SJIF Impact Factor (2025): 8.688| ISI I.F. Value: 1.241| Journal DOI: 10.36713/epra2016 ISSN: 2455-7838(Online)
EPRA International Journal of Research and Development (IJRD)
Volume: 10 | Issue: 7 | July 2025 - Peer Reviewed Journal

A STUDY ON WORKPLACE SAFETY AND EMPLOYEE WELLBEING

In Indian Manufacturing: A Case Study of Ashok Leyland

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ABSTRACT

Workplace safety and employee well-being have evolved from being compliance mandates to strategic pillars of sustainable industrial performance. In manufacturing industries like Ashok Leyland—where operations involve heavy machinery, complex shift patterns, and high physical demands—the importance of a secure and supportive work environment cannot be overstated. This study investigates the effectiveness of safety protocols and the overall state of employee well-being at Ashok Leyland by capturing real-time employee perceptions and correlating them with operational practices.

This research concludes that although Ashok Leyland has a foundational commitment to employee well-being, critical gaps remain in execution, awareness, and proactive engagement. The study offers practical suggestions such as mandatory periodic safety training, anonymous reporting systems, ergonomic audits, and integrated wellness programs. By prioritizing these reforms, companies like Ashok Leyland can enhance not only safety compliance but also workforce morale, retention, and productivity.

KEY WORDS: *Primary And Secondary Data, Safety Protocols, PPE, Ergonomic Design, Safety Training, Wellness Programs, Management Support, Workload Pressure, Implementation Gaps, Injury Rates, Mandatory Training, Reporting Systems, Ergonomic Audits, Wellness Initiatives, Safety Awareness.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Safety at the workplace goes beyond protective gear and emergency exits. It encompasses the emotional, mental, and physical security of the workforce. In a fast-evolving industrial landscape, especially in sectors reliant on heavy machinery and manual labor like automotive manufacturing, these dimensions must be addressed holistically.

Ashok Leyland, a major player in India's commercial vehicle market, provides a pertinent context to examine how an established corporation manages safety and well-being. The focus of this study is on understanding policy implementation gaps and identifying practical, employee-focused strategies that enhance workforce health, engagement, and performance.

NEED OF THE STUDY

In today's globalized industrial era, workplace safety and employee well-being are not just legal mandates but strategic imperatives. Industries like automotive manufacturing face inherent risks—heavy machinery, hot working environments, chemical exposure, and fatigue from long shifts. While companies like Ashok Leyland have policies in place, the real question lies in their implementation and employee perception.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This study specifically focuses on Ashok Leyland's selected manufacturing units, analysing how safety protocols and workplace conditions affect employee well-being—physically, mentally, and emotionally.

Key Coverage Areas

Evaluation of safety infrastructure: PPE availability, signage, hazard reporting.
Understanding the psychological comfort of employees: Can they report issues without fear?
Ergonomics and shift planning: Are workers physically stressed by their work environment?
Availability and awareness of wellness programs.

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2. OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

1.To assess the Effectiveness of workplace safety measures.
2.To study the impact of workplace conditions on employee well-being.
3.To recommend improvement for workplace safety and employee well-being.

The research employed a descriptive and quantitative design. Stratified random sampling was used to ensure diverse representation. Data was collected through structured questionnaires, reaching 110 employees across departments like production, HR, quality, and maintenance. Analytical tools included SPSS for correlation and regression, along with frequency analysis.

3. KEY FINDINGS

The employee profile revealed a young workforce, with 61.8% in the 25–35 age group. Over 43% were new recruits with less than a year's experience, indicating a strong need for continuous training. While the company appears committed to safety, gaps persist in training frequency, PPE availability, and enforcement consistency. About 75% of employees reported past injuries, and 83.6% experienced stress linked to unsafe or uncomfortable working conditions.

Only 60.9% rated the ergonomics of their workspace positively, and nearly 20% felt unsafe to voice concerns. These figures point to a systemic disconnect between policy and execution.

4. STATISTICAL INSIGHTS

Quantitative analysis showed strong positive correlations between key variables. For example, employees who felt safe also tended to report better work-life balance ($r = 0.525$) and higher comfort levels ($r = 0.368$). Training and emergency preparedness had a significant correlation with perceived safety ($r = 0.745$).

Regression analysis confirmed that protection measures like PPE availability and emergency resources were the strongest predictors of employee satisfaction. The model had an R^2 value of 0.812, indicating a high level of explanatory power.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommends immediate reforms such as:
- Regular, department-specific safety drills and training modules.
- Automated PPE issuance systems and strict inventory controls.
- Comprehensive ergonomic evaluations every quarter.

Mid-term changes should include improving ventilation, lighting, and noise control. Mental health programs should be rolled out organization-wide, focusing on stress management, counselling, and emotional resilience.

Strategic long-term actions involve integrating safety metrics into KPIs, using AI for predictive risk management, and fostering an inclusive, psychologically safe environment.

6. CONCLUSION

The results from Ashok Leyland serve as a microcosm for the Indian manufacturing sector. They highlight the need for a cultural shift from reactive safety measures to proactive, preventive systems. By making safety and wellness an organizational priority—not just a compliance checkbox—companies can achieve sustainable productivity, reduce turnover, and build a resilient workforce.

This research provides a practical roadmap for policy makers, HR managers, and operational leaders aiming to bridge the gap between intention and impact.

Keywords:
Workplace Safety, Employee Well-being, PPE, Ergonomics, Mental Health, Automotive Industry, Ashok Leyland, Occupational Health, HR Strategy, Safety Training

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