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Paper Title: **DECENT AND SAFE WORK: A CASE STUDY OF IT
INDUSTRY**

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Abstract

Workers are the backbone of an industry as well as an economy. Accelerating growth requires ensuring, understanding and managing life of workers when they are at work. This paper analyses the meaning and importance of safe work in Information Technology industry where work is rendered in apparently safe environment. IT industry has been chosen as it apparently offers highly remunerative packages but compromises on some of the essentials of decent work. One of the dimensions of decent work is safe work. In this paper, work safety has been measured on the basis of rudimentary statistical tools and non-parametric tests. Primary data collected from 272 IT employees by using snowball sampling technique and a well-designed questionnaire have been used for developing Safe work Index (SWI) on the lines of decent work agenda of the International Labour Office. Findings reveal deficit of safe work in IT companies and deteriorating health status of IT employees which has implications for the social health of the nation. The nature of work in IT industry which requires longer hours at work, constant sitting posture and working on computer screens has started playing havoc among the employees of younger age group and calls for attention for provision of decent ergonomic furniture and timely breaks from a sitting posture. The paper concludes with suggestive measures for the same.

Key words: Safe work, health, decent work.

Introduction

Safety is a basic human need for survival. The concept is multi-dimensional in the sense that it not only refers to safety of one's being, but also to safety of one's health, secure livelihoods, safer habitats and safer work conditions. It is the latter that is the foci of the paper. Safety of work and workplace are two mutually exclusive notions which should not be used to reaffirm each other. A safe workplace does not ensure safe work, although safe work in some cases may denote a safer workplace. Importantly safe work has been an important indicator of decent work and the paper in the later sections shall mention ILO conventions related to safe work.

Certain industries are more dangerous than others. One of the key reasons for the favourable declining fatal accident trend in high-income countries is the gradual structural change: in these countries fewer people work in hazardous sectors and jobs, such as those in agriculture, logging,

mining, and relatively more are employed in relatively safer service sectors (Takala, 2002). This paper has examined safer working conditions in Information Technology Industry of India which has been considered as one of the fastest growing industries in the last two decades. The paper has been structured in the following way. The first section introduces and analyses the meaning of safe work and decent work. The second section discusses the various dimensions of safe work in the context of IT industry. Thereafter the paper discusses the materials and methodology of the technical assessment and analysis of safe work in India's IT industry. Results have been discussed in the next section and lastly the paper discusses the broad conclusions and recommendations.

1 SAFE WORK IS DECENT WORK

What is safe work and how safe work is in IT industry? A Safe workplace is synonymously used to refer a risk-free workplace, where the work conditions are conducive to the physical and mental well-being of the worker. Hence safe work is provision of work on similar grounds. ILO's Convention No.155, 1981, is for Occupational Safety and Health and calls for a national policy to 'prevent accidents and injury to health arising out of, linked with or occurring in the course of work by minimising so far as is reasonably practicable the causes of hazards inherent in the working environment.'

The Employment Injury Benefit Convention, 1964 (No.121) establishes the principle of employer responsibility for insuring employees for occupational injury. The labour inspectorate is an important means of enforcement of the principles of national legislation and regulation (Labour Inspection Convention, 1947 (No.81)). A close relationship can be established between objective conditions of safety and health at work, perceptions of such conditions, and the performance of persons at work. The nature of work as a coordinated set of activities carried out in specified conditions means that all work is exposed to some degree of risk. A research led by Kirsi Ahola of Finnish Institute of Occupational Health found that a stressful job can make one old and sick before time because people with high stress work tend to have shorter telomeres, which has been associated with several diseases. Telomeres, located at the ends of chromosomes, serve as a type of protective cap to the ropey strands and their shortening has been linked to Parkinson's disease, type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease and cancer. (TOI report, 2012)

Safety of the work as well as workplace are important dimensions of decent work and can be broadly assessed by examining the presence of a safety committee at the workplace. Work environment needs to be conducive to the human well-being. Henceforth the objective dimensions of the same can assess occupational health hazards especially in case of factory workers, excessively longer working hours, number of health inspectors, etc. At the micro-level this can be undertaken by examining the presence of any health clinic at the workplace, mechanisms to check over-exerting laborious work being advocated, effective entitlement to breaks, good and sanitised toilet facilities, etc. Safety of work is universally applicable as it preserves and enhances human well-being. India, being a developing country needs to have effectively safe workplaces and work to be able to ensure rise in labour productivity.

Provision of safe work is analogous to provision of decent work. Decent work aims at provision of work in conditions of freedom, security, equity and dignity and it is 'security' that inherently encompasses the need for safer work and workplaces, apart from other kinds of security like income security, work security, employment security, etc. 'Decent Work' has been advocated as a major revolutionary agenda by International Labour Organisation (ILO), Geneva. The promotion of this universal agenda for all men and women has become the central objective of ILO now. Decent work is not a new agenda, but the oldest and foundational concerns of ILO being presented in a comprehensive form with a new phrase. It can be called as comprehensive because it entails not only labour rights, labour standards, human dignity, job-creation and poverty-alleviation but calls for such conditions at work which uplift the material well-being of the labour along with their spiritual development. In this context provision of safe working conditions can uplift the overall well-being of an employee by boosting his productivity, interest and concentration at work.

ILO's InFocus programme on safety and health at work and the environment has five major components: Occupational and environmental health, Occupational safety, Worker's Health Promotion and Well-being at work, Development of Inspection systems and the International Occupational Safety and Health Information Centre, CIS (Takala, 2002).

II MULTIPLE DIMENSIONS OF SAFE WORK

Safe work is multidimensional in nature. It has broad segments depending upon the nature of work and type of industry. All the risks related to work or present at workplace are deficits in safe work

provision and this section shall highlight some of them. The following chart reflects the multidimensionality of safe work.

Figure 1: Multidimensionality of safe work (Source: Author's own)

Among the most notable is the risk of accidental injury, work-related cancer, work-related circulatory diseases, work-related communicable diseases. These all affect the physical well-being of an employee and can hamper his productivity at work. Appropriate ergonomic arrangements have become the need of the hour to counter such risks at workplaces. However, apart from these there can be many other factors which threaten the peace of mind of an employee and thus hamper the mental well-being of workers. These factors could be work-pressure, stress, harassment at workplace and the nature of work.

Risk of accidental injury can be attributed to factors like absence of a well-organised and vigilant safety committee at workplace, flouting of government norms related to work culture, outdated machinery or other technical equipments, lack of knowledge about usage of machine/equipments, lack of effective training to employees, obsolete storage containers, lack of fire safety, etc.

Risk of work-related cancer can be attributed to factors like presence of carcinogenic chemicals or materials at workplace, absence of air-quality moderation equipments, absence of safe drinking water or sanitary facilities, work arrangement in abnormally high or low temperatures,

environmental tobacco smoke at work which may be either in form of active or passive smoking, radiation or use of radio-active substances in production.

Risk of work-related circulatory diseases particularly refers to ailments that occur as a result of unsafe nature of work and are broadly classified into cardio-vascular diseases and cerebrovascular diseases. These may be attributed to night-shifts or long shifts at work, passive smoking, job strain, excessively strenuous work without adequate breaks (eg. Manual work done by weight-lifters, bus drivers, pilots, etc.)

Risk of work-related communicable diseases is attributable to factors like poor hygiene, sharing of equipments or any other thing with a diseased person suffering from a contagious disease, infectious or parasitic diseases, poor quality drinking water, lack of knowledge, attack by infected animals (dog, monkey, etc.)

Stress may be caused by work-pressure, deadlines for assignments, lack of cordial relations among peers, harassment, longer working hours, disrupted work-life balance, health problems, etc.

Physical or mental harassment may be attributable to political atmosphere at workplace and may be of several types to be discussed in detail later with empirical evidence.

Nature of work may also result in unsafe work in the sense that it may lead to health problems in the long-run as is in the case of IT industry where work requires one to sit and work on computer screen, often for longer hours.

Materials and Methods

The methodology of the study is based on inductive reasoning and has been undertaken on the basis of a primary survey having a sample of 272 IT employees collected using snowball sampling technique of non-random sampling. The socio-demographic profile of the sample has been introduced in detail in the next sub-section.

i) SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SAMPLE

Let us note some of the basic socio-demographic characteristics of the sample:-

- **Male-female ratio:-**

The proportion of males and female IT employees as respondents has been unequal which bears resemblance to the male-female ratio in the IT industry. 25 % of the employees were found to be female, while remaining were male employees. Efforts were made to balance the

gender ratio in the study but despite prolonged pursuits only 67 female employees responded to the questionnaire. Ironically the male female ratio in IT industry is also imbalanced and is approximately 1:4. Hence the imbalance reported in the sample should not hold repercussions to the conclusions of the study.

Chart III.1 Gender-ratio of the sample

- **Marital status:** -

Marital status of an employee has an important bearing for a study on decent work because responses on few indicators like work-life balance, stability of work, etc. would be different from the married and unmarried sections of the society. As high as 62 % of the employees in the sample were found to be single/unmarried, out of which 29% were female. On the other hand, 38 % of the IT employees were found to be married.

Chart III.2Sample distribution as per Marital status

- **Age-group :-**

A peculiar feature of India's IT Industry has been employment of a relatively younger age-group labour force. Industry-analysis on the grounds of decent work can be found to be different as the work experience of the employees increase. In this study, majority of the IT employees were found to be in the age-group of 20 to 30 years.

Particularly 39% of the employees were found to be below 25 years of age, from which 18% were females. Besides, another 39% of the sample fell in the age-group of 25-30 years. On the other hand, 16 % of the employees belonged to the age group of 30-35 years and 6% above the age of 35 years.

Chart III.3 Age-group-wise sample distribution

- **Background/native place :-**

The background/native place of a respondent shows his mobility for work. It also gives an insight that how globalisation is leading to a change in migration patterns and as IT Industry is expanding, more and more workers with diverse backgrounds are becoming a part of it. There is a perception that generally professionals of urban backgrounds are found in IT industry. However in this study, although 65 % of the employees had a background of Metropolitan city/NCR region, yet 26.7 % had a background of township and 8.4% employees had a background of a rural area. This variation is evident given the fact that IT firms are now putting footholds in 2-tier and 3-tier cities too.

Chart III.4 Sample distribution as per background/native place

- **Social Class** :-

An initiative was taken in this study to assess the social class of IT employees and a staggering 96% response-rate was received for it. The prime objective was to ascertain how and whether the reserved category labour force is getting absorbed in the IT industry and what are their experiences of working in IT industry, whether they work in decent working conditions, how do they fare in the different decent work indicators, etc. As high as 79% of the respondents were found to be of General category and remaining 21% were of reserved category wherein 7% were SC, 4.6% were of ST category and remaining 9% were OBCs.

Chart III.5 Sample distribution as per social class

ii) ACADEMIC AND PROFESSIONAL DETAILS

- **Academic background:-**

A characteristic feature of IT industry is predominance of technically skilled labour force. In this sample, 56% of IT employees were graduates and 43% of the employees were post-graduates. This is justifiable because majority of the employees get recruited in IT companies through campus placements or direct applications primarily because of their professional qualifications. The average age of an IT employee with an engineering background of entry in the workforce is 22 years. Pursuing higher education especially in research areas is typically difficult for employees already working in IT industry owing to their extremely busy schedules and reluctance to take career-breaks. That is why, employees pursuing research were found to be exceptionally low with 1% M.Phil and Ph.d degree holders.

Chart III.6 Sample distribution as per academic qualifications

- **Company (Current job-profiles) :-**

The criteria for size of the firm was large if it employed more than 500 employees, medium if the size of employment was between 50 – 500 and small-scale if the size of employment was less than 50 employees. In the sample, 80% of the employees worked in a large-scale IT firm, 17% in medium-scale IT firms and only 2% in small-scale firms.

Chart III.7 Sample distribution as per size of company

- **Type of employment:-**

The study examined whether the employees in IT industry have a contractual or regular employment in their companies. It was found that 91% of the employees had regular employment and only 9% had contractual employment. This is a positive sign and is expected from an organised industrial sector.

Chart III.8 Sample distribution as per type of employment

iii) MEASUREMENT OF SAFE WORK IN IT INDUSTRY AND EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

INDICATORS

In this study, the criterion adopted for safe work is in correlation with the nature of work in any IT company. The criteria have been selected to explore the extent of safe and decent work provision in this industry.

a) The nature of work in any IT company involves work-pressures due to deadlines set by the clients overseas or in the domestic market. Moreover team-work often fails to produce the desirable just-in-time results due to poor management or poor workplace relations. Longer working hours can also disrupt the work-life balance of the employees and lead to stressful situations. For this reason, stress has been used as one of the criteria to assess safe work. Medical practitioners cite stress as the source of all health problems. In this study it was found that 46% of the respondents never experienced work-induced stress. However 54% of the employees admitted that their workload increased their stress levels.

b) The health problems related to the nature of work in IT industry are – Eyestrain or problem, backache, stiff neck, cervical spondylitis, Obesity, Depression, Insomnia, heart disease, occasional dehydration, hypertension or any other. A weight of 0 was given if the employee did not suffer from any work-related health problem. A weight of 1 was given if the employee suffered from 1 health problem, 2 for 2 health problems and so on. The responses were coded, summarised and normalised for each of the respondents for construction of Safe Work Index (SWI).

TABLE IV.1

HEALTH PROBLEMS AMONG IT EMPLOYEES OWING TO NATURE OF WORK

Health problems	Percentage of employees suffering from health problems
Eye-strain or problem	78
Backache	65
Stiff-neck	34
Spondylitis	8
Obesity	16
Depression	7
Insomnia	4
Heart-disease	2
Occasional dehydration	4
Hypertension	8
Headaches	1
Diabetes	1

78% of the employees suffered from Eye-strain/weak eye-sight and the proportion of employees suffering from frequent backaches was also found to be relatively high at 65%. The constant sitting exposure often leads to stiffness of neck region and this was found in about 34% of the employees. As stiff neck can lead to cervical spondylitis, this health problem was found in 8% of the employees. Lack of physical activity leads to unhealthy weight gain and in this respect Obesity has also been complained by 16% of the employees, showing the deteriorating fitness levels of the younger-generation age group. Lack of exercise often is related to longer working hours and disturbed work-life balance. Depression and Insomnia were found to be in about 7 % and 4% employees which are the consequences of the same factors – longer working hours, disturbed work-life balance, unproductive work, unfair treatment at workplace, etc. Besides this, employees also reported some serious ailments such as heart disease was found in 2% employees, occasional dehydration in 4%, hyper-tension in 8% and headaches and diabetes were reported from 1% employee each.

The fact that IT employees suffered from cervical spondylitis, obesity, depression, heart-disease, occasional dehydration, hypertension, headaches, diabetes and insomnia has important repercussions for the social health status of India. This is so because these health problems are

beginning at a relatively younger age among IT employees and are happening due to inadequate provision of decent work in their companies.

TABLE IV.2NUMBER OF HEALTH PROBLEMS AMONG IT EMPLOYEES

No.of health problems	Number of employees suffering
1	65
2	77
3	45
4	18
5	9
6	1
8	1
9	1

As observable, health assessment of IT employees indicates decent work deficit.

c) In the third criterion, the existence of safety department at the workplaces was also questioned and given a value of 1 for 'yes' and 2 for 'no'. The physical environment of the IT industry is safe and well-maintained for human working conditions and this was confirmed by 83% of the IT employees who indicated the presence of safety department at their workplaces

d) If an employee has faced instances of harassment (physical, mental) or any other kind of mistreatment at workplace, then it can account for unsafe work. For assessing the same, the fourth criterion used was *whether the employee faced any kind of harassment/mistreatment at workplace and if yes which kind of harassment*. For the latter, a multiple-choice list of type of harassments was prepared and the employee had to select as many types of harassment faced by him/her. A weight of 1 was given if the employee did not face any harassment at workplace and 2 if he did. It was found that 65% of the IT employees faced harassment of different kinds at their workplaces. These results imply that harassment is on a rise in IT industry and this needs stringent and fair measures at organisations to control it. Almost half of the employees reported being subjected to

manipulation of their personal or professional reputation by their peers or seniors which is a serious case of mental harassment. Complaints of stalking, exclusion from professional activities, persistent negative attacks on personal or professional life, unreasonable or inappropriate monitoring of employee's performance and setting of objectives with unreasonable targets were also reported by a majority of employees. Many a times, harassment can severely affect the productivity of an employee as it affects his/her mental well-being.

TABLE IV.3
TYPE OF HARASSMENT FACED BY IT EMPLOYEES

S.No.	Type of harassment	Percentage of employees (who faced)
1	Physical harassment	8
2	Stalking	25
3	Offensive phone-calls or email messages	4
4	Exclusion/isolation from professional activities	29
5	Persistent negative attacks on personal or professional	29
6	Deliberate or unsolicited physical contact	13
7	Manipulation of your personal/professional reputation	50
8	Persistent undermining of work	12
9	Unreasonable or inappropriate monitoring of performance	25
10	Setting objectives with unreasonable targets	17
11	Questions or insinuations about private life	4
12	Unreasonable refusal of leave	6

13	Biased perception	2
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iv) *SAMPLING DESIGN*

Sampling design consists of the techniques and tools used for data collection and processing.

Technique of data-collection: *Questionnaire method and Interviews*

Since IT employees were reluctant to provide the names and addresses of IT employees given the nature of the study, random sampling method could not be used to select the respondents. Hence snowball sampling, which is one of the methods of non-random sampling, has been used to select target respondents for this study. It is an informal method to reach the target population (IT employees) as this study is of exploratory nature. The method ensures that the responses are free of any influence/scrutiny from the employer's side. The resultant sample is free from biased-ness on the part of the researcher. Since the theme of the study is to assess the decent work provision by the company, the levels of trust and freedom on the part of the respondents had to be assured in order to arrive at unbiased results. Questionnaire were distributed personally, sent by email and forwarded further with personal requests. It is to be noted that extensive persuasion was done to be able to extract as many responses possible on the questions included in the questionnaire. An online web-link to the questionnaire was also created to facilitate responses from tech-savvy employees. Informal and indirect requests for questionnaire form-filling could not maintain balanced male-female ratio due to the use of snowball-sampling method. The technique of purposive and snowball sampling has been used to contact a sample of approximately 300 IT employees in the IT industry of India out of which 272 IT employees responded to the study. Some of the selection criteria adopted was:

- IT employees having work experience of 1+ years in the industry
- Focussed group selection of IT employees only, and doesn't consist employees of ITES/BPO
- IT employees working in IT departments of large-scale companies (Both MNCs and Indian companies) were also included

Tools of data-collection

The study was based mainly on primary data collected through a well-designed questionnaire as well as by conducting telephonic interviews. The questionnaires were mailed to the respondents

by email and were also circulated by hand. A web-link to the questionnaire was also created for easy and quick access to the IT employees. The electronic media devices like email and telephonic contacts were used to gather the information from the respondents. The secondary data sources used were – Papers and articles published in journals, government publications, other survey publications, books, internet, etc.

Data Processing:-

The data gathered from the sample has been coded and saved in the SPSS software files. Separate codes have been used for responses on multiple-choice questions.

Techniques of data-analysis

Inductive logic has guided the data-analysis of this report. Inferences have been drawn on decent work –related issues based on collected qualitative and quantitative data from questionnaire. The primary method used for data analysis was Index construction. Safe work Index was created on the basis of the four indicators of safe work mentioned in part A. This index has been made by coding, normalising and aggregating the responses with the help of the standard formula developed by United Nation's Development Programme (UNDP) for the construction of HDI and other indices. The Range Equalisation method has the following formula:

$$(\text{Actual Value} - \text{Minimum Value}) / (\text{Maximum Value} - \text{Minimum value})$$

Normalisation of the values ensure that the final values are in the scale of 0 to 1, with 0 being an indicator of safe and decent work and any value above 0 shows the extent of decent work deficit (DWD).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Safe Work Index

The values for each of the four criteria after being coded and normalised were aggregated with appropriate weights to form the Safe Work Index (SWI). Following are the results of the index.

TABLE IV.4SAFE WORK INDEX

Range for DWI – 4	Percentage of employees
0.0 – 0.10	23
0.11 – 0.20	4
0.21 – 0.30	21

0.31 – 0.40	16
0.41 – 0.50	7
0.51 – 0.60	21
0.61 – 0.70	4
0.71 – 0.80	3
0.81 – 0.90	1
0.91 – 1.0	0
Total	100

CHART IV.3 Safe Work Index

As observed in the table above, only 23% of the IT employees were found to be working in decently safe working conditions at their workplaces or homes. However the remaining 77% found their work to be rather unsafe as far as its effects on their health and stress levels were concerned. 29% of the employees were found in the range of 0.51 to 0.9 reflecting very unsafe working conditions which has had effects on their health too. This implies that work in IT industry is

affecting the health of its employees and there is a need to take policy measures by companies to ensure that the nature of work does not deteriorates the health condition of employees. Ease in the provision of sick leaves, first-aid, medical facilities, creation of a recreation room, ergonomic chairs and tables, protective lid on computer screens, health check-ups of employees, etc. are some of the measures which may be taken up by IT companies to check and improve the health of their employees.

Results as per the socio-demographic profile of the sample:-

(i) *Gender-wise distribution:* Gender-wise classification revealed that more of female employees compared to male employees were found to be working in safer work conditions with 39% of them in the range of 0-0.1. Majority of the Male employees were found in the range of 0.21-0.6 reflecting adversely unsafe conditions at their workplaces. This reveals that longer working hours are comparatively affecting more of male employees' vis-à-vis female employees.

Table 4.1

Distribution of results as per gender of an IT employee

<i>Range of Safe work Index</i>	<i>Male (%)</i>	<i>Female (%)</i>
0-0.10	18	39
0.11-1	82	61

(ii) *Marital Status:* Relatively more of unmarried employees were found to be working in unsafe conditions as compared to their married colleagues. This is possible because unmarried employees

being younger and less experienced may be required to devote more hours at work leading to related health-problems. While 23% of both categories were found in the decent work

Table
Distribution of results as per Marital Status

<i>Range of Safe work Index</i>	<i>Married (%)</i>	<i>Unmarried (%)</i>
0-0.10	23	23
0.11-1	77	77

range, 25% of the unmarried employees were found in the range of 0.51-0.6 as compared to 15% of married employees reflecting extreme deficit of safe working conditions in the IT industry. This implies that health of unmarried employees who are likely to be in the younger age-group is getting affected and this again has serious implications on the social health status of our nation. There is an urgent need to address this issue.

(iii) *Age-group*: The above results were supported by the findings of the values according to the age-groups of IT employees because majority of the employees below the age of 25 years were found to be range of 0.21-0.6. Comparing these results with other age-groups revealed that work was unsafe even

<i>Range of Safe work Index</i>	<i>< 25 years (%)</i>	<i>25-30 years (%)</i>	<i>30-35 years (%)</i>	<i>>35 years (%)</i>
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0-0.10	15	29	22	25
0.11-1	85	71	78	75

for those above the age of 35 years as 63% of them were found in the range of 0.31 to 0.6. Nevertheless, this is not an unpredictable finding given the fact that longer working hours in sitting positions facing computer screens is bound to give health problems to any healthy person.

(iv) Background: 23% of the employees with Metropolitan background, 24% from township and 27% from the rural backgrounds were found in the decently safe work range of 0-0.1. However 46% employees

<i>Range of Safe work Index</i>	<i>Metropolitan(%)</i>	<i>Township (%)</i>	<i>Rural (%)</i>
0-0.10	23	24	27
0.11-1	77	76	73

with rural backgrounds were also found to be working extremely unsafe working conditions as their values were found in the range of 0.51 to 0.9.

(v) Social class: Classification of results as per social class revealed that employees with ST background were found to be working in very unsafe working conditions followed by SC and then OBC IT employees. To put it straight, 58% of the ST employees were found in the range of 0.51-6,

<i>Range of Safe work Index</i>	<i>General (%)</i>	<i>SC (%)</i>	<i>ST (%)</i>	<i>OBC (%)</i>
0-0.10	24	29	17	21
0.11-1	76	71	83	79

followed by 35% SC and 29% OBC employees. The results were relatively better for general category employees across all ranges except 0.61-0.7.

(vi) Size of company: Employees in the large-scale IT companies should ideally have better and safe working conditions given the fact that they have better infrastructural facilities and resources. However the results portrayed a mixed picture because only 24% of the employees in large IT companies were found in the decent work range. Besides a similar percentage (24%) was found in the range

<i>Range of Safe work Index</i>	<i>Small-scale (%)</i>	<i>Medium-scale (%)</i>	<i>Large-scale (%)</i>
0-0.10	29	17	24
0.11-1	71	83	76

of 0.51-0.9 which reflects extremely high deficit of safe working conditions. In case of small-scale and medium-scale companies, 29% and 17% employees were found in the decent work range while 43% of the employees in each were found in the range 0.51 to 0.7.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The nature of work, work environment and work-pressures are directly linked to the health of employees. Longer hours at work are correlated with unsafe work as per the empirical findings of the study. In this context, work was found to be unsafe for a majority of IT employees implying that the nature of work in IT industry is adversely affecting the health levels of its employees. High stress levels and health problems among employees of Information Technology industry:- an industry characterised by younger workforce, educated backgrounds, high labour productivity and globally competitive talents- bears a serious note for the policy-makers as well as the industrialists in the long-term on one hand and on the social health status of the Indian economy on the other

hand, in its effort to derive gains from the demographic dividend. Since majority of employees faced harassment at their workplaces, effective monitoring cell should be set up to prevent and resolve the complaints relating to harassment matters.

According to a report by Workplace Health, safety and compensation commission:

“Workers who actually do the job must be involved in the development of safe work practices and procedures. They are the ones who know the tasks; they can provide the best information. If those who carry out the work are not involved, there is a chance the safe work practices and procedures will not reflect “real life” in the workplace. And if this is the case, workers will be reluctant to follow the written practices and procedures.”

In IT industry, there is a need to transform the nature of work for the betterment of employees. Work on a continual basis may be replaced with work in intervals. The latter implies that employers may allow the employees to take at least two shorter breaks (of 15 minutes duration) from their work and during that break, employees may be allowed to go to cafeteria or recreation room. As work in IT industry is considered to be flexible, employees can be given the liberty to work from home once a week. Another possibility is dividing the 9 hour shift into core and peripheral importance wherein all employees may be required to be present during the core hours (say from 11 to 3 pm) and have flexibility of completing their shift before or after these core timings. Besides, the employers may devise specific strategies to de-stress the work environment on a regular basis (say once in a fortnight) and the strategies may be anything from organising a meditation or yoga class to official day trip on weekends. Regular surveys may be conducted with employees posing questions on their take on the health facilities provided at the workplace. Suitable ergonomic and modular furniture can be put into place which suits work requirement for longer hours. Thus, the findings of this research study urges the need to address the attention of the employers towards the health status of IT employees as it has repercussions on the social health of the nation and productivity of employees. Any positive step in changing the work conditions of IT employees would be a success of this research study.

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