

## A SURVEY OF SAFETY PRACTICES IN SOME MANUFACTURING INDUSTRIES IN NORTH-EASTERN STATES OF NIGERIA

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### ABSTRACT

This paper looks at safety practices in some of the industries of North-Eastern States of Nigeria. Some of the surveyed industries were known to provide reasonable levels of safety facilities. The relationships between accidents and the degree of provision of safety facilities and observance of safety rules were established.

**Keywords:** Manufacturing Industries, Industrial Safety, Major Accidents, Carelessness, Workforce.

### INTRODUCTION

Safety practices are an essential factor for the development of the productive sector of all manufacturing industries. In any industrial set-up the ultimate goal is to use man, machine and money effectively in order to achieve the objective of such an establishment. Seeing the importance of man in an industry, it is therefore necessary to look at safety which is one of the most prevailing factors disturbing man from achieving the organizational goals (Esekhgbe, 1996). Therefore, industrial safety which has been described as a discipline relating to all measures taken to ensure the general well-being of the workers, prevent machine down - time and material wastage due to accidental damages in order to raise the profitability of the enterprise (Ibhadoe, 1997), is a term now generally used to assess the operational efficiency of modern industry.

The importance given to the safety and health of workers in the operations of any organization is an obvious commitment to a responsible business. A healthy and contented workforce gives back to the employer a number of very tangible benefits in terms of higher productivity, higher product quality, lower rates of absenteeism, fewer disputes and increased loyalty, and a stable work-force which also means less training expenses for new staff (Ibhadoe and Akporherhe, 1998). Also adequacy of safety equipment at working place helps to increase efficiency of labour and productivity level. It also

fosters industrial harmony and good human relationship in the organization. Safety cannot be separated from other aspects of personnel management and thus, management is completely responsible for safety precautions at work (Solivendy, 1952). The management can be a regulatory body which can effect safety in any organization. For example in the United Kingdom, regulatory bodies, such as the Health and Safety Executives (HSE) have encouraged companies to develop a positive safety as a means of successful safety management (HSE, 1991). Harrison (1972), defined organizational culture in terms of beliefs and values of the organization, which act as prescriptions for the way in which members of the organization should work. Safety culture may be perceived as a subset of organizational culture, where the beliefs and values refer specifically to matters of health and safety.

Goldberg (1991) suggested that the way in which senior managers instruct, reward, allocate their attention and behave under pressure will be particularly salient in shaping organizational culture. Perception of Senior Managers' attitudes and behaviours in relation to the safety and well-being of the workforce, therefore, will form the basis for the safety behaviour of workers, and as well as the safety performance of the company. However, Snaive (1999) described health and safety in every organization as the role of the personnel department

to ensure that the working environment is as conducive and safe as possible.

Despite the several studies carried out on safety practices in Nigerian Industries as exemplified by Asini (1991), little or no investigation has been done on the safety practices in some key manufacturing industries in North-Eastern States of Nigeria. The aims of the present survey were therefore:

- I. To determine the safety standard of the manufacturing industries
- II. To determine the extent to which safety laws were enforced in these companies of the North Eastern State

### METHODOLOGY

The methods that were adopted for data collection for this survey were based on the criteria. The first method was the use of a questionnaire for all the categories of workers on the production line, since they are more exposed to accidents in working

place. The second method was through oral interviews for the Senior Personnel (Production line and administrative managers) of the industries and thirdly, by collecting data from their records on the production line. In carrying out this survey, three working days were spent in each company visited in order to collect the relevant information and also observe work methods in relation to safety practices, which could act as a guide to the veracity of claims made by respondents and the companies' record books.

The companies which were chosen randomly from the North-Eastern States of the country include (Table 1).

- Savannah Sugar Company in Adamawa State
- Ashaka Cement Plc in Gombe State
- Asbestos Nigeria Limited in Bauchi State
- Maiduguri Flour Mill and Nigerian Bottling Company Plc both in Borno State

Table 1: Statistics of the Investigated Companies

S/No	Name of Company	Location	Major Product	Year of Establishment
1	Ashaka Cement Plc	Gombe State	Cement	1974
2	Savannah Sugar	Adamawa State	Sugar	1974
3	Asbestos Nigeria	Bauchi State	Roofing Sheets and pipes	1979
4	Maiduguri Flour Mills	Borno State	Wheat Flour	1953
5	Nigeria Bottling Company Plc	Borno State	Soft Drink	1987

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 2 - 4, show the respondent opinion towards provision of safety facilities extent of enforcing safety laws and the causes of major accidents in the companies over the past ten years of production.

In Ashaka Cement Plc, the administered questionnaires and oral interviews revealed that the company adequately ensured safety precautions by providing necessary facilities as indicated by 64% of respondents (see Table 2). However, the safety

manual can be improved upon. In case of Savannah Sugar Company 54% of the respondents agreed that they were provided with safety gadgets and training as required. However, the provision of a safety manual and warning signs are areas the company needs to improve upon. In Asbestos Nigeria Limited, the respondents of the administered questionnaires and oral interviews showed that only 25% of respondents believe that the safety provisions were adequate. As a matter of urgency, the management of the Asbestos Nigeria Limited should provide the safety facilities to their

Table 2: Respondent Opinions Towards Provision of Safety Facilities.

S/No	Name of Company	Safety Facilities	Percentage of Positive Respondents	Average of the Positive Respondents (%)
1.	Ashaka Cement Plc	Safety gadgets Safety sign warning Safety manual Safety training	85 60 50 60	64
2.	Savannah Sugar	Safety gadgets Safety sign warning Safety manual Safety training	64 44 40 68	54
3.	Asbestos Nigeria	Safety gadgets Safety sign warning Safety manual Safety training	30 15 20 35	25
4.	Maiduguri Flour Mills	Safety gadgets Safety sign warning Safety manual Safety training	63 89 59 74	71
5.	Nigeria Bottling Company Plc	Safety gadgets Safety sign warning Safety manual Safety training	86 71 64 93	79

Table 3: The Extent of Enforcement of Safety laws in the Companies

S/No	Name of Company	Percentage of Respondents		
		Very Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Not Satisfactory
1.	Ashaka Cement Plc	20	50	20
2.	Savannah Sugar	20	50	30
3.	Asbestos Nigeria	13	35	52
4.	Maiduguri Flour Mills	30	50	20
5.	Nigeria Bottling Company Plc	21	58	21

Table 4: The Causes of Major Accidents in the Companies over the Past ten Years of Productions-

S/No	Name of Company	Causes of Accident	Percentage of Respondents
1.	Ashaka Cement Plc	Material handling Lack of maintenance Ageing of machine Carelessness of the workers	None None None 100
2.	Savannah Sugar	Material handling Lack of maintenance Ageing of machine Carelessness of the workers	34 22 22 22
3.	Asbestos Nigeria	Material handling Lack of maintenance Ageing of machine Carelessness of the workers	None 33 17 50
4.	Maiduguri Flour Mills	Material handling Lack of maintenance Ageing of machine Carelessness of the workers	None 50 None 50
5.	Nigeria Bottling Company Plc	Material handling Lack of maintenance Ageing of machine Carelessness of the workers	None 20 20 60

workers. The Maiduguri flour Mill and Nigeria Bottling Company have adequate provision of safety facilities according to 71% and 79% of respondents respectively (Table 2). The results of the questionnaires administered in both companies indicated that the respective managements have fostered a safety culture.

Table 3 shows the extent the companies are enforcing safety laws. All the companies except Asbestos Nigeria Limited seem to exhibit a reasonable level of enforcement.

Table 4 shows the causes of major accidents in the companies over the past ten years of production. The common accidents due to the carelessness of the workers in all the companies were on the high side of 50 to 100%. This may be due generally to an undisciplined attitude to work by the workers. This manifests itself in disorderliness of the work place. For example, some of the common accidents arise from leaving sharp tools and other objects carelessly

on the floor, non-repair or replacement of faulty equipment and the use of incorrect work methods. Also, lack of maintenance resulted in 22% to 50% of the accidents. Most of these accidents can be eliminated if the management of each company takes safety seriously.

**CONCLUSION**

The survey of safety practices in some key manufacturing industries in the North Eastern States of Nigeria has shown shortcomings in safety practices in some of the companies. The Ashaka Cement Plc, Savannah Sugar company, Maiduguri Flour Mill and Nigeria Bottling Company, Maiduguri have adequate safety facilities. The said companies also enforced safety laws. However, Asbestos Nigeria Limited needs to improve on her safety practices.

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