

Challenges For The Management In Creating A Better Work Environment : A Critical Evaluation Of The Indian Jute Industry In The Post Liberalization Era

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ABSTRACT

An incredible work environment is a place that promises to advance gifted employees and makes good on that promise. A healthy work environment provides people with opportunities to meet professional and personal goals. It is much more pleasurable, and less stressful to go to a work environment that is filled with positivity and enjoyment. A positive work environment is not only important for our physical, mental and emotional health, but is also important for the results that we produce for the organization that employs us. The better we feel at work, the more likely we will take pride in our job activities and be loyal to our organization. So, no organization is perfect without creating and maintaining a work environment of fairness, respect, and justice.

The Indian Jute Industry is one of the oldest and high labour intensive industries, particularly unskilled and semi-skilled labour. This industry lost a huge number of man hours and productivity due to poor industrial relations. Various studies have revealed that industrial relations have improved in the post liberalization era in India. So, in the present study, the researchers analyzed the importance of the Work Environment in the Jute Industry in the post liberalization era. The study reveals that in the post liberalization era, a lot of changes occurred in the Work Environment (working conditions, work schedules, safety measures, etc.) of the jute industry.

Keywords: Liberalization, Work Environment, Industrial Relations, Work Schedules, Working Hours, Safety Measures, Jute Industry

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INTRODUCTION

A good work environment is the one that drives more performance and less negative stress. It is also maintaining a sustainable workload, involving people in the development and decision making processes, recognizing and rewarding people in alignment with performance demands. A good work environment also builds a sense of community, communicates the value of work, provides attention to personal and professional safety, appreciates an outstanding employee, etc. Work environment means the milieu around a person. It is the social and professional environment in which a person is supposed to interact with a number of people. The persons around you are supposed to coordinate with you in one way or the other. It influences the employees' health and the organization's productivity as well. Work environment has three important components- physical, psychological and social :

- ❖ **Physical Conditions** consist of lighting, ventilation, temperature, noise level and the like.
- ❖ **Psychological Environment** comprises of the factors which influence the attitude, perceptions, behaviour and satisfaction of a worker.
- ❖ **Social Environment** refers to the group background a worker hails from.

LIBERALIZATION

The Government of India brought about the economic liberalization policy in 1991. Globalization and liberalization have also made a positive impact on various important economic segments. Today, the service sectors, industrial sectors and the agriculture sector have really grown to a great extent. Around 54% of the annual Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of India comes from the service industry, while the industrial and agriculture sector contributes around 29 % and 17 % respectively. With the improvement of the market, more and more new sectors are coming up and are reaping profits such as IT services, chemicals, textiles, cement industry and so on. With the increase in the supply

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level, the rate of employment is also increasing considerably.

There has been an improvement in the manufacturing sector as well, which grew from 8.98% in 2005 to around 12% in 2011. The communication segment has grown up to around 16.64%. The condition is expected to improve further with more demand and increase in the customer base. The yearly growth of the industrial sector has been around 6.8 %, which will rise more in the future. India is one of the well known industrial markets in the Asia-Pacific region.

THE JUTE INDUSTRY

The Jute industry occupies an important place in the national economy of India. It is one of the major industries in Andhra Pradesh and West Bengal. Jute, the golden fibre, meets all the standards for 'safe packaging' in view of being a natural, renewable, biodegradable and eco-friendly product. It is estimated that the jute industry provides direct employment to 0.37 million workers in organized mills & in diversified units, including the tertiary sector and allied activities. It supports the livelihood of around 4.0 million farm families. There are a large number of persons engaged in the trade of jute. In the world perspective, India is the major producer of both raw jute and jute products. Out of the total world production of Jute, Kenaf and allied fibre of 3.0 million tonnes in 2007-08, India produced 1.8 million tonnes (60%). Considering the significance of the Jute Sector, the Ministry of Textiles is taking measures to develop the jute sector into a strong and vibrant area that can compete in the domestic and global market and ensure remunerative returns for the jute farmers.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- ❖ To study the work environment in the jute industry in North Coastal Andhra Pradesh.
- ❖ To study the effect of liberalization policies on work environment in the north coastal Andhra Pradesh jute industry.
- ❖ To make a comparative analysis of the opinions of the sample respondents on work environment in developed (Visakhapatnam), developing (Srikakulam) and backward (Vizianagaram) districts of Andhra Pradesh in the post liberalization era.

METHODOLOGY

The research has given more emphasis to primary data for this study. The study focuses on the perceptions and attitudes of employees in relation to their work environment in the post liberalization era. The views & opinions on broad issues were collected from selected employees who had more than 15 years of experience from various departments and plants in the jute industry in North Coastal Andhra Pradesh, i.e. Visakhapatnam, Vizianagaram and Srikakulam districts. 95 per cent of the jute growing areas and jute industry are concentrated in the North Coastal Andhra Pradesh, which consists of Visakhapatnam (developed), Vizianagaram (backward) and Srikakulam (developing) districts. The researchers selected and collected the data from these three districts because these three districts commonly have the jute industry with different levels of economic development. The sample respondents constituted the main source of information, which was collected by administering a structured questionnaire. The secondary data was collected from records, annual & management reports and wage & trade union agreements of various jute mills. The details regarding the sample selection of the respondents is presented in the Table 1.

Table 1: Details Of The Selection Of The Sample Respondents From The Three Districts Of North Coastal Andhra Pradesh			
S. No.	Name of the District	Employees having above 15 years of experience	Sample employees
1.	Visakhapatnam	2200	220
2.	Vizianagaram	4140	414
3.	Srikakulam	3660	366
	Total	10,000	1,000
Source: District Labour office, Government of Andhra Pradesh, Vizianagaram			

❖ **Techniques For Analysis:** The researchers used the Likert scale survey method for the analysis of the data. It is a five point scale which is used to allow the individual to express how much they agree or disagree with a particular statement. The weighted mean is similar to an arithmetic mean.

Formally, the weighted mean of a non-empty set of data $\{x_1, x_2, \dots, x_n\}$, with non-negative weights $\{w_1, w_2, \dots, w_n\}$,

is the quantity

$$\bar{x} = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^n w_i x_i}{\sum_{i=1}^n w_i}$$

which means:

$$\bar{x} = \frac{w_1 x_1 + w_2 x_2 + \dots + w_n x_n}{w_1 + w_2 + \dots + w_n}$$

According to this method, values are given on the scale as: Strongly agree : +1; Agree : + 0.5; Neither agree nor disagree : 0; Disagree : -0.5 and Strongly disagree : -1. Based on the survey data, the tables were prepared and calculated with weighted averages.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Surveys conducted by Mitra (1981) [1] and Roychowdhury (2003)[2] revealed that the workers divulged that, in the pre-liberalization era, jute mill labour was the most unstable and floating in character, and the labour supply in jute mills was greatly affected by the seasons. The bad living and working conditions, the low-wage rates, the fluctuations in the international jute market and hence in employment lead to the failure of the leadership of the jute mill workers. Bhattacharjee and Chaudhuri's [3] study (1994) revealed that in India, for the period from 1960–86, a 'structuralized' macroeconomic model was advanced, where the changing strength, structure and activities of unions were considered explicitly. The objective was to disentangle the effects of factors specific to the bargaining process from the effects of overall economic development.

Dunn and Brewer [4] opined that globalization refers to changes in technology, internationalized financial flows, commodity trade, and the transition from national to world markets as the main arena for economic competition. These, in turn, have been used to justify economic and political decisions such as deregulation and privatization of industries, downsizing and streamlining of work forces and dismemberment of welfare services provided by governments.

Morelli and Tomlinson's [5] study enlightened that Jute companies attempted to attract women back to the industry, not with higher wages, but with improved working conditions. It responded to pessimism concerning the future of the jute industry as the companies decided to launch initiatives to attract new industries to the area.

IMPACT OF LIBERALIZATION ON THE WORK ENVIRONMENT IN THE JUTE INDUSTRY

For the purpose of measuring the work environment, 18 statements were prepared. The opinions of the respondents of Visakhapatnam, Vizianagaram and Srikakulam districts were collected and are shown in the Tables 2, 3 and 4. Comparative analysis of the three districts with the help of the weighted averages are shown in the Table 5.

❖ **Visakhapatnam District:** The researchers tabulated the sample employees' opinion on work environment in the jute industry in the post liberalization era in Visakhapatnam District in the Table 2.

❖ **Analysis of The Opinions Of The Respondents:** According to the opinion on work environment of the sample respondents in the jute industry in Visakhapatnam district (Table 2), 65% of the respondents said that, *"in the post liberalization era, proper ventilation and good passage ways are maintained by the organizations at the workplace."* However, this statement was disagreed by 20% of the employees and the remaining employees were neutral with this statement. One of the employees in the production section said that in recent times, the managements of the organizations have realized the importance of ventilation, and they have made necessary modifications for natural ventilation and the required electrical lighting has also been installed at the units. A senior worker in the production section said that though the management has taken certain steps to protect the workers from dust and fumes like

Table 2: Opinions Of The Respondents On The Work Environment In The Jute Industry In The Post Liberalization Era In Visakhapatnam District							
S. No.	Statement	SA (+1.0)	A (+0.5)	N (0.0)	D (-0.5)	SD (-1.0)	WA
a) Working Conditions							
1.	At the workplace, proper ventilation facilities are provided.	71 (32.27)	73 (33.18)	31 (14.09)	18 (8.18)	27 (12.27)	0.33
2.	Adequate arrangements have been made for elimination of noise, dust and fumes.	88 (40.00)	67 (30.45)	27 (12.27)	14 (6.36)	24 (10.91)	0.41
3.	The workplace has good passage ways.	80 (36.36)	61 (27.73)	35 (15.91)	22 (10.00)	22 (10.00)	0.35
4.	Adequate measures are taken to reduce job stress and fatigue.	76 (34.54)	59 (26.82)	39 (17.73)	20 (9.09)	26 (11.81)	0.32
5.	At the workplace, proper house-keeping facilities like cleanliness, sanitation facilities are maintained.	96 (34.55)	69 (31.36)	23 (19.55)	21 (9.55)	11 (5.00)	0.49
b) Working Hours & Work Schedules							
6.	The working hours are very convenient.	90 (40.91)	56 (25.45)	31 (14.09)	20 (9.09)	23 (10.45)	0.39
7.	The work schedules are properly fixed.	90 (40.91)	50 (22.72)	36 (16.36)	18 (8.18)	26 (11.81)	0.36
8.	Weekly holiday on rotation basis is quite convenient.	80 (36.36)	71 (32.27)	27 (12.27)	11 (5.00)	31 (14.09)	0.35
9.	The shift system of working is quite convenient.	68 (30.90)	52 (23.64)	37 (16.82)	36 (16.36)	27 (12.27)	0.22
c) Safety Measures							
10.	Adequate safety equipment and fire prevention equipment is provided by the organization.	90 (40.91)	66 (30.00)	20 (9.09)	18 (8.18)	26 (11.81)	0.40
11.	Safety instructions are given promptly.	97 (44.09)	46 (20.91)	36 (16.36)	24 (10.91)	17 (7.73)	0.41
12.	Accident reporting system is quite good in the organization.	84 (38.18)	48 (21.82)	36 (16.36)	22 (10.00)	30 (13.63)	0.30
Overall Weighted Average							0.33
SA = Strongly Agree; A = Agree; N = Neither Agree nor Disagree; D = Disagree; SD = Strongly Disagree; WA = Weighted Average							
Source: Primary Data							

providing masks, caps, glasses etc., some employees were not using these properly.

Out of the 220 sample employees, 135 employees (76 strongly agreed and 59 agreed) were of the opinion that "Organizations take adequate measures to reduce the job stress and fatigue at the workplace." This statement was disagreed by 20 employees, strongly disagreed by 26 employees and the remaining respondents were neutral with this statement.

"At the workplace, proper house-keeping facilities like cleanliness and sanitation facilities are maintained." - this statement was strongly agreed by 35% of the respondents and 31% of the respondents agreed with this statement. 20% of the employees were neutral regarding this statement, it was disagreed by 10% and was strongly disagreed by 5% of the employees.

A management representative said that the companies involved in the jute business are spending a good amount of money on cleanliness and sanitation at the workplace. However, the companies are planning to outsource this task.

"In the post liberalization era, the working hours and work schedules are quite convenient and are properly fixed." - this statement was accepted by 65% of the sample employees and was disagreed by 20% of the employees. The remaining employees were neutral with this statement.

All the jute industries are following the statutory rule of one holiday after completion of six working days. Besides the weekly holidays, the companies are giving more holidays than the prescribed holidays of the state government. "In the post liberalization era, the work shift system is quite convenient for the employees." - this statement was strongly agreed by 31% of the employees and agreed by 24% of the employees. However, 16% of the employees disagreed with this statement, 12% strongly disagreed with the statement and 17% were neutral with this statement.

"For the safety of the employees, organizations provide safety equipment, safety instructions and fire prevention equipment." - this statement was accepted by 65% of the sample employees, disagreed by 20% of the employees and

the remaining employees were neutral regarding this statement. One of the management representatives said that the companies are following the safety and security norms prescribed by the factory inspector and the fire officer.

"In the case of accidents, the reporting system in the organization is quite good in the post liberalization era." - this statement was strongly agreed by 84 sample employees and agreed by 48 employees. However, it was disagreed by 22 employees, strongly disagreed by 30 employees and 36 employees were neutral regarding this statement.

The success of an organization depends upon good industrial relations. The good industrial relations are developed when the employees are satisfied with the welfare facilities provided by the management. From the above analysis, it can be inferred that more than half of the employees (overall weighted average : 0.33) were satisfied with the welfare measures which are being provided in the jute industry in the post liberalization era.

❖ **Vizianagaram District:** The researchers formulated the sample employees' opinion on the Work Environment in the jute industry in the post liberalization era in Vizianagaram District, and the results are presented in the Table 3.

Table 3: Opinions Of The Respondents On The Work Environment In The Jute Industry In The Post Liberalization Era In Vizianagaram District							
S. No.	Statement	SA (+1.0)	A (+0.5)	N (0.0)	D (-0.5)	SD (-1.0)	WA
a) Working Conditions							
1.	At the workplace, proper ventilation facilities are provided.	262 (63.28)	99 (23.91)	23 (5.55)	14 (3.38)	16 (3.86)	0.69
2.	Adequate arrangements have been made for elimination of noise, dust and fumes.	281 (67.87)	87 (21.01)	17 (4.11)	12 (2.90)	17 (4.11)	0.73
3.	The workplace has good passage ways.	272 (65.70)	87 (21.01)	18 (4.35)	19 (4.59)	18 (4.35)	0.70
4.	Adequate measures are taken to reduce job stress and fatigue.	288 (69.56)	86 (20.77)	18 (4.34)	11 (2.66)	11 (2.66)	0.76
5.	At the workplace, proper house-keeping facilities like cleanliness, sanitation facilities are maintained.	289 (69.80)	86 (20.77)	12 (2.90)	13 (3.14)	14 (3.38)	0.75
b) Working Hours & Work Schedules							
6.	The working hours are quite convenient.	279 (67.39)	96 (23.18)	12 (2.89)	13 (3.14)	14 (3.38)	0.74
7.	The work schedules are properly fixed.	272 (65.70)	87 (21.01)	18 (4.35)	19 (4.59)	18 (6.76)	0.70
8.	Weekly holiday on rotation basis is quite convenient.	272 (65.70)	94 (22.71)	16 (3.86)	19 (4.58)	13 (3.14)	0.72
9.	The shift system of working is quite convenient.	242 (58.45)	94 (22.71)	46 (11.11)	19 (4.58)	13 (3.14)	0.64
c) Safety Measures							
10.	Adequate safety equipment and fire prevention equipment is provided by the organization.	286 (69.08)	89 (21.50)	12 (2.90)	14 (3.38)	13 (3.14)	0.75
11.	Safety instructions are given promptly.	285 (68.84)	86 (20.77)	14 (3.38)	14 (3.38)	15 (3.62)	0.74
12.	Accident reporting system is quite good in the organization.	266 (64.25)	89 (21.50)	22 (5.31)	24 (5.80)	13 (3.14)	0.69
	Overall weighted average						0.72
SA = Strongly Agree; A = Agree; N = Neither Agree nor Disagree; D = Disagree; SD = Strongly Disagree; WA = Weighted Average							
Source: Source: Primary Data							

❖ **Analysis of The Opinions Of The Respondents :** The Table 3 reveals that in the post liberalization era, *"the jute industry provides proper ventilation facilities and good passage ways at the workplace."* - this opinion was accepted by 87% of the sample employees, disagreed by 8% and the remaining employees were neutral with this statement. An employee in Vizianagaram district jute industry opined that, as compared to the olden days, in the present era, the managements of jute companies are more careful about following the safety norms and provide adequate ventilation facilities at the plant. Some sheds were also modified by the management for allowing proper ventilation.

"In the post liberalization era, companies provide adequate arrangement for elimination of noise, dust and fumes." - this statement was accepted by 368 sample employees (281 strongly agreed, and 87 agreed with the statement). 17

employees were neutral regarding this statement, 12 employees disagreed and 17 employees strongly disagreed with this statement.

Out of 414 sample employees, 70% strongly agreed and 21% agreed with the statement that, *"in the post liberalization era, the companies in the jute industry took adequate measures to reduce the job stress and fatigue."* - it was disagreed by 3%, strongly disagreed by 3% and was considered neutral by 4% of the employees. However, one trade union member said that though the companies had taken certain steps by changing the timings and shifts for reducing the job stress and fatigue, this step was not adequate, and more needs to be done in this regard.

"In the post liberalization era, proper house-keeping facilities like cleanliness, sanitation facilities are maintained at the work place." - this statement was accepted by 375 employees (289 strongly agreed and 86 employees agreed with this statement. However, it was disagreed by 13 employees, strongly disagreed by 14 and 12 employees were neutral regarding this statement. One senior employee said that due to proper cleanliness and sanitation facilities, the work environment had improved greatly, and this, in turn, reduced absenteeism among the employees.

"The companies provide weekly holiday on a rotation basis, which is quite convenient for the employees." - this statement was strongly agreed by 66% of the employees and agreed by 23% of the sample employees. However, 16 employees were neutral, 19 disagreed and 13 strongly disagreed with this statement. One of the management representatives informed the researchers that to satisfy the trade unions and workers, besides the weekly and statutory holidays, the companies also granted another five holidays for the festivals of the local goddess and other festivals which are not mentioned in the state government calendar. These holidays are the paid holidays.

"In the post liberalization era, the shift system in the companies is quite convenient for the employees." - out of 414 sample employees, 336 employees (242 strongly agreed with the statement and 94 agreed with the statement) agreed with this statement. This statement was disagreed by 5%, strongly disagreed by 3% and 11 % of the employees were neutral regarding this statement.

"In the post liberalization era, the companies provide safety instructions, safety equipment and fire prevention equipment to the employees at the workplace." - this statement was agreed by 90% of the sample employees. However, it was disagreed by 7% of the employees and 3% of the employees were neutral with this statement.

Out of 414 sample employees, 266 employees strongly agreed and 89 employees agreed with the statement *"that the accident reporting system in the companies is quite good in the post liberalization era."* However, 24 employees disagreed; 13 employees strongly disagreed and 22 employees were neutral regarding this statement.

The above analysis (overall weighted average : 0.72) shows that more than 75% of the employees were satisfied with the welfare measures taken by the organizations in the jute industry in the post liberalization era. As compared with Visakhapatnam district, the satisfaction level towards work environment was almost double in the Vizianagaram district.

❖ **Srikakulam District:** The researchers put together the employees' opinion on Working Conditions in the jute industry in the post liberalization era in Srikakulam District, and the results are presented in the Table 4.

Due to strong enforcement from the factories' department and trade unions, the managements also realized the importance of the work environment. According to the above survey, 76% of the sample employees were of the opinion that, *"In the post liberalization era, proper ventilation facilities and good passage ways are provided at the workplace."* More than 10% of the employees disagreed with this statement and 13% of the employees were neutral regarding this statement.

"In the post liberalization era in the jute industry, adequate arrangements have been made for elimination of noise, dust and fumes at the workplace." - this statement was agreed by 245 employees (164 strongly agreed and 81 agreed), it was disagreed by 24 employees, and strongly disagreed by 35 employees. 62 employees neither agreed nor disagreed with this statement. Some workers informed the researchers that the dust protecting caps and glasses were not sufficiently supplied by the management from time to time. However, on the other hand, the management representative in that unit expressed that some employees were not using the caps properly, and some were damaging the caps.

"In the post liberalization era, proper house-keeping facilities like cleanliness, sanitation, etc. are maintained at the workplace." - this statement was strongly agreed by 148 employees and agreed by 83 employees. However, it was disagreed by 37 employees, strongly disagreed by 35 employees and 63 employees were neutral regarding this statement. Some employees said that the company was providing clean drinking water at all the important places, but

Table 4 : Opinions Of The Respondents On The Work Environment In The Jute Industry In The Post Liberalization Era In Srikakulam District							
S. No.	Statement	SA (+1.0)	A (+0.5)	N (0.0)	D (-0.5)	SD (-1.0)	WA
a) Working Conditions							
1.	At the workplace, proper ventilation facilities are provided.	199 (54.37)	80 (21.86)	50 (13.66)	27 (7.38)	10 (2.73)	0.59
2.	Adequate arrangements have been made for elimination of noise, dust and fumes.	164 (44.81)	81 (22.13)	62 (16.94)	24 (6.56)	35 (9.56)	0.43
3.	The workplace has good passage ways.	185 (50.55)	95 (25.96)	45 (12.30)	30 (8.20)	11 (3.01)	0.56
4.	Adequate measures are taken to reduce job stress and fatigue.	181 (49.45)	82 (22.40)	54 (14.75)	12 (3.28)	37 (10.11)	0.49
5.	At the workplace, proper house-keeping facilities like cleanliness, sanitation facilities are maintained.	148 (40.44)	83 (22.68)	63 (17.21)	37 (10.11)	35 (9.56)	0.37
b) Working Hours & Work Schedules							
6.	The working hours are quite convenient.	149 (40.71)	91 (24.86)	69 (18.85)	35 (9.56)	22 (6.01)	0.42
7.	The work schedules are properly fixed.	172 (46.99)	99 (27.05)	50 (13.66)	29 (7.92)	16 (4.37)	0.52
8.	Weekly holiday on rotation basis is quite convenient.	183 (50.00)	78 (21.31)	58 (15.85)	11 (3.01)	36 (9.84)	0.49
9.	The shift system of working is quite convenient.	168 (45.90)	83 (22.68)	47 (12.84)	40 (10.93)	28 (7.65)	0.44
c) Safety Measures							
10.	Adequate safety equipment and fire prevention equipment is provided by the organization.	166 (45.36)	98 (26.78)	66 (18.03)	20 (5.46)	16 (4.37)	0.52
11.	Safety instructions are given promptly.	192 (52.46)	86 (23.50)	44 (12.02)	25 (6.83)	19 (5.19)	0.56
12.	Accident reporting system is quite good in the organization.	203 (55.46)	88 (24.04)	30 (8.19)	18 (4.92)	27 (7.37)	0.57
	Overall Weighted Average						0.50
SA = Strongly Agree; A =Agree; N = Neither Agree nor Disagree; D = Disagree; SD = Strongly Disagree; WA = Weighted Average							
Source: Primary Data							

the water tanks were not cleaned on time. Out of 414 sample employees, 50% of the employees strongly agreed with the statement and 21% of the employees agreed with the statement, *"that in the post liberalization era, the companies providing a weekly holiday on a rotation basis is quite convenient for the employees."* However, this statement was disagreed by 3%, strongly disagreed by 10% and 16% of the employees were neutral regarding this statement.

One of the employees in the production section informed the researchers that though the company had installed the safety equipment, but the equipment was not properly maintained, and the company officials had not demonstrated the method of using the equipment. Out of 414 sample employees, 291 employees (203 strongly agreed and 88 agreed) agreed with the statement, *"that the accident reporting system in the industry is quite good."* The statement was strongly disagreed by 18 employees, disagreed by 27 employees and 30 employees were neutral regarding the same. The above analysis (overall weighted average : 0.50) reveals that most of the employees working in the jute industry in Srikakulam district were satisfied with their work environment .

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE OPINIONS OF THE WORKERS EMPLOYED IN THE JUTE INDUSTRY IN THE THREE DISTRICTS

The researchers conducted a comparative analysis of the Work Environment provided by the jute industry in the post liberalization era in Visakhapatnam, Vizianagaram and Srikakulam districts of North Coastal Andhra Pradesh with the help of weighted averages, and the results are presented in the Table 5.

❖ **Analysis of The Opinions Of The Respondents:** In this section, the researchers made an attempt to compare the opinions of the sample respondents of the three developed, developing and backward districts (one each) of Andhra Pradesh . The research revealed that almost all the managements of the jute mills in North Coastal Andhra Pradesh had

Table 5: A Comparative Analysis Of The Opinions Of The Workers On The Work Environment In The Jute Industry In The Post Liberalization Era In North Coastal Andhra Pradesh				
S. No.	Statement	Weighted Averages		
		Visakhapatnam	Vizianagaram	Srikakulam
a) Working Conditions				
1.	At the workplace, proper ventilation facilities are provided.	0.33	0.69	0.59
2.	Adequate arrangements have been made for elimination of noise, dust and fumes.	0.41	0.73	0.43
3.	The workplace has good passage ways.	0.35	0.70	0.56
4.	Adequate measures are taken to reduce job stress and fatigue.	0.32	0.76	0.49
5.	At the workplace, proper house-keeping facilities like cleanliness, sanitation facilities are maintained.	0.49	0.75	0.37
b) Working Hours And Work Schedules				
6.	The working hours are quite convenient.	0.39	0.74	0.42
7.	The work schedules are properly fixed.	0.36	0.70	0.52
8.	Weekly holiday on rotation basis is quite convenient.	0.35	0.72	0.49
9.	The shift system of working is quite convenient.	0.22	0.64	0.44
c) Safety Measures				
10.	Adequate safety equipment and fire prevention equipment is provided by the organization.	0.40	0.75	0.52
11.	Safety instructions are given promptly.	0.41	0.74	0.56
12.	Accident reporting system is quite good in the organization.	0.30	0.69	0.57
	Overall Weighted Average	0.33	0.72	0.50
Source: Primary Data				

realized the importance of working conditions for maintaining good industrial relations with the workers. Out of the five statements which are related to working conditions, the Vizianagaram district stood first, followed by Srikakulam and Visakhapatnam districts. In maintaining proper cleanliness and sanitation, the Srikakulam district stood at the last position. It is evident from the Table 5 that regarding the work schedule and working hours; the satisfaction level of the respondents from Visakhapatnam district (0.39 and 0.36) was very low i.e. it was almost 50% of the satisfaction level of the employees based in the Vizianagaram district (0.74 and 0.70). The satisfaction level of the employees with the weekly holiday on a rotation basis and the shift system was less in the Visakhapatnam district. The Vizianagaram district stood first followed by the Srikakulam district in this aspect of employee satisfaction. Even from the point of view of safety measures and safety instructions, the satisfaction levels of respondents from Visakhapatnam district was quite low. However, as compared to the working conditions and working hours, the satisfaction levels of respondents from Visakhapatnam district were quite better. Hence, it can be inferred from the results that the poor working environment adversely affects the industrial relations between the managements and the employees in the jute mills in the Visakhapatnam district. In some of the jute mills in the Visakhapatnam district, the accident reporting system was also not efficient.

CONCLUSION

The Government also recognizes the significance of good work environment in the jute industries. So, the govt. started a new scheme under the Non-Plan funding, which was put into operation with effect from April 1, 2010 as per the approval of the Ministry of Textiles, for the benefit of the workers of the jute industry. The scheme provides sanitation, health facilities and working conditions in the mill sector; provision of incentives to the small and medium jute diversified products units for compliance with social audit, including prescribed working conditions and health

facilities by way of extension of health insurance benefits for the mill sector on the same lines as the Rajiv Gandhi Shilpi Swasthya Bima Yojana.

In today's workplace, the typical employer/employee relationship of old has been turned upside down. Workers are living in a growing economy and have almost boundless job opportunities. This combination of factors has created an environment where the business needs its employees more than the employees need the business.

The Management's new challenge is to create a work environment that attracts, keeps, and motivates its workforce. The responsibility lies with the Managers and the Supervisors on all levels of the organization. Businesses must step outside their traditional roles and comfort zones to look at new ways of working. They have to create a work environment where employees enjoy what they do, feel like they have a purpose, have pride in what they do and can realize their full potential.

END NOTES

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