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Postural stress of workers involved in handicraft work at industry

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Abstract

India is a land of craftsmen of hand and muscle power. Craft traditions have withstood the change in time and still epitomize the Indian industrial culture in the world. Craft sector is the second largest employment sector in India. There are 23 million crafts people in India. Many agricultural and pastoral communities depend on their craft skills as a secondary source of income. The inherent skills in embroidery, weaving, basketry etc. are means to social and economic independence. Textiles are decorated by various techniques, of which embroidery is only one. The city of Lucknow of Uttar Pradesh in India has a prominent place in the history of India particularly for its art, historical monuments and rich cultural heritage. Lucknow is also known around the world over for its many fine handicrafts. Chikankari is considered to be the most popular amongst these and is recognized worldwide. It is a fine art of embroidery made with untwisted yarn with the help of the needle on a fine cloth. Posture is the position of body while performing above work activities. Awkward posture is deviation from ideal working posture of arms at the side of torsoes, elbows front, with wrists straight which is adopted by all the workers involved in handicraft work. Hence the present study aim at studying the postural stress of workers and related health problems.

Keywords: chikankari workers, family craft, long hour's posture, risk and injury, work schedule and working environment

Introduction

India is a land of craftsmen of hand and muscle power. Craft traditions have withstood the change in time and still epitomize the Indian industrial culture in the world. In small workshops men beat iron to make knives, cut wood for furniture and leather for shoes, mould molten brass in small furnaces, weave silks, cottons and carpets on handlooms. Craft sector is the second largest employment sector in India. There are 23 million crafts people in India. Many agricultural and pastoral communities depend on their craft skills as a secondary source of income. The inherent skills in embroidery, weaving, basketry etc. are means to social and economic independence. Textiles are decorated by various techniques, of which embroidery is only one. In India there are many popular embroidery groups such as chikankari of Lucknow, Kantha of Bengal, Fulkari of Punjab, Kutch of Gujarat and kashidakari of Kashmir. Each style of embroidery is different from the other and has its own beauty and significant value. The National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO) carried out a sample survey in 2004-2005 and its results showed that out of total workforce of 401 million, only 32 million workers are employed in the organised sector and remaining in the unorganised sector. It reveals that over a decade, the employment in the organised sector has been almost stagnant or slightly declined. As per survey, there were 44.35 million enterprises and 79.71 million workers employed thereof in the non-agricultural unorganized sector of the economy. Among these 25.01 million enterprises employing 39.74 million workers were in rural areas whereas 19.34 million enterprises with 39.97 million workers in the urban area. Among the workers engaged in the unorganised sector, 70.21 million are full time and 9.5 million part times. Percentage of female workers to the total workers is 20.2 percent. The World Bank employment report (2004-05) estimated that about 26% of total share of Indian gross national product comes from the unorganized economy. In spite of the huge size of work force in the unorganised sector, there is a limited attention being paid to this work force as far as health and safety and well being issued are concerned. The majority of chikankari workers live in poor areas, lack basic health and welfare services and social protection and work in an unhealthy and unsafe working environment. For many of these operators their home and workplace are one and the same place. Vulnerability to diseases and poor health result from a combination of undesirable living and working conditions. The conditions under which most these workers operate are precarious and unsafe. The interaction between occupational hazards and poor living conditions can exacerbate the health problems of these workers.

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Some of the most prevalent problems faced by these workers are: poor lighting, lack of ventilation, inadequate work space and working tools, lack of protective equipment, exposure to hazardous long hours of work. Therefore keeping in mind these facts the research study was planned with the following objective:-

- To study the work schedule stress.
- To study work related hazards of the workers.

Material and Method

In order to achieve the objectives of the study, descriptive cum experimental design was planned. The interview

schedule was found to be an appropriate tool, which would adequately gather information pertaining to research work. The present study was carried out in Lucknow city. Both purposive/convenient and random sampling techniques were used to select the study area and samples. Sample size was determined before the data collection. A total of 120 samples were selected from Lucknow city of the Uttar Pradesh. Collected data was tabulated and analysis with descriptive as well as relational statistics.

Result

Problems faced by the worker at work place

Table 1: Distribution of the respondents on the basis of Problems faced.

S. No	Problems	Unit I (n=60)		Unit II (n=60)	
		Mean		Mean	
I	Environmental Problems				
1	Insufficient natural light	1.5	II	2.8	I
2	Insufficient artificial light	2.9	I	1.3	II
3	Inadequate ventilation	2.3	I	1.3	II
4	Less space	2.7	I	1.5	III
II	Economic Problems				
1	Low rates give by traders	2.5	I	1.9	II
2	Delay in payment	1.8	III	1.5	II
3	Payment in installment	1.3	III	1.7	II
4	Non availability of financial assistance from traders	2.1	II	1.3	I
III	Other Problems				
1	Exploitation by middlemen	1.6	II	1.8	II
2	Storage Problem of raw material	2.5	I	1.6	II
3	No knowledge of grading packing and labeling	2.9	II	1.2	II
4	Competition among Chikankari group	2.5	I	1.8	I
5	No assistance by the family member in work	1.3	II	1.7	II
6	No satisfaction with the present wage structure	1.8	II	1.4	II

Scrutiny of data in table-1 depicts that Unit I workers reported insufficient artificial light, inadequate ventilation and less space as most important environmental problems (rank I) followed by insufficient natural light (rank II). Unit II workers reported insufficient natural light as most important constraints (rank I) followed by insufficient artificial light and inadequate ventilation (rank II).

On further analysis table above reveals that Unit I workers reported low rate given by traders as most important economic problems (rank I) followed by non availability of financial assistance from traders as most important problems (rank I), whereas, Unit II workers reported non availability of financial assistance from traders followed by low rate given

by traders, delay in payment and payment in installment at II rank of importance. Among other problems Unit I workers reported storage problem of raw materials and competition among chikankari group as most important problems (rank I) followed by exploitation by middleman, no knowledge of grading, packing and labeling, no assistance by the family members in work and no satisfaction with present wage structure at rank II. On the other hand Unit II workers also reported competition among chikankari at first rank followed by storage problem exploitation by middleman, no assistance by other members, no knowledge of grading, packing and labeling and no satisfaction with present wage structure.

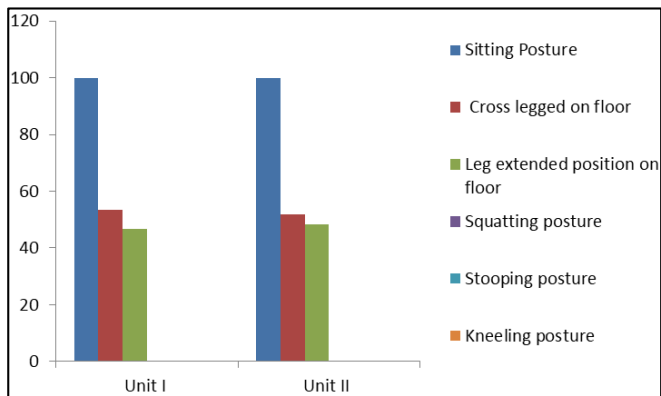
Table 2: Distribution of respondents on the basis of posture adopted for chikankari.

S. No.	Posture adopted	Unit I (n=60)	Unit II (n=60)	Total (n=120)
1	Sitting Posture	60 (100.00)	60 (100.00)	120 (100.00)
a	Cross legged on floor	32 (53.30)	31 (51.70)	63 (52.50)
b	Leg extended position on floor	28 (46.70)	29 (48.40)	57 (47.50)
2	Squatting posture	-	-	-
3	Stooping posture	-	-	-
4	Kneeling posture	-	-	-

Posture adoption during work depends on type of workstation available to workers. Chikankari is basically an embroidery that can be better performed in sitting posture because it need concentration. Workers do this work in different sitting positions i.e. sitting cross legged, sitting leg extended, squatting, stooping or kneeling, posture either due to habit or due to need of work. On the whole common posture cent percent was sitting posture, on comparison in both the units the trends was focused similar as mentioned above. The data

in table 2 reveals that majority 51.70 percent center based and 53.30 percent Unit I workers perform their work in sitting on floor in cross legged position, whereas, 48.40 percent Unit II and 46.70 percent Unit I workers in sitting on floor with leg extended position. None of the worker adopted squatting, stooping and kneeling posture for this work. It can be inferred that majority 98.33 percent workers reported working hour to be 7-8 hours per day. On further analysis it was found that cent percent Unit II workers reported 7-8 hour

working per day. On the other hand 96.66 percent Unit I workers worked for 7-8 hour. Only 3.33 percent Unit I workers were found devoting more than 8 hours to this work.



Fig

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