

CRUSSHED GRUSSHED Sth Annual Report on worker safety in the Indian auto sector, with special focus on research done by the workers themselves

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A Safe in India Foundation's Report



Abbreviations and Acronyms

ACMA	Automotive Component Manufacturers Association of India		
ASDC	Automotive Skills Development Council		
BIS	Bureau of Indian Standards		
BRR	Business Responsibility Report		
DG FASLI	Directorate General Factory Advice Service and Labour Institutes		
ESG	Environmental, Social, and Governance		
ESIC	Employees' State Insurance Corporation		
GDP	Gross Domestic Product		
IL0	International Labour Organization		
ISH	Industrial Safety and Health		
IS0	International Organization for Standardization		
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding		
MSME	Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises		
NEEM	National Employability Enhancement Scheme		
NGRBC	National Guidelines on Responsible Business Conduct		
OEM	Original Equipment Manufacturer		
0SH	Occupational Safety and Health		
OSH & WC	Occupational Safety, Health, and Working Conditions		
SCoC	Supplier Code of Conduct		
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals		
SIAM	Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers		
SII	Safe in India Foundation		
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure		



CHAPTER 10

"Hamaari Baat, Hum Bataayengey" (HB-HB) Workers' own research: Their insightful and powerful voice for change

Research led and conducted by workers in Faridabad, a key auto sector hub, and its report authored by workers with support from SII and the Praxis team. All of them work in the automotive supply chain and most of them have lost their fingers in auto component factories.



10.1 The Key Worker-Researchers met with other workers in the community and near workplaces. They gathered information over a year and met at the SII Faridabad office to discuss their findings.

While this Participatory Research Project began a year ago with 15 Shramik Saathis (Worker Volunteers), given the nature of their jobs and responsibilities at their native places, we are grateful to the following main seven worker-partners who stayed the course and completed the project.



SUCHITA, aged 45, is from Bihar. She was injured while working on power press machine in May 2022. She is a mother of four daughters and manages household work along with 8–12-hour shifts at the company. With a formidable reputation in the community, she is actively sought by other workers for advice and support in raising their issues.



RANJAN KUMAR SINGH, aged 43, is from Chapra, Bihar. He has been working in an auto component factory for eight years. He lost four fingers in 2018. He has been advocating for the use of magnets as safety measure for working on power press machine in the company and has been able to introduce changes in the factory.



RAM CHANDER PODDAR, aged 50, is from Darbhanga, Bihar. He has been working with his current employer since 2020. He lost four fingers in 2021 while working on a power press machine. His family consists of five members, including one son and two daughters. He moved to Faridabad in 2000.



DHARMENDAR TIWARI, aged 32, is from Chapra, Bihar. He has been working with his current employer in auto component sector since 2018. He lives with his father and sister, who also works in the same company. He started working in Faridabad in 2012.



RAMJI PANDEY, aged 47, is from Banaras, Uttar Pradesh. He has been working in his current auto component factory since 2021. He lives with his wife and one son. He helps injured workers by providing ESIC information and support.



DINESH PANDEY, aged 59, is from Gaya, Bihar. He has been working in his current auto company since 2022. He raises ESIC awareness among workers in the community. He has worked with Maruti earlier.



SHREE KANT, aged 33, is from Buxar, Bihar. He has been working in his current company since 2023. He lives with his wife and two sons. He previously worked in Gujarat in 2009 and moved to Faridabad in 2013.



10.2 This Participatory Research was the next logical step to SII's engagement with workers since 2016.



Since 2016, SII has been directly engaging with workers and empowering them with knowledge on worker safety and ESIC benefits. More than 5,200 have attended SII's monthly Worker Support Groups, large worker events (Shramik Sammalen), community outreach activities, etc. On SII's social media (Hindi FB, YouTube, WhatsApp), thousands of workers have engaged with SII on these subjects' asking questions, answering quizzes and surveys, and providing insights which help SII advocate on their behalf.

In 2023, for the first time, SII started a 'Participatory Research' with its expert partner, Praxis, where workers were trained to conduct their own research in their communities and work environment, specifically related to safety' and present their findings and recommendations.

This new important chapter, which will now be a permanent feature of this report series, introduces the first such worker report. Their findings and recommendations were done by way of charts prepared by them and has been presented here for the English audience by Praxis and SII.

10.3 Methodology of Worker Participatory Research





A formal worker-led research study is a path breaking effort in bringing to the fore, the issues faced by the workers in the automotive sector supply chain, and in their own words.

The focus of the participatory processes was to enable discussions that bring out the direct experiences of the participants through use of the thought-provoking participatory tools such as factory resource mapping, body mapping and daily schedule mapping to evolve all dimensions of worker safety, identify the key causes of poor safety, and build recommendations for the various stakeholders.

This report is based on discussions and research and the key findings from the discussions led by Worker Volunteers ("Shramik Saathis"), developed by and associated with SII, over the past two years in Faridabad. Workers' submissions in Hindi backing this report are available in the footer.¹

The findings from the various research tools used, brought forth issues and ideas that were often unknown, unrecognised, or unacknowledged.

All the experiences and quotations in this report have not been attributed to a single worker but depict observations made during the collective discussion processes.

10.4 This year long process saw the Shramik Saathis (Worker Volunteers) being trained on the research tools, encouraged to go into their communities, organize meetings and collect data from their colleagues



Beginning September 2023, the Shramik Saathis, who led this initiative, with guidance from SII/Praxis started meeting in Faridabad automobile cluster to understand the issues around workplace safety faced by workers in the auto component factories.

They met 6 times and conducted 12 community or factory meetings, reaching 168 workers. For the synthesis, 4 Group Discussions were conducted with workers comprising 30 workers. Individual level data was collected by the Shramik Saathis from 200+ workers to understand worker experiences.



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10.5 They decided three key objectives for their research report

The conversations started with sharing of individual experiences by workers and then formalised into some concrete objectives:

- 1. Understanding the key safety issues faced by the workers in auto component factories
- 2. Understanding some of key reasons for the persistence of these issues
- 3. Listing out some important recommendations from the workers to government officials, and factory owners and management

10.6 They followed five steps to make their recommendations

The group followed these five steps for building their conversation and to come up with their recommendations:





10.7 HB-HB report Finding 1 on workers' working conditions support and indeed add great nuance to CRUSHED series findings in their own words.

10.7.1 What causes these accidents?

"वो सब देखते हैं, हमें कुछ नहीं पता रहता।"

("They see everything, we don't get to see anything" – In the context of the management keeping tabs on the rate of production on each machine, while the operator worker has no means to do the same; this builds constant pressure as every day of high production leads to the higher target number without taking into account all other factors)

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"हमें प्रोडक्शन, क्वालिटी और एच आर तीनों को सुनना पड़ता है। प्रोडक्शन और क्वालिटी वाले भी एक जैसा नहीं सोचते।"

(We have to hear from production, quality, and HR. Even Production and quality team don't have coordination)

"ज्यादा टारगेट होता है तो ऑपरेटर कभी—कभी खुद ही सेंसर बंद कर काम करने लगता है।" (When targets are high, operators sometime themselves stop/remove the sensors and start working)

"स्प्रिंग खुद ही ठीक करक काम चला लेते हैं। प्रोडक्शन जरूरी रहता है।" (We mend the spring on our own and start the work as production is important to achieve)

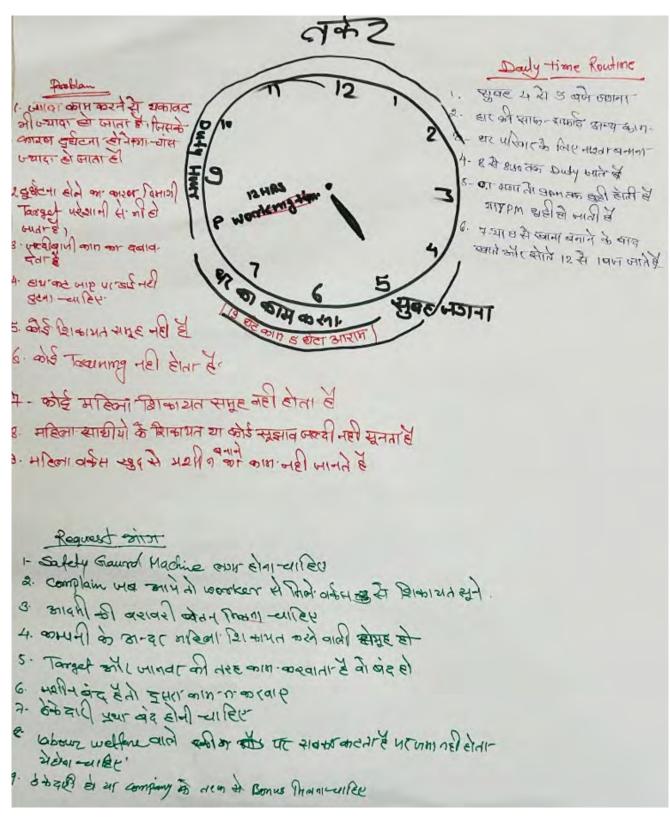
"मशीन की इज्जत है, लेकिन वर्कर की कोई इज्जत नहीं है।" (Machine is respected more; workers get no respect)

"सबसे बड़ा कारण प्रोडक्शन टारगेट है।" (The most critical reason (for accidents) is the product target)



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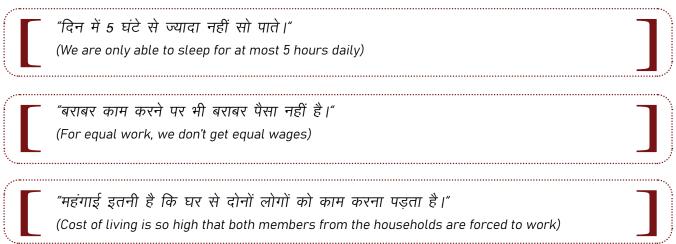




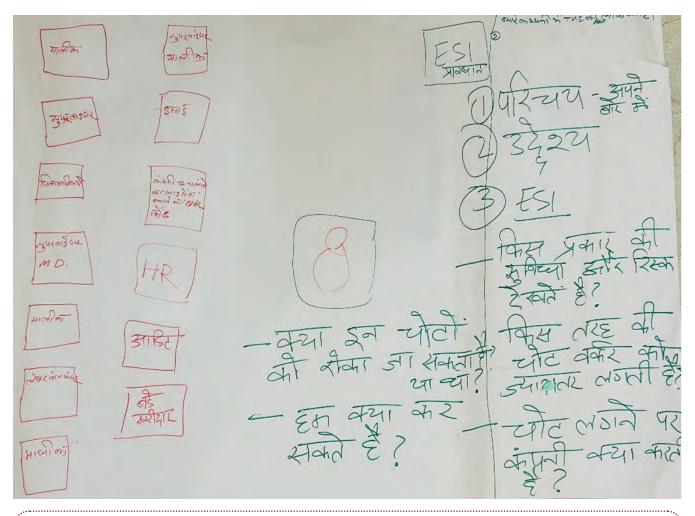
10.7.2 The life of the woman worker - underpaid, overstressed and sleep deprived

"हमारा ध्यान बटा रहता है।" (Our mind is always pre-occupied with responsibilities at home and factory)





10.7.3 Why power press machine causes more accidents, and it still goes unaddressed?



"पावर प्रैस में सबसे ज्यादा खतरा है, पर इसमें सबसे कम पैसा मिलता है। इसको बड़ा काम नहीं मानते।" (Power press machines have most accidents but pay is least. This work is not considered 'highly skilled')

"अगर हम काम करने से मना कर दें तो, कोई दूसरा वर्कर तैयार हो जाएगा।" (If we say NO to working, someone else will take my job)

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10.7.4 Will factories ever own worker concerns?

"ठेकेदारी के कारण हमारा कंपनी से कोई संबंध नहीं रहता।"

(Due to contractualisation, we do not have any direct relation with the factory)

"हम कुछ सवाल पूछते हैं, तो ठेकेदार जगह बदल देता है।" (If we ask any questions, the contractor changes our place of employment)

"कंपनी लिखती है 'मैंने सुना नहीं, मैंने देख नहीं, मैंने पूछा नहीं।' तो क्या सारी गलती वर्कर की है?"-(Company displays on walls - I did not listen; I did not see and did not ask (as the reasons for accidents). But does that mean that entire responsibility is of workers?)

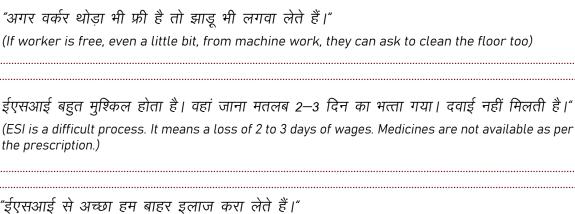
"जब गर्मी ज्यादा थी और हमरे कूलर की बात की तो एच आर बोला तुम लोगों को नींद आने लगेगी।" (When heat was at peak, we asked for coolers but HR said you would start feeling sleepy)

"बड़ी कंपनी को ऑडिट टीम अचानक बिना बताए भेजनी चाहिए।" (Big companies should send surprise audit visits)

10.7.5 Things need to change; what we face should be considered unacceptable

0	and a state of the	
पांडेकसन जा उबार जाया है, लेकिन इस्ते लाहा जाया जाली हो रहा हू जिल्लाओं के नाम नहीं किनी है और तर जा नियम की हू जा लाइट की रही ह त्यी जंग हो जाया है। चीन का मने ६ जा लाइट कही रही ह त्यी जंग हो जाया हू।	 लील जागल जाग्यनी अन्य सेन 	(3) Laxmi Entex Prises complia
ही रहा है देखात ज्यादा है, लेकिन इसके कारहा ज्यादा राजनी	E Son month के गाँडेज्यान ला रखम उतीयल हे इस लाखा	
विषया की में लगभगी के साम तरी कितनी है जीय तथा का तीय तथा की में लोग लाहिट जही रहती में तथी लोग ही आता है। मौने का पानी के लिए जी कही है जी लोग ही आता है।	रफ्सीडेक्ट की अधिक होग हैं और एक कराती के भेरत	. इसमेकी जापाई नहीं है। महीन को मेर्टनेंम करने के लिए .
गीने का पाने के लिया नी रहती है तभी लेंग हो जान है। है जुडा बाने के लिया जो बटेकी है उस्में वझी पुज जने ने जादन के लियाज जाने हैं, जुडा का जाने है तरी	कम है। इसके जोनम नहीं मिलनी दिवाली के जुन्ह महि) कोई जहीं हैं इससे हैल्परी के की मठीन जलने के लिय
318	पहले मजरूर को किन्नालना चाल लर देरे है। त्रेडिजी य	र देवान काले हे सेने हैने का कोई समय की में रूप
स्टाफ की पिलाया जाता है। टेकी कि सफाई जी 0 - 0	ा जाम का रहात ज्यादा दिया जाता है, मेन्द्री भीतिय	कर्म्यानी हो सडील से हला कटने के घट किना इलाज
कराफ की विमाग जाता है। टेनी कि स्वताई जही कि ताती सेंद्राम के 20 ना पाने ठेंडा जिनम है। इस नगरती में	वहीं दि जाती है। इस अन्यती में जूता - जूंगल,	करा हे काम में निकाल दिया जात है और जिसके जाय
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मार लेरे हे पर जमा जर देरे हे पर लल्यायन के लिए भेज मार लेरे हे पर जमा जही करने हैं।		कर हैने हैं पर लग्जाहान के लिय पैसाकार लेते हैं पर अगी नहीं करते हैं।
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सुख सुविधा दि जामी है और तेंजर की दिया जान है	मैं हिस करणती हैं। cilpuleer को हैल्पर के रूप में आते हुई , पर होरे पर इहाव डाल्ल्स महारेन काल्वका जलाना	में 2010 में 28 जुलाई को जर्मी हुई बी। अब तन में हिम बी, तम नम लेड हनजाम ना आजा 11/8/2022 में हम मंट
	गिर्मा हिस्स लगारणा से साथा हाइस ह मा हाइस में हैं।	USI EAR JUL EN AVE of DALAIN STOP VER & ANGAM
अगेर क्राइंग्स नहीं दिया जाता हूं। इस कामानी में जैन्सी	मीदी हाग का मेगुठा कट जाया हो हाइ सा (२ थुटा १०६३	हमें जदून परेषाम कर रहा है, मालीक का तेरा केवा भी
withou one broad and P.F and E.S.I WHIT ONE	की हुआ। इस हारसे के बल ३/०२/१००१३ की मुझे	राजी राजी निमन जांझो नहीं तो पुलीम बुलामर मिलन्वा हुंगा जैसे बैजीर को पुलीन से पिटवा कर जिल्लावा है।
21 र रि, जा देखें करती के निर्धायक उग. है रह	अभ्य में जिल्हाल दिख प्राया इस हाटने के आखा	को के समाई जा को मैन्ट्रेनस नहीं और PF रही करने है।
जमा नही जरने हैं। इसने 2005 में हो काम करना हैं	मुझे किसी करवनी में लाम भी गहीं हीन कहा है।	और 175 क E.S.I कारती है और 25 के काराइस जो की
अगा उसानी तीन वैटीयों कि साही कर ही पर थन हो भी जो		गानीक जगा नहीं जरम हे और फ़ामेक लेकम हे। कि मैं जमा जर दिवा हूं। तेरे की क्षेत्रे पुना कि में जगानही
anoticity of for anoth give Wet former & . It ore		में म्हान्दा है निगरकी है कि कर यह की साहि देह कि है गड़की
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		कोई जान प्रक तारी कुछ नहीं जिल्ही है।
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(We prefer going to outside medical facilities rather than ESI hospitals)

"कई बार एक्सीडेंट होने पर, उसका टाइम अलग दिखाते हैं।" (When accidents happen, time is changed to show a different shift)

"जब हम फैक्टरी से बाहर आते हैं तो आज़ाद लगता है, लगता है तिहाड़ से निकले हैं।" (When we come out of the factory, we feel a sense of freedom, it seems we have come out of Tihar)

10.7.6 Wilful contravention of the laws

मुझसे कहा कि कह दो कि घर पर चोट लग गई थी।" (I was told to say (for a factory accident) that injury happened at home)

"सेंसर लगने से प्रोडक्शन लगभग 20 से 30 प्रतिशत घटेगा। कंपनी कहती है सेंसर बहुत महंगा है।" -(Use of senor reduces production by 20 to 30%. Company says sensor is costly)

"हेल्पर को कह देते हैं कि देख कर सीख तो गए हो, अब चलाना शुरू कर दो।" (Supervisor tells helpers that you have seen how the machine works, now start working on it)

"गेट पास के बिना बाहर नहीं जा सकते, और समय से पहले गेट पास मुश्किल से मिलता है। (We cannot leave the premises without a Gate Pass and we are not given one until they are willing to let us go)

"हम साढ़े दस घंटे की शिफ्ट करते हैं। कोई ओवरटाइम नहीं मिलता।" (We work for 10.5 hours in a shift. We don't get any over time)



"हमें हरियाणा का ग्रेड नहीं मिलता!" (We do not get Haryana grade (minimum wages) for payment)





10.7.7 Will safety equipment and trainings resolve these issues?

"हमारे यहां कोई समिति नहीं है।" (We do not have any safety committees)

"आज तक कोई ट्रेनिंग नहीं हुआ।" (In our factory, we have not received any training)

"प्रोडक्शन के कारण सबसे ज्यादा एक्सीडेंट होते हैं। मशीन के मेंटेनेंस पर कोई ध्यान नहीं रहता।" (Accident happen due to (very high) production targets. No one focuses on maintenance of machines)

"नया वर्कर तेजी से काम करता है, उसे नहीं समझ आता कि खतरा कहां है।" (New workers start working at greater pace without realising the dangers)

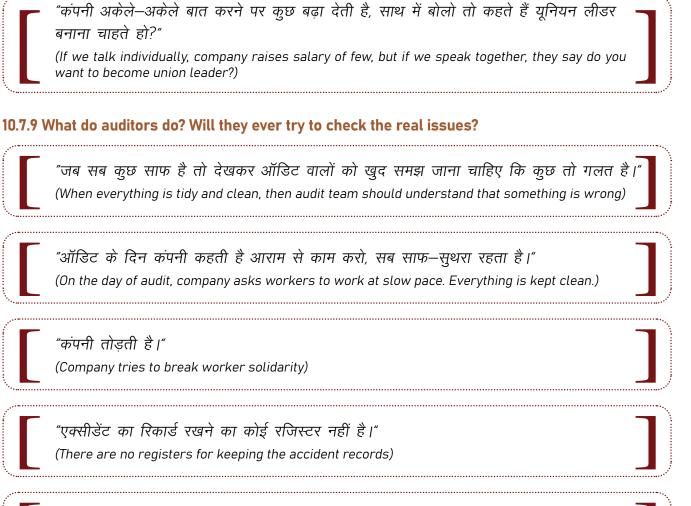
10.7.8 Do workers have voice and what forces workers to not say a NO?

देश आनीद है। फिरभी हमलोग आपस में श्कता नहीं अनाने के कारण से हम मांग आज भी कमपनी में कम पेसा में काम करते है। कमपनी में जुताका स्वीद्यानही है प्रस सौंप कार्यती में हलामेर का अविद्या नहीं ह मेडिकल के मुबिचा नही है कत्र्यनी में बर्स का न्युविद्या नहीं है प्रसिन में सेफरी नही है सलेन्सर के सुबिदा नही ह मसीवने कम्पनी में पंसा का सुबिधानही है भाषान्त प्रसाद / राजनेहा प्रेसरोप में कासकरने वाले कोई भी मनदूर राजनी का प्रसाद / राजनेहा प्रेसरोप में कासकरने वाले कोई भी मनदूर सरहोत नही है।

"हम 9 लोग एक साथ लंच करते थे, सबको अलग—अलग सेक्शन में भेज दिया।" (Nine of use used to have lunch together; so, all of us were moved to different sections)

"कंपनी तोड़ती है।" (Company tries to break worker solidarity)





"सेफ्टी ऑडिट वाले वर्कर की स्थिति, भाड़े पर कोई सवाल नहीं पूछते।" (Safety audit teams don't ask questions on workers' condition and wages)

10.8 HB-HB Report Finding 2: Workers expectations from/recommendations to factories, brands and the government



10.8.1 "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 on safety practices to create a safer workplace".

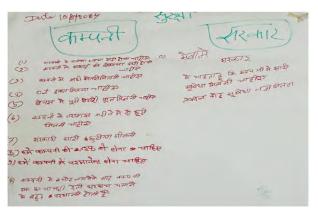
"जूते और ग्लब्स का पैसा पगार से काट लेते हैं।"

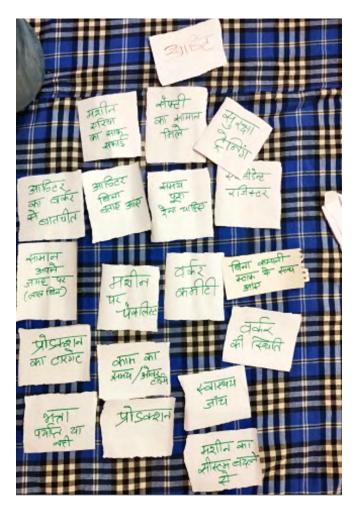
(They deduct cost of shoes and gloves from our salary)

• Offer us Clear Contracts and Job Security with Dignified wages: All of us should receive a proper contract and salary slip. Factories should work towards offering more stable jobs instead of temporary roles. Wages should be as per the government grades.

- **Provide us basic workplace facilities:** Factories should ensure clean workspaces, organize machines well, provide canteens with healthy food, clean and safe water and toilet facilities and give workers enough breaks to rest during their shifts.
- Ensure fair treatment for us, women workers: We, women workers, should get equal pay for the same work as men and not have extra workloads. Factories should create a workplace where everyone feels respected and treated fairly.
- **Provide us Better Support when Injured:** Ensure injured workers get the help they need, like monthly financial support and proper records of accidents. Injured worker should be rehabilitated in jobs.
- 10.8.2 "We want automobile Brands to be more proactive and take responsibility"
- Large companies should take responsibility: Big companies should support factories by ensuring fair pricing. This helps factories maintain good working conditions and fair wages for workers. Also, they should have stricter audit conditions.
- Make audits worker-friendly: Auditors should spend time talking to workers, check machines and records carefully, and do surprise audits to see the real working conditions. Auditors should evaluate not just the physical and operational conditions but also worker welfare.

10.8.3 "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.
- **Ensure our payments are in time:** The government should ensure prompt payment of wages, overtime dues, and other benefits without delays or unfair deductions.
- Make audits stricter. They need to ensure that factories adopt stricter safety measures to protect workers and provide adequate healthcare facilities to address workplace injuries and health risks.
- **Don't terminate us suddenly:** The government should 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.

10.9 HB-HB Report Finding 3: Factory Maps helped identify all the areas that makes a worker feel unsafe and reasons thereof

Workers drew maps of typical factory setting including physical infrastructure and identified key facilities with poor safety records and the risks associated with specific areas of a factory including general health hazards. In some instances, worker group only drew the map or listed the key risks in any typical factory settings.

In total 10 safety maps were created.

Images of the safety maps

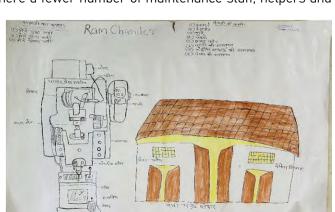
Key observations from factory maps on what in

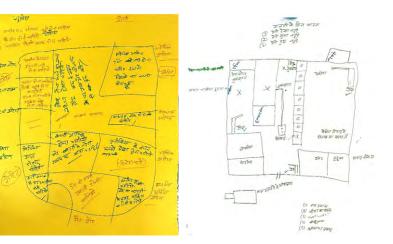
10.9.1. Power Presses

- Areas where power press machines operate are dangerous, as they cause many accidents in which workers lose fingers and hands.
- Sensors are often switched off to meet the production targets. Many old machines don't have safety sensors. This
 - also leads to accidents which are often blamed on workers.
- Power Press machines are not maintained well as there a fewer number of maintenance staff, helpers and focus remains on fulfilling the production targets.
- Operators on many instances themselves repair the machines (like mending the spring) and start working.

10.9.2 Movement of man and material

- Exit routes are not always free, with material often stored enroute
- Areas where loading and unloading takes place are also prone to accidents as material can slip off the cranes.





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- Machine as well as storage area is not kept tidy in general practice, and this also causes injuries.
- Only on days of safety and quality audits, a clear Standard Operating Procedure (SoP) is followed.
- Cleaning of material is done with acids and how the acid is stored and used is not always safe. This results in worker experience irritation on skins and eyes.

10.9.3 Training

• Most of the training sessions on safety are only on paper and no meetings are done to orient the workers except in cases of "big" factories which typically have these systems.

10.9.4 General Sanitation and Hygiene

- 1. Many of the factories lack basic facilities such as canteen, rest area etc.
- 2. Facilities for sanitation and drinking water are limited and not maintained well. In many instances workers carry their own drinking water as factories supply same water for drinking as well as toilets.
- 3. Often there is no one employed to clean the shopfloor or toilets.

10.10 HB-HB Report Finding 4 - Body maps helped identify the impact of their jobs on the different parts of their bodies as felt by the workers

Workers drew a body map of a typical worker and tried to identify some of the key health and safety issues faced by the workers and possible causes for the same.

Images of the body maps:



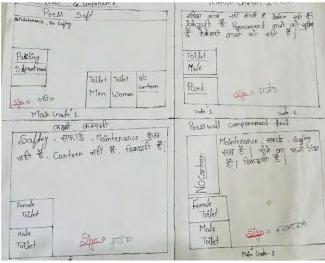
10.10.1 The physical problems faced by the workers is like a catalogue from a medical journal

- Loss of fingers and hands in accidents for workers working on power press machines is not unknown but the factory managements' first response is to blame the workers.
- Continued exposure to sound and heat causes headaches, migraines, hearing loss and many other complications.
- Long hours on the feet, cause issues like varicose veins and swollen legs.
- Workers working on lathe machine are exposed to dust continuously and it causes breathlessness, nausea, and

other issues such as asthma and lung problems.

- Most machines have some risk or the other
- There are no health check-ups on periodic basis so many of these listed health issues are not observed.
- Accessing health facilities and further process of compensation is tiresome so we just suffer.
- Some of the issues around ill-kept toilets or lack of safe drinking water are not even discussed or seen as a concern.
- The lunch/tea break is considered a favour to the worker; not a due right.

SII will continue strengthening this participatory research and workplace safety capacity of workers. It will help provide them a constructive platform to make their insightful and helpful voices heard in the industry and the government.





"We want our entire supply chain to be safe and competent – Tier 1s to Tier 4s."

- Mr. Gorakh G Velapurkar

Vice President (Materials), Bajaj Auto on working with suppliers on occupational safety and health

"National Guidelines for Responsible Business Conduct demand businesses to be responsible for their value chains."

- Dr Garima Dadhich

Associate Professor, Indian Institute of Corporate Affairs on the importance of taking OSH to the supply chain

"Whenever women have injuries, at least in the case of some women, their husbands just leave them...and the kind of miserable life that is ahead of them, you can hardly imagine."

— Prof. Nisha Srivastava

Professor, Institute for Human Development, New Delhi. During the release of previous SII Report

"True progress in the automotive industry extends beyond technological advancements or economic growth; it prioritizes the safety, dignity, and well-being of the workforce. The 'CRUSHED 24' report by the Safe in India Foundation highlights the urgent need for change while offering a roadmap to a safer, more inclusive future.

At ACMA, we recognize that employee safety is vital for our members and their suppliers, serving as a cornerstone for manufacturing excellence and labour productivity. In collaboration with the Safe in India Foundation, we are committed to raising awareness and reducing shop-floor accidents across the industry."

SHRADHA SURI MARWAH President ACMA & CMD Subros Ltd



www.safeinindia.org

This report is based exclusively on information disclosed in the public domain by the companies mentioned and any information provided by the seven companies that interacted with us. All this information is taken at face value and has not been validated through independent assessments or investigations. It is possible that some of the information available in the public domain has been missed despite our best efforts, especially for the three companies that did not respond to our numerous requests. All documents used for this analysis are listed in section 7.1 onwards (Chapter 7). We hope that these the government published the data and the companies provide us with any information needed to correct any data points/analysis in the report as soon as possible and more importantly, act on the recommendations here to make their OSH policies better to reduce these factory accidents.