

EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES AT APPLE; SOCIAL AND LEGAL ISSUES DISRUPTING INDIA'S INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS LANDSCAPE

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ABSTRACT

Apple started its Indian journey by setting up the Narasapura plant near Bangalore, Karnataka, where the iPhone SE was manufactured. Wistron Corporation, the contract manufacturer for Apple in India, has sustained losses due to violence by a section of workers at its manufacturing plant over employment conditions and terms of employment. Wistron could not cope with the rapid scaling up of workforce and production targets and blatantly violated various labour laws. Wistron has suggested investing over Rs. Two thousand nine hundred crores in India to boost efforts for local iPhone manufacturers and made in India products. By end of 2022, the iPhone 12 is projected to be released. This case illustrates how improper practices at the Wistron-Apple Factory have impacted make-in India plans. This case also depicts the lack of statutory compliance, blatant use of contract labour and the labour department's failure to ensure strict compliance of labour laws by MNCs. The incidents also revealed the inability of Trade Unions to enforce restrictive trade practices and ensure decent working conditions and minimum wages in compliance with all labour laws. The riot by workers as an extreme step indicates the workforce's growing anger for being deprived of a decent wage and living conditions. Working conditions, wages, lack of collective bargaining framework, corrupt labour officials over looking blatant human rights violations and compliance of statutes is a fit example of how MNC's are able to escape the statutory framework and focus on profits at the cost of labour. The failing support infrastructure in the form of NGOs and other work groups protecting the interest of labour is seen in this case. MNCs are seemingly taking cover over the pandemic induced pain and steam rolling various employment matters that will have a long-lasting socio-economic impact. The study was undertaken over 3 months involving field visits, interviews with all stake holders and visiting villages and farms from where the labour was sourced. The story is grim and the government at the centre will have to act decisively to avoid blatant violations similar to the Wistron- Apple episode. While this case does depict the historical labour matters and the legacy Apple carries. The choice is with the customer to reject such practices by avoiding purchase of such products manufactured from sweat shops. This case has been depicted as witnessed, from hard facts from the field and collaborating with other evidence.

Keywords: Contract Employees, Conflict Resolution, Collective Bargaining, Employee Grievance, Labour Relations, Working Conditions, Victimization.

INTRODUCTION

Steve Jobs, Steve Wozniak, and Ronald Wayne founded Apple Inc. on April 1, 1976. It is a multinational technology firm based in the United States specializing in consumer goods, software, and online services. Its headquarters are in Cupertino, California, and it has risen to become the world's 11th largest firm and the world's largest information technology company, with a revenue of \$ 356.82 billion. With devices sold all over the world, Apple's current product range includes the iPhone, iPad, Mac, iPod, Apple TV, a portfolio of consumer and professional software programs, the iOS and Mac OS X operating systems, iCloud, and several accessories, service, and support services. The total number of employees had reached over 154 thousand as of FY 2021(Wikipedia, 2021).

On February 3, 2017, Apple Inc. signed an agreement with the Karnataka government to set up a manufacturing plant in Narasapura, Karnataka, manufacturing 70% of the mobile phones it sells in the domestic market, in value terms, in India. Wistron Corporation, which makes iPhones, has a factory at Kolar's Narasapura Industrial Area, 51 kilometres from Bengaluru, India's IT and investment capital (ET Bureau, 2021). The list of suppliers, outsourced plants or manufacturing units for Apple in India is listed in (Table 1).

Supplier Name	Primary Locations
ZhenDing Technology Holding Limited	Tamil Nadu
Wistron Corporation	Karnataka
Sunwoda Electronic Company Limited Guangdong	Uttar Pradesh
Shenzhen YUTO Packaging Technology Company Limited	Karnataka
Jabil Incorporated	Maharashtra
Hon Hai Precision Industry Company Limited (Foxconn)	Tamil Nadu
Flex Limited	Tamil Nadu
ChengUei Precision Industry Company Limited (Foxlink)	Andhra Pradesh
LingyiiTech (Guangdong) Company	Tamil Nadu

Source: Apple Supplier List | Fiscal Year 2020

The list of suppliers of Apple Inc. for manufacturing in India

Apple had commenced operations in the plant through Wistron, a contract manufacturer, having 10,000 employees in its Bengaluru facility (Refer to Table 1). The plant manufactures iPhone 7 for Apple and IT products for Lenovo and Microsoft. The company's labour relations, was far from satisfactory in India. The plant employs 10,000 plus workers, yet the management failed to address the labour laws and had made no arrangements to establish a full-fledged labour welfare department. The consequences of altering working hours from 8 to 12 hours did not comply with Factories Act Provisions (Sections 51 to 59). Due to the change from a 8-hour shift to a 12-hour shift, workers' concerns about their pay, including overtime, had not been adequately handled by the management according to legal regulations. The problem with the attendance

system, which fails to track worker attendance appropriately, has gone unaddressed for the months of June and July 2020. Wages were also not paid as per the provisions of the Payment of Wages Act. (Section 15).

Case Overview

On December 12, 2020, contract employees at Wistron Manufacturing (India) Pvt. Ltd., factory in Narasapura, Karnataka, India rampaged over a salary disagreement, resulting in an outbreak of violence (Das & George, 2006). Employees turned violent at the iPhone manufacturing site in the suburbs of Bengaluru, which is managed by a Taiwan-based electronics firm Wistron Corporation. The night shift employees of the Narasapura factory destroyed the property and machinery over a drastic drop in their promised wages. Wistron guaranteed Engineering graduates Rs.21,000 per month; however, the salary was decreased to Rs.16000 and further to Rs.12,000 per month (Greg et. al., 2017). Salary for non-engineering graduates was also cut to Rs.8,000 per month. Unrest had been brewing for over two months, according to several employees, and it finally erupted on December 11, 2020 night when their salaries were credited to their bank accounts again with a decreased wage. The contract workers claimed that their salary had been lowered and that payments had been delayed month on month. Contract personnel were hired and paid through several labour supply companies, but Wistron management oversaw and controlled their work. On field inquiry.

Temporary workers at the factory in Karnataka protested the company's failure to pay regular and overtime wages. They chanted anti-factory chants and vandalized vehicles parked on the site. The workers allegedly looted several iPhones built at the plant and were retained for export. The protest is one of the most visible manifestations of India's recent industrial turmoil. Authorities from the state administration detained several of the protesting workers. In its original statement, Wistron stated that company had complied with all laws and was assisting officers with their inquiry. Apple said it has initiated a probe into Wistron's Narasapura factory in India. Thousands of contract employees recently invaded Wistron's iPhone production factory over claimed salary non-payment, resulting in theft and loss of items worth hundreds of crores. Wistron, on the other hand, indicated that the money had been put in the account of the contractor (staffing firms), and that action would be taken against that company. In retaliation, Apple has placed Wistron Corp. on probation by refusing to place fresh orders following an investigation into significant labour violations.

Apple Pvt Inc. and Wistron have admitted to "*lapses*" in payment and work schedules following the first inquiries. Even the state administration acknowledged that the plant's contractual workers had not been paid their regular and overtime wages for 3-4 months before the unrest. Wistron also announced that the vice-president in charge of the company's Indian operations had been sacked. Some of the mechanisms in place to oversee labour agencies and payments, Wistron said, needed to be tightened and enhanced. It took quick measures, including disciplinary action, to rectify the situation. Wistron, on the other hand, was put on probation by Apple. Apple will not award Wistron any new contracts until the company completes the necessary adjustments (Live Mint, 2020). On field inquiry with multiple contract workers indicated blatant violation of various provisions of the Factories Act 1948, Contract Labour Abolition and Regulation Act, 1970 and the labour department has been found wanting on regulating compliance of multinational companies. Workers interviewed on the field indicated possible corruption between the labour officials and multinational companies, and hence the

companies are having a free run, violating labour laws of the land, not complying with regulations and routing huge chunks of money overseas which could be legitimately due to the labour. The story of hundreds of victimized contract workers at Wistron Corporation's is how MNC's are taking the Indian system for a ride while doing business in India. On December 12, 2020, the production unit was damaged in a fit of rage, which is only the most recent reminder. The mobile phone has now become the worldwide display par excellence (Akshatha, 2020). The Wistron case exemplifies all of the labour complications in today's world. The unethical transnational contracts that perpetuate sweatshop practises in the manufacturing units is a growing influence in the globalised world. Our world's disparities have never been more evident.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Foxconn produced a wide range of electronics for several international businesses, including Apple, Dell, HP, and others. Apple's prominent involvement in China's industrial systems and export development model has been brought to worldwide notice by several journalists, activists, and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). Every iPad and iPhone, gleaming screen, and well-polished metal case were linked to Foxconn or another unknown business in Apple's supply chain. (Litzinger & Lund et.al., 2013).

China's new working class, which is primarily made up of rural migrant labourers, was subjected to unique types of exploitation due to the combined power of corporations, governments, and labour unions. What are the consequences for global labour after more than a dozen Foxconn employees committed suicide in 2010, resulting in a surge of protests, riots, and strikes at Foxconn and elsewhere (Pun et.al., 2016 a). Workers were marching to and from their production lines, dorms, and meals at some factories, as if they were in the military (Chan, 1997). They were underpaid and undernourished, and they went hungry frequently. In the aftermath of a fire at a toy factory that killed nearly a hundred workers, letters from friends and family working at other industries were discovered. Many of them complained of continuous hunger and questioned whether things might be better elsewhere (Chan, 2002).

Table 2 SACOM INVESTIGATIVE REPORTS, MAY 2010–SEPTEMBER 2012	
Date	Title
20-12-2012	New iPhone, old abuses: Have working conditions at Foxconn in China improved?
30-05-2012	Sweatshops are good for Apple and Foxconn, but not for workers
24-12-2012	iSlave behind the iPhone: Foxconn workers in central China
06-05-2011	Foxconn and Apple fail to fulfil promises: Predicament of workers after the suicides
13-10-2010	es: Military Management inFoxconn
25-05-2010	Dying young: Suicide and China's booming economy

Sources: SACOM (Pun et al., 2016b)

They had to work for lengthy periods as well. Workdays were typically 11 to 12 hours long, six days a week, and often much longer during peak seasons. They were usually compelled to labour at a fast pace throughout these long, exhausting hours. Even young, fit workers found it impossible to keep up with daily pace (Unger & Siu, 2019). Nine mainland Chinese and Hong Kong professors wrote a letter to Foxconn and the Chinese government on May 18, 2010, encouraging them to treat younger migrant workers appropriately.

The path ahead is barred, and there is no way back. The new generation of migrant workers is experiencing a significant identity crisis in this environment, exacerbating psychological and emotional issues. We better understand these Foxconn employees' "no way back" mentality by delving deeper into our society and structural conditions (Pun et al., 2016 c). Refer to Table 2, SACOM, a Hong Kong-based labour organization founded by students and academics concerned about labour rights concerns in mainland China, has launched a trans-border campaign to assist workers with purpose. "Foxconn is not the only firm to be accountable. Without the collaboration of Apple, Foxconn's primary client, the workers' condition could not be perpetuated." SACOM Project Officer Debby Chan said (2009–2012).

Unit – NT \$ Thousands	1 Taiwan Dollar= 2.60355 INR				
Item	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Operating Revenue	62,32,73,388	65,99,08,231	83,60,81,023	88,95,36,347	87,82,55,078
Gross Profit	2,94,16,236	3,16,44,517	3,16,39,403	3,75,59,256	4,21,58,550
Operating income	23,89,705	60,12,070	59,13,811	1,07,66,016	1,32,99,845
Operating Income and expenses	19,340	12,54,970	2,44,600	11,07,187	5,23,799
Profit before tax	23,70,365	47,57,100	61,58,411	96,58,835	1,27,76,066
Net income for continuing operations	12,70,895	29,93,004	43,61,491	72,85,189	97,26,243
Income from discontinued operations, net of income tax effect	-	-	-	-	-
Net Income	12,70,865	29,93,004	43,61,491	72,85,189	97,26,243
Other comprehensive Income for the year	26,01,852	24,30,986	48,21,073	5,18,936	2,53,372
Profit attributable to owners of the company	38,72,747	5,62,018	4,59,582	78,04,125	99,79,615
Profit attributable to non controlling interests	13,34,094	29,61,101	38,85,516	49,08,472	68,00,768
Total comprehensive income attributable to owners of the company	39,33,920	5,31,776	9,32,172	53,50,283	71,11,916
Total comprehensive income attributable to non- controlling interests	61,173	30,242	4,72,590	24,53,842	28,67,699
EPS	0.53	1.16	1.44	1.76	2.40

Source- Money control (2020)

Most of Wistron's sales come from the United States, followed by Hong Kong/China and then Europe. Wistron's India subsidiary was set up on February 18, 2018. As per the company's annual report, the paid-in capital for India manufacturing via the subsidiary was Rs 379.9 crore (Refer table 3). The average net Profit of the company for the three financial years ended March 31, 2018 (FY 2015-16, FY 2016-17, FY 2017-18) was INR 8,062,682,932. Apart from Apple, the company is also planning to bring on other clients to its 43-acre site in Karnataka. 40% of the land has been used for manufacturing purposes. Initially, the India facility had 2,000 employees but quickly added new staff on a contract basis and crossed 10,000. Third-party agencies manage the employment contracts and wages of Wistron's contract workers on behalf of the Taiwanese firm (Saraswathi, 2020).

Nature of the Problem

Consumer demand for the world's hottest gadgets is never-ending, and production lines never stop. Apple's competitive advantage is technological innovation, design, and marketing. In that case, its success is inextricably linked to its vast suppliers' ability to meet Apple's needs for high-quality new products (Jenny et al., 2016). Apple planned to begin commercial manufacture of the iPhone 13 in India for domestic and international markets. It has been able to secure a supply of semiconductor chips, which are in limited supply throughout the world, which has aided in planning its growth in India. Roughly 20-30% of India's products will typically be exported. The executives of apple believe that producing the iPhone 13 in the country will help it boost the supply of the model in its worldwide markets. The manufacturing facilities in the country swiftly accomplished the objective of zero waste in landfills, and they went even farther by spreading waste reduction knowledge to the communities where their employees live. In India, their suppliers set a new record by achieving platinum Zero Waste accreditation in just six months, with seven suppliers. Employees were subjected to a tough labour working environment that included continuous shifts, excessive overtime, inadequate rest, overcrowded dorms, etc. Over a decade ago, in an Apple product assembly factory in China, the world observed the same labour demonstrations and challenges India is experiencing now.

According to the All-India Central Council of Trade Unions, workers in the southern state of Karnataka were exposed to "*very exploitative sweatshop-like working conditions in egregious violation of labour rules,*" according to the All-India Central Council of Trade Unions (AICCTU). The workers were paid significantly less than the promised 22,000 rupees monthly salary and were not given salaries for November 2020 and the management had not replied to their complaints. Experts on labour rights have warned that worker discontent in India's industrial regions might worsen due to new regulations introduced in September 2020 that limit workers ability to strike or obtain social benefits if they work for tiny businesses (ILO, 2016a). Apple might also be made a party to the investigation into the violence at the Wistron facility by the Karnataka State government. Apple is also looking into the contract manufacturer's plant incident, where they discovered supplier code of conduct violations. The corporation is also examining whether Wistron had requested permission to extend working hours in advance. Apple has been asked to reveal the results of its investigation with the labour authorities/court, as there are many Supreme Court and High court judgments that have maintained the principal employer's liability.

The contractor is liable for paying wages, and the principal employee-employer is ultimately responsible, according to the Contract Labour (Regulation and Abolition) Act of 1970. This

implies that the authorities will be able to demand explanations from both Apple and Wistron. The progress will be monitored by the management as well as outside auditors. Wistron's ability to satisfy its production-linked incentive (PLI) targets may be impacted due to this probation. According to the scheme, foreign companies must produce smartphones worth Rs 4,000 crore over the previous year's production while also investing Rs 250 crore in the first year, which Wistron is unlikely to meet. Wistron, one of Apple's largest suppliers, has suffered a significant blow because it was unlikely to fulfil the PLI objective for the year. Wistron would be unlikely to invoke the scheme's force majeure clause. Clause 8.9 of General Conditions of Contract permits the authorized committee, an inter-ministerial body comprised of the revenue and IT secretaries, to change the incentive rates, targets, and other criteria during the scheme's duration. It can revise, modify, and withdraw any terms under the scheme in a force majeure event. "The outbreak and vandalism at the Wistron unit have been qualified for the force majeure clause, but Apple's suspension of additional orders does not qualify as a justification for relaxation." It's unlikely that the government will consider easing the restrictions on the iPhone maker. According to a complaint filed by the admin company, many new phones, laptops, and monitors are missing from Wistron Private Limited's plant in the Narasapura industrial park. In connection with the incident, 156 workers have been arrested. Under the Indian Penal Code, they have been charged with unlawful assembly, rioting with lethal weapons, voluntarily causing harm, trespass, dacoity, and other offenses under various provisions of IPC (Phartiyal & Monnappa, 2020). Wistron and its contractors were found in breach by the Department of Factories. The infractions included the Minimum Wages Act of 1948, the Factories Act of 1948, the Contract Labour (Regulation and Abolition) Act of 1970, and Apple's Supplier Code of Conduct. Profit motive at the cost of labour relations and fulfilling the socio-economic objectives is the main theme of this study. Violation of labour laws and possible corruption is the fall out of this case study.

Protection of Labour Rights

Abuse of workers' rights have plagued many worldwide supply chains. Production workers in the apparel industry frequently endure precarious working circumstances, including poor pay, excessive and often forced overtime, dangerous working environments, and repression of their freedom to form unions and negotiate collectively (Mark, 2020). The Sexual Harassment of Women at Work (Prevention, Prohibition, and Redress) Act 2013, the Contract Labour (Regulation and Abolition) Act 1970, the Payment of Bonus Act 1965, the Payment of Gratuity Act 1972, the Industrial Employment (Standing Orders) Act 1946, the Apprentices Act 1961, the Minimum Wages Act of 1948, the Payment of Wages Act of 1936, and the Trade Union Act of 1926, which includes the Industrial Disputes Act of 1947, are all part of the 44 Acts that have a direct impact on the manufacturing unit. Statutory compliance is a must (Krishnan & Sumathi, 2021). The Indian Constitution and recommendations from the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the National Labour Commission and other labour laws have created a broad framework for labour protections. Articles 14, 19, 21, 23, and 24 of the Indian Constitution provide fundamental rights. In addition, they prioritize women's equality and ensure that women are safeguarded. The aims are equal protection under the law and equality before the law. They make it illegal to discriminate against citizens based on their religion, race, caste, gender, or place of birth. They also give equitable employment opportunities to all inhabitants (Ghosh & Nandan, 2015). Articles 14, 15, 15(3), 39(a), (d), 42, 43, and 43A of the Constitution are all relevant in this regard (Bakshi, 2018). The ILO's Governing Body has recognized eight agreements as "essential"

to the organization's efforts to protect workers' rights. The Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No.87), the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No.98), the Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No.29), the Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957 (No.105), the Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No.100), and the Discrimination Convention, 1951 (No.100) are among the conventions that have been signed.

When necessary, the Apple standards are designed to supplement the Apple Supplier Code of Conduct by providing more clarification on Apple's expectations. Apple Suppliers and their subsidiaries, affiliates, and subcontractors must meet these standards to comply with the Code. These Standards integrate the Code's concepts and standards, and if any sections of the Code conflict, these Standards will govern and be viewed as amending the Code. These Standards apply to Apple suppliers and their subsidiaries, affiliates, and subcontractors, who deliver goods or services to Apple or for use in or with Apple products. The Apple Code and Standards are based on international human rights standards and instruments such as the United Nations' International Bill of Human Rights, the International Labour organization's 1998 Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) Due Diligence Guidance for Responsible Supply Chains of Conflict-Affected Minerals (ILO, 2016b). The All-India Central Council of Trade Unions has criticized the Karnataka government for failing to address workers' concerns at Wistron's site in Bengaluru, where protests over unpaid wages turned violent. The union claimed that the government was "turning a blind eye" to the facility's infractions. Officials raised no issues about the workers not being appropriately paid for four months, according to Clifton D'Rozario, the trade union's National Secretary. He went on to say that the administration was only interested in foreign investments. The state government is being exceedingly lenient with the corporation, turning a blind eye to all of the facility's violations.

The corporation requires all labour contractors or contract manufacturers to pay at least the minimum wage and additional benefits stipulated by law or the contract. The provider must compensate overtime hours at the legal premium rate. The compensation structure and pay periods must be communicated to all employees. Suppliers must follow all legal wage and benefit obligations, pay real wages on time, and refrain from employing wage deductions as a disciplinary measure. All temporary and outsourced labour must be used in accordance with local laws. We discovered flagrant infractions in Apple's contract manufacturing divisions despite these regulations.

Historical Perspectives Apple Manufacturing Operations World Wide

Following a report alleging appalling working conditions, Apple Inc. and its manufacturing partner Foxconn admitted to violating Chinese labour law by hiring too many temporary workers in the world's largest iPhone factory. Apple employs 300,000 workers in the facility dedicated to producing the company's next iPhone. Apple employed 147,000 workers directly at Apple Park and Silicon Valley, including 25,000 corporate employees. One Foxconn facility in Zhengzhou, dubbed "*iPhone city*," employs 350,000 Chinese employees entirely to work on the iPhone. Apple employs hardware components from 43 different nations as of 2021. Taiwanese original design manufacturers Foxconn, Pegatron, Wistron, and Compal Electronics, do most of the assembling in sites primarily in China, Brazil, and India. Facility

August, nearly half of the employees at the world's largest iPhone factory in Zhengzhou, China, were temporary hires, sometimes known as "dispatch" workers. According to a survey by China Labour Watch, a labour watchdog based in New York City. According to the article, Chinese labour law specifies that temporary workers cannot make up more than 10% of the overall workforce (Livemint, 2022 a).

During peak production season, factory workers put in "At least 100 extra hours each month," despite Chinese labour rules requiring them to work no more than 36 overtime hours per month. During peak season, regular employees are not permitted to resign. Some dispatch employees did not get the incentives the dispatch corporation had promised. Even though internship regulations prevent it, student employees labour overtime during the peak production season. The factory does not supply workers with sufficient personal protective equipment or offer them any occupational health and safety training. The factory does not keep track of injuries that occur on the job. According to media, current debates on the role of labour in global value chains must incorporate economic, technological, and social upgrading as variables that can result in long-term improvements in actual salaries and working conditions (Peter et al., 2012).

Apple has been accused of anti-competitive behaviour, rushed litigation, dubious tax techniques, sweatshop labour, misleading warranties, insufficient data security, and environmental issues. Apple has been chastised for employing proprietary parts and screws in their newer MacBook models and iPhone goods. Apple has been chastised for seeking to ban the Google Voice app on the iPhone so that iPhone customers cannot use it. Apple declined to approve the Google Voice program for use on the iPhone, saying that it modified its intended functions, such as routing voicemail through Google's application rather than its native application, visual voicemail, "ruining" the iPhone user experience (ethicalconsumer,2022).

Outside of the United States, China has remained one of Apple's most important locations. Pegatron, Foxconn, and Wistron are three of the company's largest suppliers. These three companies have massive factories in China dedicated only to the production and assembly of iPhones, iPads, watches, and a variety of other Apple goods. Apple's suppliers and partners have been accused of significant labour law infractions since at least 2010. An explosion at Fox Conn's Chengdu plant in 2011 killed four workers and wounded roughly 18 more. In the same year, another explosion occurred at one of Pegatron's plants, injuring 59 workers. Since 2010, China Labour Watch, a nonprofit organization, has tracked Apple and its vendors' labour regulations and potential infractions. It has often expressed concerns about the working conditions in these corporations' plants. The agency has raised concerns about the working conditions at Pegatron as early as 2013. "Workers at Pegatron worked lengthy extra hours to churn out a scaled-back, less costly version of the iPhone," according to the company's website. The salary was less than half of the average monthly income in the area and significantly below the minimum wage required to live in Shanghai, one of China's most expensive cities. China Labour Watch issued a new complaint six years later, alleging that Foxconn had broken labour rules in its plants (Jack, 2016).

Notably, Apple did nothing to stop Foxconn from breaking Chinese labour laws. Apple has done virtually little to enhance labour rights in their Chinese suppliers' plants. Workers are given salaries near or equal to the minimum wage in the area. According to a survey by China Labour Watch, it is tough for workers to make ends meet on the minimum wage. All of the charges were refuted by Apple. However, the corporation "did exceed the number of contract

workers authorized by Chinese legislation," according to the report.

According to one staffer, in other plants in India, the unsanitary living conditions were reported by workers residing in the hostels. The workers' symptoms included skin sensitivities, chest discomfort, and even food poisoning. The demonstration was started by the food poisoning of over 250 female factory workers as a result of stale food. A Reuter's story citing views from the Thiruvallur district (Tamil Nadu State/India) government noted the major food poisoning event among Foxconn workers on December 15. 159 females from a single dorm were admitted to the hospital that day due to food poisoning. A further 100 workers sought medical help but were not admitted to the hospital. The widespread food poisoning among workers fuelled rumours that some of the women workers had died due to the illness. The rumour, however, was eventually shown to be untrue. After two days, some of the workers who were ill failed to show up for work, while others mounted a protest over the deplorable working conditions. Foxconn has now promised to reform the plant's administration and make rapid improvements to the facilities. Even though the factory is closed, the corporation will continue to pay all of its employees until reopening. According to Reuters, Apple has placed the facility "*under probation*" and will ensure its criteria are followed before it reopens (Sudarshan & Sayantani, 2021; Phadnis, 2020).

Make in India is imperative to India's growth, and Ford's debacle will increase unemployment and social issues. While Ford entered the Indian market believing that its potential was untapped, the outcomes haven't lived up to expectations (Krishnan & Poorani, 2022). Changes in production practices, the resulting labour practices and unrest are considered micro-level responses to macrolevel trade patterns and subsequent policy-level reorganization in nation-states (Krishna & George 2006). Labour relations are a critical factor in production. Therefore, it is essential to comply with the various labour statutes and address the socio-economic deficits that persist in the Indian scenario. India cannot be made a sweat shop for victimizing and discriminating the poor labour, who are vulnerable owing to poverty and unemployment. (Livemint, 2022b). A wide variety of multinational enterprises including industry leaders in retail (Walmart, Target, Ikea), electronics (Apple, Microsoft, HP), toys (Mattel, Hasbro), soft drinks (Coca Cola), and the 10 most valuable apparel brands have responded by adopting compliance programs to enforce social standards in their global supply chains. The goal of these programs is to improve the social performance of upstream business partners, primarily in developing countries (Greg et al., 2015 b). NGOs and the consumers must ensure compliance so that all sections of the society are protected, and the labour's socio-economic conditions are enhanced (Pawan, 2022).

CONCLUSION

From the critical analysis of the nature of the problem at the Apple manufacturing plant in India, it is evident that a large multinational company like Apple Inc. has failed to understand the Indian culture ethos, Socio-economic status of workers, cultural, political and legal framework before embarking on its manufacturing and business journey. No business can be sustainable without all the stakeholders' active support and involvement, While Apple Inc. may create value by up-skilling its workers as part of its business strategy to use top-of-the-line technology, state-of-the-art infrastructure, and manufacturing facilities, including tools and tackles, but it cannot overlook the human spirits behind the technologies and the equipment. Hiring large numbers of contract labour and not paying them proper wages is a gross violation.

The trade unions have failed miserably to ensure worker rights are protected. Therefore, it is of utmost necessity to convert the semiskilled workers to permanent workers in one or two years through extensive training and up-skilling. Appointing minimal temporary workers (unskilled workers) to do manual and sundry jobs and ensuring all core activities are managed by permanent workers. The government's failure to audit compliance regularly is another serious issue; the gravity of the problem is so severe that if it is not nipped in the bud, it will spiral into more significant social issues and will result in significant unrest. While the country is embarking on make in India plans, our labour must be protected from exploitation in the hands of the powerful MNCs. Apple's net worth is equal to 3\$ trillion and can get away with human right violations, as seen in China. It is important to ring-fence the workforce from such similar practices.

A comprehensive framework for skill development to socio-economic welfare is the need of the hour to ensure sustainable business practices that would generate profit and goodwill for the enterprise to progress with the help of all stakeholders. Profit motive and cost optimization alone won't serve the nation, economy, and labour's cause. We need to be pragmatic and learn from other good examples that MNCs has established for ensuring social justice and economic progress. Lastly, make in India is not a licence to exploitation, victimisation and violations of human rights and the labour law framework. Indian workers are knowledgeable and are not choking as we see in China and are pushing back if required. Let the stake holders understand the predicament of the working class to make it a wining proposition

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