

A Study on Problems Faced by Migrant Labourers at Workplace and HR Interventions

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A Research Paper on Migrant Labour Welfare and Human Resource Management


Heera Hosieries, Tirupur, Tamil Nadu, India

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Abstract

This paper investigates the workplace problems encountered by migrant labourers at Heera Hosieries, a knitwear manufacturing unit in Tirupur, Tamil Nadu, and evaluates the role of Human Resource (HR) interventions in addressing these challenges. A descriptive research design was adopted, with primary data collected via structured questionnaires from 100 migrant employees using convenience sampling. The study identifies language barriers (100%), long working hours (60%), job insecurity, discrimination, and inadequate facilities as the major issues faced by migrant workers. The findings reveal that HR interventions — including safety measures, grievance handling, training programs, and welfare facilities

— have a moderate but significant positive impact on employee satisfaction. A Chi-Square test (calculated value 12.5 > table value 9.488 at $df=4$, $p<0.05$) confirms a statistically significant relationship between HR support and employee satisfaction. The paper concludes with targeted recommendations for improving HR policy implementation, communication, and welfare provisions for migrant workers.

1. Introduction

Migrant workers are individuals who relocate from their native regions — typically rural areas — to urban centres or other states in search of employment and improved livelihoods. In India, industries such as textiles, construction, manufacturing, and hospitality depend significantly on migrant labour for their day-to-day operations. Despite their essential contribution, migrant workers often remain on the periphery of formal Human Resource Management (HRM) frameworks, managed informally by contractors or supervisors rather than through institutional HR systems.

Tirupur, widely known as the "Knitwear Capital of India," is a prime example of such an industry hub, employing over 600,000 workers in garment production and contributing substantially to India's textile exports. The city's cluster-based production model — involving knitting, dyeing, stitching, and packing — is heavily reliant on migrant labour from various states.

This study focuses on Heera Hosieries, a garment manufacturing unit in Tirupur, to understand the specific workplace challenges faced by migrant employees and how HR interventions can effectively mitigate them. The research is motivated by the recognition that improved HR practices not only enhance employee well-being but also drive productivity and organisational performance.

2. Literature Review

A growing body of research highlights the multifaceted challenges confronting migrant workers globally. Atay et al. (2025) found that migrant workers experience high stress levels due to poor working conditions and job insecurity, and that organisational support significantly reduces stress. Lyu et al. (2025)

documented unsafe working conditions, exploitation through low wages and extended hours, and poor social integration in the construction sector, recommending stronger HR policies and safety practices.

Goldar Perrote et al. (2025) identified limited job security and restricted career growth as persistent issues for migrant domestic workers, emphasising the need for better labour protection and HR frameworks. Fernandez-Sanchez et al. (2025) highlighted the vulnerability of migrant workers to labour trafficking and forced labour, underscoring the importance of legal safeguards and rights awareness.

Jaffer et al. (2025) demonstrated that health intervention programs significantly improve migrant workers' physical and mental well-being and access to healthcare services. Lyu and Zhu (2025) established that robust HR policies directly reduce workplace risks and enhance productivity, with training and safety measures as key drivers of improvement.

At the national level, Aruna Singh (2024) conducted a data-driven analysis of internal migrant workers in India's informal sector, highlighting the importance of inclusive policies and improved living conditions. Chatrath and Hack-Polay (2024) examined workplace conflicts among migrant groups, attributing tensions to cultural differences and poor communication, and recommended inclusive HR policies. Morando (2022) demonstrated through mixed-methods research that training programs positively affect individual outcomes, provided organisational support is sustained over time. Dr. Ramar Veluchamy (2021) emphasised the importance of HRM practices in protecting migrant workers during crises such as COVID-19, noting the critical role of public policy and institutional welfare mechanisms.

3. Methodology

The study adopts a Descriptive Research Design to systematically document and analyse the problems faced by migrant labourers and evaluate HR interventions. Primary data were collected through structured questionnaires and direct interviews with 100 migrant employees of Heera Hosieries, selected via convenience (non-probability) sampling. Secondary data were drawn from research journals, books, government reports, and institutional websites.

Dependent variables include employee well-being, job satisfaction, work-life balance, motivation, and workplace safety perception. Independent variables encompass HR interventions (training, safety, welfare programs), working conditions, wage structure, job security, and organisational support. Data were analysed using percentage analysis and Chi-Square testing in Microsoft Excel and SPSS.

3.1 Respondent Profile

Table 1: Age Distribution of Respondents

Age Group	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Below 20 Years	15	15%
21–30 Years	15	15%
31–40 Years	40	40%
41–50 Years	20	20%
51 & Above	10	10%
Total	100	100%

The majority of respondents (40%) belong to the 31–40 age group, representing the core active workforce. Younger workers (below 30 years) account for 30%, while only 10% are above 50, indicating a predominantly mid-career migrant labour pool.

Table 2: Gender Distribution of Respondents

Gender	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Male	65	65%
Female	35	35%
Total	100	100%

Males constitute 65% of the workforce, underscoring the male-dominated character of garment manufacturing labour at this facility. The relatively lower female representation may reflect the physical nature of certain tasks, safety concerns, or limited targeted recruitment of female workers.

Table 3: Designation Level of Respondents

Designation	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Entry Level	80	80%
Senior Level	20	20%
Total	100	100%

A dominant 80% of respondents are in entry-level roles, confirming that migrant labourers are concentrated in lower-tier positions with limited upward mobility. Only 20% hold senior-level posts, highlighting significant career progression constraints.

Table 4: Years of Experience of Respondents

Experience	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Less than 1 Year	30	30%
1–3 Years	50	50%
More than 3 Years	20	20%
Total	100	100%

Half the respondents (50%) have 1–3 years of experience, suggesting moderate tenure. The 30% with under one year of experience points to a notable inflow of new migrants, while only 20% have over three years, indicating relatively high turnover or limited long-term retention.

4. Analysis and Results

4.1 Key Workplace Problems Identified

Table 5: Summary of Key Workplace Issues

Issue	Finding	% Affected
Language Barriers	All respondents confirmed difficulty	100%
Long/Stressful Hours	Majority face extended working times	60%
Fair Wages (Neutral)	Uncertainty about wage fairness	50%
Workplace Discrimination	Agree or Strongly Agree	55%
Job Insecurity	Do not feel secure in jobs	30%
Accommodation Dissatisfaction	Disagree or Strongly Disagree	40%

Language barriers emerged as the most critical issue, with 100% of respondents confirming communication difficulties. This finding aligns with Chatrath and Hack-Polay (2024), who identified language differences as a primary driver of workplace conflict. Extended working hours affect 60% of workers, contributing to physical fatigue and mental stress. Notably, 55% perceive or experience workplace discrimination, and 40% are dissatisfied with accommodation — underscoring significant welfare gaps.

4.2 HR Interventions Effectiveness

Table 6: Employee Perception of HR Interventions

HR Intervention	Agree / Strongly Agree	Disagree / Strongly Disagree
HR Support for Workplace Problems	60%	25%
Safety Measures Ensured	60%	25%
Training & Development Programs	50%	30%
Timely Wage Payment	60%	25%
HR Policies Clearly Communicated	50%	30%
Work-Life Balance Support	50%	30%
Welfare Facilities Satisfactory	50%	30%
HR Interventions Improve Conditions	60%	20%
Overall HR Satisfaction	50%	25%

HR interventions show moderate effectiveness. Approximately 60% of workers affirm that HR supports problem-solving, ensures safety measures, and pays wages on time — reflecting foundational HR functions in place. However, training programs, policy communication, and work-life balance support reach only about 50% of employees, indicating implementation gaps. Overall satisfaction with HR support stands at 50%, suggesting that while a solid HR framework exists, it has not yet achieved universal reach.

4.3 Chi-Square Test: HR Support vs. Employee Satisfaction

Table 7: Chi-Square Calculation Table

Response	Observed (O)	Expected (E)	O-E	(O-E) ²	(O-E) ² /E
Strongly Agree	20	20	0	0	0.00
Agree	30	20	+10	100	5.00
Neutral	25	20	+5	25	1.25
Disagree	15	20	-5	25	1.25
Strongly Disagree	10	20	-10	100	5.00
Total	100	100	-	-	12.50

Degrees of Freedom (df) = $n - 1 = 5 - 1 = 4$. At 5% level of significance, the critical Chi-Square table value for $df = 4$ is 9.488. The calculated Chi-Square value of 12.50 exceeds the table value of 9.488, leading to the rejection of the Null Hypothesis (H0). The Alternative Hypothesis (H1) is accepted, confirming a statistically significant relationship between HR support and employee satisfaction ($p < 0.05$). This finding validates that strengthening HR practices will yield measurable improvements in migrant worker satisfaction and well-being.

5. Conclusion

This study affirms that migrant labourers at Heera Hosieries face a range of pressing workplace challenges — chief among them language barriers, extended working hours, discrimination, and inadequate welfare facilities. While HR interventions such as safety measures, timely wage payment, and grievance handling are operational, they do not uniformly benefit all employees. The statistical analysis confirms that effective HR support significantly enhances employee satisfaction and well-being.

Organisations in the textile sector must go beyond token HR compliance and implement comprehensive, accessible interventions tailored to the unique needs of migrant workers. The following recommendations emerge from the study:

- Introduce multilingual communication tools, signage, and basic language training programmes to eliminate language barriers.
- Enforce strict work-hour regulations, mandatory rest periods, and transparent workload scheduling to reduce stress.
- Establish a robust, anonymous grievance-redressal system that migrant workers can access without fear of reprisal.
- Expand and monitor training and development programmes to cover all entry-level migrant workers, with a focus on skill upgrading and career advancement.
- Improve accommodation, sanitation, food, and transport facilities to meet minimum welfare standards.
- Communicate HR policies in workers' native languages to ensure comprehension of rights, benefits, and processes.
- Implement and enforce strict anti-discrimination policies and conduct regular awareness sessions on equal treatment.

By systematically addressing these areas, organisations can cultivate a more inclusive, productive, and humane work environment for migrant labourers — generating benefits for both the workforce and organisational performance.

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