

Occupational Health Hazards of Agricultural Laborers

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ABSTRACT Cereals are cultivated primarily for their starchy seeds and are staple food crops in India. Common cereals produced in India are wheat, rice, maize, oats, barley, sorghum and some of the millets. India has world's largest number of agriculture workers as more than sixty per cent of population is engaged in agriculture. Most of the farmers have small land holdings because many activities are performed manually viz., sowing, weeding, fertilizer application, pesticide spraying, harvesting, threshing, cleaning, storage etc. The study revealed that during harvesting time, the stalks of cereal crops dry completely and become hard, therefore the farm workers faced difficulty in harvesting such crops and causes cut in hands/arms. Since sorghum grains contain husk, which was accumulated on the body during threshing and causes itching/irritation in hands and other parts of the body. These problems may occur due to the non usage of any kind of functional clothing at work place. Hence, there is a need to design operation specific functional clothing for labourers. Findings suggest for designing hand gloves - harvesting and apron, head gear, mask-threshing.