OVERVIEW

With the large-scale industrialisation, the hazards faced by the industrial worker has increased manifold. Therefore the subject of industrial safety has assumed quite an importance. Absence of proper safety measures would invariably lead to avoidable accidents resulting into injuries to persons, damage to equipment and machinery, financial losses both to employers and employees. To quote Mr. RB Blake, "Accidents are expensive. Substantial savings can be achieved by preventing them". The human angle for providing safety to the industrial workers is no less important, in fact in the present industrial environment; it is one of the major reasons for the management to undertake effective safety programs in their organizations, concerns, and factories.

Industrial safety involves not only elimination of agents of injury, but also a reliable control of harm to employees. Common experience shows that injuries continue to occur despite the knowledge of their causes and the recommended controls. Therefore, implementation of the hazard control program becomes critically important.

The government has passed a number of Legislation on the subject. However they are not being followed in letter and spirit. The anomaly needs to be rectified. A good safety program can reduce occupational
injury/illness and the operating costs, which in turn contributes substantially towards increased productivity and improved profits.

In view of the foregoing, it is imperative that the subject of industrial safety be given due care and a proper safety program be evolved and implemented to ensure the safety of workers. In earlier days the accidents were said to be the outcome of workman’s carelessness, with management sharing little responsibility. Subsequently based on studies carried out by the management experts’ appropriate labour legislation Workman’s Compensation Act 1923, in tune with the requirement of time was adopted by industrialized nations. Other nations also adopted this Act with the aim of reducing industrial accidents. Later on further studies carried out brought out the exceptions in this Act and labour legislations like Factories Act 1948 and ESI Act 1948 were adopted. These acts covered all possible measures. These acts were constantly reviewed for further prevention of industrial accidents and thus enhancing the safety of workers. After the Bhopal gas tragedy, additional provisions to cover hazardous operations were included by legislations as a result of detailed study carried out by management and legal experts. A study was carried out on the Challenger Space Shuttle accident of 28 January 1986 in which seven people died. This revealed differences between engineers and managers, upper and lower level managers, insufficient provision for upward communication outside the chain of command.
Industrialisation has advanced with leaps and bounds in the last few decades. This has helped to raise the per capita income. Employment opportunities and standard of living have improved. However industrialization has brought in several problems in its wake. One such problem is the industrial accident. With the rapid advancement in industrial process new types of dangers have been introduced in increasing numbers. Mechanical, electrical, chemical and radiation hazards cause lot of problems for safety of the employees in the industry. When the safety planning and safety measures are lacking, industrial operations may not remain under full control, schedules may get disrupted and cost may increase. Mr. R B Blake, the Senior Safety Engineer of the Division of Labour Statistics, US Department of Labour had rightly stated that,

"The main driving force behind the industrial safety movement is the fact accidents are expensive, substantial savings can be made by preventing them".

In the early 1900s the mission of business firms was exclusively economic. Today, partly owing to the interdependencies of the many groups in our society, the social involvement of business has increased. There is indeed a question as to what the social responsibility of business really is. Moreover the question of social responsibility, originally associated with business, is now being posed with increasing frequency in regard to government, universities, non
profit foundations, charitable organizations and even religious organizations,. Society, awakened and vocal with respect to the urgency of social problems, is asking managers, particularly those at the top, what they are doing to discharge their social responsibilities and why they are not doing more. The proposed research work is with the aim of analysing the procedures adopted by industries and factories, measures both statutory and non statutory provided by the government and efficacy of the controlling authorities. These aspects are seen in the light of future environment. Thereupon it is proposed put forward suggestions on the basis of research work for the benefit of present and future generations.

The research topic relates to industrial safety management, which is dynamic and alive. It will explore the shortcomings if any and reasons thereof. It would attempt to analyse whether concrete steps have been taken in this direction to acknowledge, identify and cover these loopholes or whether they still remain unattended posing as grave security risks. The paper will also analyse industrial safety thinking over the years including the psyche right from ancient times and discuss future options. The study encompasses the safety management at both macro level as well as micro level. The industrial safety takes a new serious turn with the ‘chemical, biological, nuclear ‘dimension and global terrorism being added to it.