

The Working condition's Impact on Health and wellbeing

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Global Sustainability UK has been involved and delivered some breakthrough research and development work to create impact on working conditions of people in manufacturing and farming. As a subject expert I passionately believe workforce wellbeing is directly related to working environment and interactions at work that can affect an individual's mental and physical health. There is a plenty of literature highlight that poor working conditions, stress at work are key factors to long term conditions and lifestyle choices. For example smoking, COPD, diabetes and heart conditions are common in people working. Workforce is an integral and most productive part of a population; therefore, Public Health Improvement programmes focus on measures to deliver models that can address issues and risks related to workforce wellbeing and health, Thus contributing to larger health improvement impacts in the community and health economy.

Health, Work and Well-being is a cross-Government initiative to protect and improve the health and well-being of working age people. Public Health workforce wellbeing programmes are implemented bringing together employers, trade unions, healthcare professionals and other partners. 1 Therefore Public Health interventions at workplaces and industries related to healthier work environment can work as a microcosm to create societal impact. NOISH has also significantly reported that Health protection can play an important role to improve employee's health and safety and work.²

The workforce healthier environment can be improved with a Public Health lead Intervention involving Health protection and wellbeing. Significant evidence and research is available indicating over work, and unsupported working conditions, pertain to psychosocial risk factor and show plausible association with emotional drain, stress and burn out syndrome, as one of the health consequence for workforce. ³

This paper is presented to highlight the issues related to working conditions of manufacturers and suppliers involved in producing surgical goods in Pakistan. The cost of these lifesaving tools impact health, safety and wellbeing of many workers. These suppliers and manufacturers serve key brands internationally. The reason for selecting this geographical region is because of its contribution to produce about 80% of stainless steel surgical goods for the global market. Like many other developing countries Pakistan is also listed by ILO as a high risk region for Labour abuse and Poor working conditions, implied by poverty and inequalities. The Labours and workers are 53% of Pakistan's population, almost 1:2 male female ratio. High income countries in West are

largely dependant on manufacturing in Pakistan specially in the region of Punjab, across all industrial sector. The industries are not well equipped with Health and safety, safe working hours and environment for the workers; thus exposing the workforce population to poor health impacts. It exaggerated by additional social impacts such as high level of stress and long term conditions not only due to poor working conditions, but due to low wages and undignified treatment.

It is worth noting that around 80% of the world's commodities related to stainless steel surgical items, a considerable proportion of sports goods, Cotton and leather are made in Punjab and few areas of Sindh to be exported or shipped abroad. The manufacturing industry in Pakistan expands beyond the walls of factory, and situated in the domestic industry on streets, work long hours in unsafe conditions as documented in Panorama Report BBC.4,5

These workers have no systematic access to health, hygiene and safe work environments, therefore contributing to loss of lives, morbidity and mortality risks due to accidents, lung related diseases, Long term conditions like Asthma, Diabetes, High blood pressure due to

stress full work level, Mental health issues, eye diseases, loss of limbs and other disabilities. Women and children are also exposed to disparity due to poor work practices.6,7

This paper will discuss the need to address working conditions to improve health of the workforce with an expected rippling affect in community. This requires an intervention to actively work with cross sectoral stakeholders and forming strategic alliances and collaborations. It is vital to amalgamate Public health expertise, Social compliance knowledge and capacity building , to deliver a programme with an aim to;

- Increasing compliance with social, labour and environmental standards through awareness raising and capacity building;
- Ensuring that suppliers are equipped with the knowledge, mechanisms and tools to identify and address issues related to their health and wellbieng at work.
- Ensuring that suppliers have the necessary structures for constructive conflict resolution and prevention of abuse to workforce;
- Increasing workers' satisfaction and wellbeing, therefore contributing to lower turnover rates and absenteeism; and
- Increasing the productivity with a healthier workforce.

The presentation of this paper will focus on introducing an intervention model to focus on capacity building and improvement framework on healthy work environment to promote health and wellbeing of employees and identifying role of trade influencers to engage with buyers on delivering this model. The outcome of this preposition will discuss outcome based approach creating a lead to bring trade, occupational health and health protection under one umbrella.

The model will be based on Applying UN Global Compact initiative to the Public Health Interventional model and focus on the Strategic role of Public Health in addressing the disparities and inequalities related to health of the workforce to embed an overall societal impact.

This project can be a big vehicle to evolve, nourish and nurture healthier communities by Improving working conditions and health of workforce in low income countries and introduce a model to create circular economies through health and social impact.