Annual Safety & ESIC Index and
  - ESG-analysis of BRSR Reports for auto sector and developing sector-specific guideline, in partnership with the Ministry of Corporate Affairs for SEBI.
- Enhance Workers' Education, Engagement and Awareness:** Increase capacity for workers' meetings, campaign events and content for social media platforms.
- Build deeper and stronger capacity:** Strengthen research, advocacy, building partnerships, with other social sector players, government, and business, and strengthening IT, HR, and FIN.

## “हमारी बात हम बताएंगे।” “Hamaari Baat, Hum Bataayengey” (HB-HB): A first in this report Workers’ own Participatory Research: Their insightful and powerful voice for change (Chapter 10)

In 2023, SII started a ‘Participatory Research’ with its expert partner, Praxis, where workers were trained to conduct their own research in their work environment to bring out their direct experiences using thought provoking participatory tools such as factory resource mapping, body mapping and daily schedule mapping. Seven Shramik Saathis (worker volunteers) led this exercise, conducted 15+ discussion sessions, met 100+ workers. Some of the views expressed:

- “हम कुछ सवाल पूछते हैं, तो ठेकेदार जगह बदल देता है।”
- “अगर वर्कर थोड़ा भी फ्री है तो झाड़ू भी लगवा लेते है।”
- “ईएसआई बहुत मुश्किल होता है। वहां मतलब 2-3 दिन का भत्ता गया। दवाई नहीं मिलती है।”
- “हेल्पर को कह देते हैं कि देख कर सीख तो गए हो, अब चलाना शुरू कर दो।”



Through this research, workers have the following **expectations from/ recommendations for factories, brands, and the government**

“We want owners and management of the auto component factories to meet the basics for a fair arrangement between us”

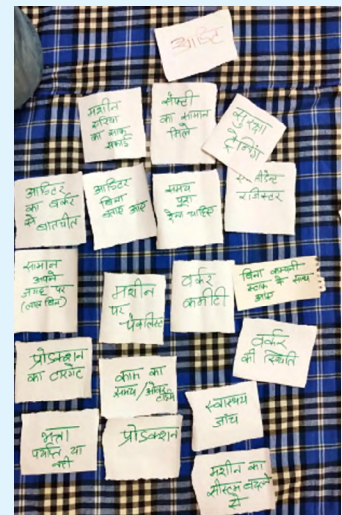
- **Improve our Workplace Safety:** Provide us good safety equipment, arrange machines with enough space, and regularly train workers
- **Offer us Clear Contracts and Job Security with Dignified wages:** A proper contract and salary slip, more stable jobs instead of temporary roles, wages per the government grades.
- **Provide us basic workplace facilities:** clean workspaces, organize machines well, provide canteens with healthy food, clean and safe water, and toilet facilities, breaks to rest during their shifts.
- **Ensure Fair Treatment for us Women Workers:** Equal pay for the same work as men, not extra workload, create a workplace where everyone feels respected and treated fairly.
- **Provide us Better Support when Injured:** monthly financial support and proper records of accidents. Injured worker should be rehabilitated in jobs.

“We want **automobile Brands** to be more proactive and take responsibility “

- **Big companies should take responsibility:** support factories by ensuring fair pricing to help factories maintain good working conditions and fair wages for workers, stricter audits.
- **Make Audits Worker-Friendly:** Auditors should spend time talking to workers, check machines and records carefully, surprise audits to see the real working conditions, evaluate not just the physical and operational conditions but also worker welfare.

“We want more support and monitoring by the **State and Central Governments**”

- **Make our jobs permanent:** Replace temporary labour with permanent job opportunities to ensure job security and stability.
- **Make our payments in time:** ensure prompt payment of wages, overtime dues, and other benefits without delays or unfair deductions.
- **Make government audits stricter:** ensure that factories adopt stricter safety measures to protect workers and provide adequate healthcare facilities
- **Don’t terminate us suddenly:** Investigate sudden and unjustified job terminations, ensuring workers are treated fairly.
- **Support Worker Groups and Representation:** Encourage workers to form groups or platforms at the factory or community level including safety committees. This will help them share their concerns together and work toward solutions more effectively.



These recommendations do not cover the entire gambit of issues identified through the research but were deemed the important first steps to a safer work environment for the workers.



CRUSHED 2024

# Letter from the CEO

We need to start listening to the voice of workers. Because they tell us what we don't, but should and need to, know.

**For the first time, this report has a "Participatory Research" done by injured auto sector workers, themselves, on the safety issues in their working environment.** Eight of them led 100+ of their colleagues, on a platform provided by us and guided by our expert partners, Praxis. Their findings, their words and their recommendations are insightful and powerful. I would urge you to read this unique Chapter 10 carefully.

**We continue to find thousands of workers injured in their supply chains every year.** This 6th annual edition of CRUSHED2024 presents our annual evidence of worker injuries in the supplier factories to the top ten automobile brands. The trends, from 6500+ auto sector workers, are now well established and unarguable.

**Good news: There is finally some hard evidence of reduction in injuries.** In Haryana, where we started, we are now seeing a gradual reduction for the last eight quarters in the suppliers of Maruti, Honda and Hero. We congratulate them for their actions, some with us and other without.

**However, a word of caution.** We are also hearing on the ground reports that suppliers are being asked to report 'zero accidents', which may be discouraging accident reporting further. We will investigate this in CRUSHED2025. If this were to be true, this is not only a loss of information, but also is a grave healthcare and financial loss to these already disabled workers and their families.

**We now also have stronger evidence on the worse plight of women workers in these factories.** Mostly employed as lowly paid helpers, they are being asked to operate dangerous power press machines, underpaid compared to men, and with no separate toilets. We need to improve their situation if we want more women employment in Indian manufacturing.

**This report also details the lack of appropriate employer-employee relationship.** Most do not have appointment letters or salary slips, their working hours underreported in wage calculations, they work more than the legal 48 hours cap per week, while being not paid legal overtime wages. Many of their Accident Reports have false information pointing responsibility at workers rather than employers.

**We are grateful that many of 25+ stakeholders in industry and government are engaging with us, although sporadically, and many actions are afoot, albeit painfully slow.** There is a long way to go.

Special thanks are due, for this report, to Siddharth Raina, Dhanraj B, VN Saroja, Dheeraj from Praxis, everyone else in the Safe in India team and of course, our advisors and supporters.

The country needs these improvements to scale up our supply chains and compete better, globally. We cannot, forever, rely on "low-road" manufacturing based on low-cost labour arbitrage. We need to take a "high-road" of better working conditions driving higher value and quality production, which is not possible with our current short term jugaad-mindset.

Please join us in this journey.

On behalf of the Safe in India team

**Sandeep Sachdeva**

Co-Founder & CEO

Safe in India Foundation