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PRODUCTIVITY IMPROVEMENT THROUGH PREVENTIVE MAINTENANCE: THE CASE OF ATSC TEXTILE MANUFACTURING FIRM

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ABSTRACT

Through effective preventive maintenance system, there is a way for the manufacturing firms to enhance their capacity and to provide better product than they are doing at present. This paper examines how preventive maintenance improves the productivity of textile machines in textile manufacturing firms, especially focused on weaving machines (looms). The study has explored the major problems and causes of machine breakdown at the existing situations and proposed the means to avoid the breakdowns. The investigation of this work indicates an increase of 46.26 % of productivity improvement and mean time between failures (MTBF) increased to 75.41 % from 44.4 %. The mean time to repair (MTTR) also decreases from 12 hrs per breakdown to 10.04 hrs per break down which is a 10.19 % reduction.

KEYWORDS

productivity improvement, preventive maintenance.

1. INTRODUCTION

New approaches in modern service and manufacturing industries have been rummaged around, developed and implemented so as to survive in the dynamic and fierce competitive system that are becoming ever more complex. The need for driving down costs, integrating every activities and available resources of a company, empowering the employee to make decision, eliminating waste generated by failure across the value adding process, shortening of production lead time and delivery of quality assured services and products have been given due attention.

Therefore, many manufacturing firms must improve their activities for maintaining their business in the competitive world. Textile manufacturing firm is one of the manufacturing firms that must plan to improve the working process and environment for higher efficiency of production processes. Preventive maintenance is one of the techniques used to improve efficiency of production processes and to drive the maintenance costs down.

Maintenance is the process of making a certain machine or equipment available and keeps to the expected performance standard, so that it can avoid sudden break down and minimize down time cost of the equipment. There are two basic types of maintenance: breakdown maintenance and preventive maintenance. In the case of breakdown maintenance, the operators are waiting until equipment fails before repairing or servicing it. But preventive maintenance is a time-based or run-based periodically inspecting, servicing, cleaning, or replacing parts to prevent sudden failure. Moreover, in preventive maintenance system allows monitoring of machinery in order to use important/ expensive parts to the limit of their serviceable life.

Preventive maintenance system is used to: reduce the size and scale of repairs, reduce down time (increase uptime), reduce number of repairs, increases quality of output, reduce overtime for responding to emergency breakdown, increase equipment availability, decreases potential exposure to liability, lowers overall maintenance costs through better use of labor and materials, extends the useful life of equipment, finds small problems before they become big ones, and greatly reduces unplanned downtime.

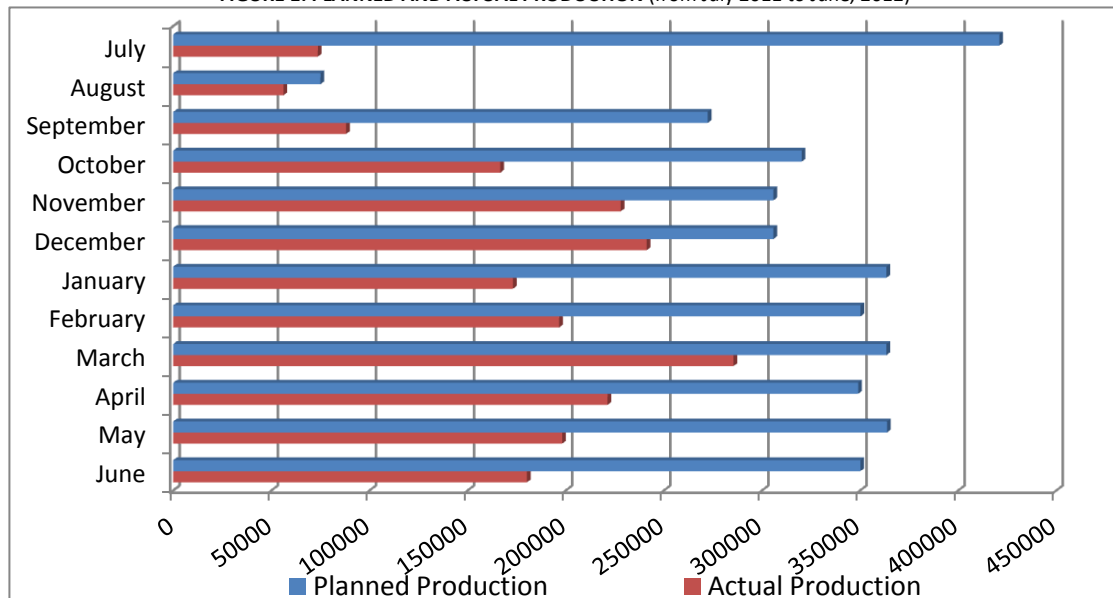
2. OVERVIEW OF ATSC TEXTILE MANUFACTURING FIRM

The textile sub-sector includes spinning, weaving and finishing plants. Most integrated textile firms (including spinning, weaving and finishing) are public enterprises in Ethiopia. The textile industry has since considerably expanded gaining an important place in the country's manufacturing sector. Textile is the most employment generating industry accounting for more than 27% of the total manufacturing employment in Ethiopia. And relatively textile industry is labor intensive compared to all other industries.

This paper has considered **ATSC Textile Manufacturing Firm – Weaving machines (looms)** as a case study. **ATSC Textile Manufacturing Firm** is one of modern textile manufacturing firms in Ethiopia and the weaving machineries (Rapier Sommet looms) are the latest ones. The company is capable of producing different items (like dyed fabric, grey fabric, bleached canvas, 100% cotton fabric, P/C grey fabric, printed fabric, etc) using these weaving machines. However, the company has been operating under its capacity due to high rate of unplanned failure, high dependency on some imported materials and spare parts, set-ups and changeovers, running at reduced speeds minor stops and idling, quality defects (like scrap, yield, rework), lack of skilled manpower, low level of development, poor quality of raw materials, and so on.

There is a great deviation between the planned and actual production of fabrics in the weaving shed. The author has considered the production data of ATSC Textile Manufacturing Firm for the fiscal year of 2011/ 2012. The production rate of the 100% Cotton grey fabric for instance shows a great fluctuation throughout the year (see figure 1). The minimum (17.5%) and the maximum of 78.9 % of the production performance have been observed in July and December respectively, 2011/2012 fiscal year.

FIGURE 1: PLANNED AND ACTUAL PRODUCTION (from July 2011 to June, 2012)



(Source: Author's analysis from ATSC Textile Firm. 2011/2012 production reports)

3. MAINTENANCE SYSTEM OF ATSC TEXTILE MANUFACTURING FIRM

As the country is having high demand of textile products, enhancing the performance of the company through implementing well developed and organized maintenance system will not only help the company to have efficient way of maintaining its different machineries but also it contributes to the improvement of the productivity and quality of its products supplied to garment manufacturing firms. Furthermore, it enables the company to keep the level of spare parts in stock at a minimum level for effective maintenance and for savings of foreign currency. Hence, this study aims at addressing and improving the maintenance system of the company to clearly scrutinize the hidden factors, which hinder the capacity of the company.

The study has focused on weaving machines breakdown and the maintenance activities performed in the weaving shed. There are so many reasons for machine breakdowns and all of these problems are investigated in this study. The machinery that is failed may be out of function for a long period of time attributable to shortage of spare parts, poor controlling system and reporting system prevailing in the industry.

The observations and the interview with the production manager of ATSC Textile Manufacturing Firm has indicated that the company is following traditional type of maintenance system. Traditional maintenance is re-active rather than pro-active, ad-hoc and essentially costly. Reliability works focuses on a pro-active and structured program, meaning less downtime, higher productivity and improvement of bottom line. The traditional maintenance approach cannot meet the needs of today's dynamic business environment. Traditional maintenance concepts assume that failures are a fact of life, or that they can be prevented through regular preventive maintenance regimes. The traditional maintenance approach can also introduce failures of their own (MIF: Maintenance Induced Failure) due to training or procedure problems. In these scenarios, it is not uncommon to find that fixing breakdowns consumes a disproportionate quantity of budgetary resources and little is left over for effective preventive maintenance activities, or continuous improvements. Traditional maintenance approach is characterized by almost total reliance upon the "mechanic" for all actions. It is the old basic craftsman approach to maintenance.

In other words, the company is implementing the logic of "run-to-failure management system" and this is simple and straightforward. When a machine breaks down ... fix it. This means "If it is not broke, don't fix it" method of maintaining company's machinery has been a major part of company maintenance operations. The company using run-to failure management does not spend any money on maintenance until a machine or system fails to operate. Run-to-failure is a reactive management technique that waits for machine or equipment failure before any maintenance action is taken. It is also the most expensive method of maintenance management. Therefore, the maintenance cost after the breakdown is very high.

The company has a maintenance department. The maintenance staff of the department uses a reactive maintenance methods or run- to- failure and waits until the failure of the machines. There is no procedure manual for maintenance. The maintenance personnel just changes the items which failed by the operation after the failure occurs. There is no analysis done to find the causes and the effect of the failure.

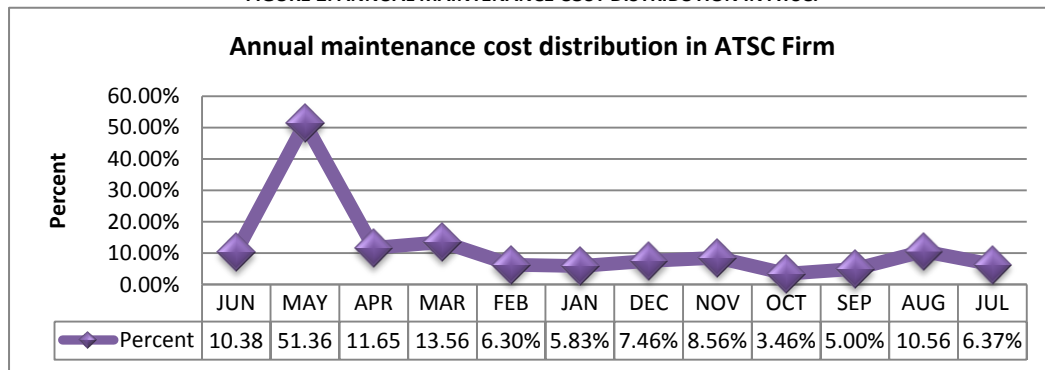
It is necessary to consider some statistics of actual maintenance performance in ATSC Textile Manufacturing Firm. The data and information has been collected in the fiscal year of 2011/2012. Table 1 indicates the ranges of maintenance costs in various months expressed as a percentage of the total manufacturing costs. The lowest band is around 3.46 % in October and the highest averages 51.36 % in May of the same fiscal year. And the expenditure on maintenance in ATSC Textile Manufacturing Firm has been estimated as 9.13 percent of total turnover; with a total annual spend of Birr 3,454,235. This expenditure is high (almost doubled) as compare to European countries, (like UK = 5.0%, Italy = 5.1%, France = 4.0%).

TABLE 1: ATSC MAINTENANCE EXPENDITURE

Month	Total expense (Birr)	Maintenance expense(Birr)	Percent
July	6,058,974	386,107	6.37 %
August	1,105,036	116,717	10.56 %
September	2,670,350	133,570	5.00 %
October	4,341,143	150,044	3.46 %
November	2,224,384	190,339	8.56 %
December	4,280,035	319,177	7.46 %
January	5,381,756	313,735	5.83 %
February	2,941,911	185,409	6.30 %
March	3,351,115	454,368	13.56 %
April	2,642,289	307,862	11.65 %
May	1,468,181	754,099	51.36 %
June	1,376,093	142,808	10.38 %
Total	37,841,267	3,454,235	9.13 %

(Source: Author's analysis from ATSC Firm data)

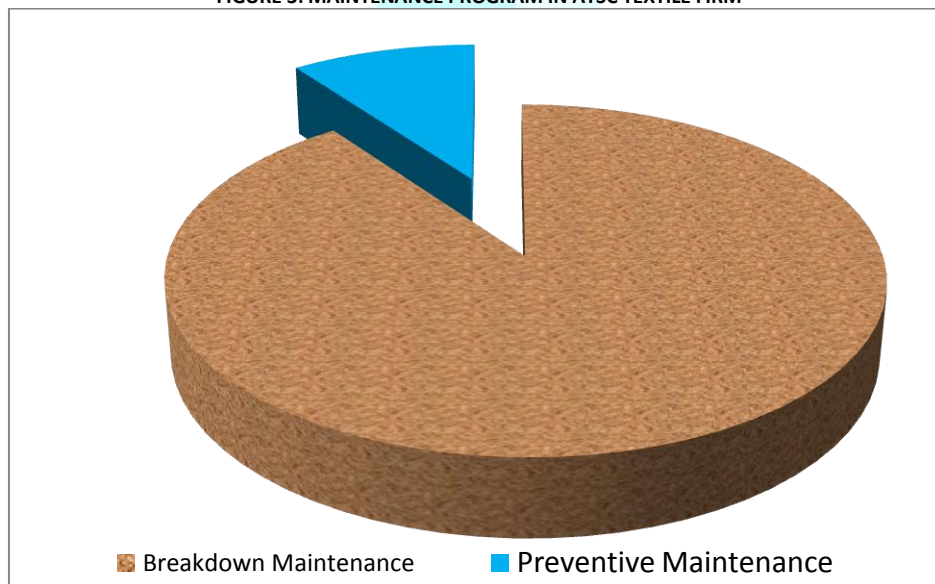
FIGURE 2: ANNUAL MAINTENANCE COST DISTRIBUTION IN ATSC.



(Source: Author's computation based on ATSC data, 2011/2012)

Some of the maintenance plan of the company contains cleaning and making minor inspection on the machineries. The plans are not based on the maintenance manuals. The figure below shows that the maintenance system that the company uses is almost 90 % breakdown type and very small percentage about 10 % lubrications and change of oils. The maintenance system of the company doesn't allow the maintenance operators to change any items before it break.

FIGURE 3: MAINTENANCE PROGRAM IN ATSC TEXTILE FIRM



In current situation around 39 weaving machines failed and stopped operation from 134 weaving machines in the company. Most weaving machines stopped due to shortage of spare parts and this shows that the maintenance system of the company doesn't follow the correct maintenance procedure. Hence, the weaving machines are out of operation and the company is losing its profit. The idle time records show that 49 percent of the idle time is due to the shortage of spare parts and the other minor causes are shown in the table 2.

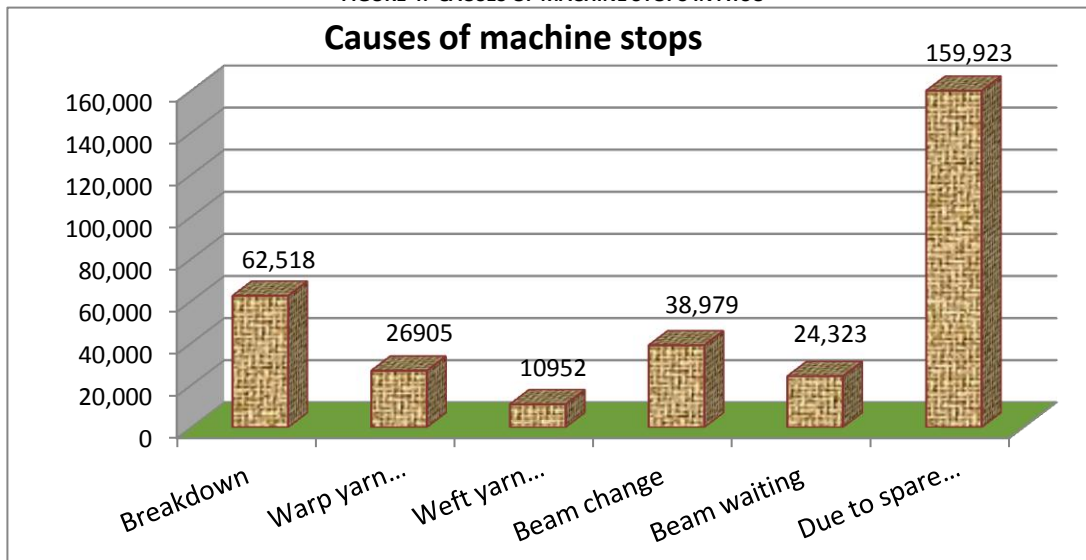
TABLE 2: REASONS FOR WEAVING MACHINE STOPS

Months	Lost production (meters)	Break down	Warp yarn breaks	Weft yarn breaks	Beam change	Beam waiting	Due to spare parts	Power interrupt
July	186410	5160	2512	873	2350	921	24170	94
August	87601	844	2335	789	1050	31	8653	99
September	297162	6480	2646	987	7060	530	5760	360
October	203843	3515	2625	905	3583	2158	10032	10246
November	198735	6042	2410	1012	5989	5404	11175	23
December	168989	4357	2087	978	8147	4735	6427	0
January	123607	4304	1896	836	2015	1504	15408	1665
February	121021	4754	2170	893	2458	1880	14376	9
March	140392	6562	2230	912	1255	1699	16244	2.5
April	146679	6890	1987	886	1811	3734	14352	184
May	140973	7080	1989	985	1639	877	14976	3.5
June	135250	6530	2018	896	1622	850	18350	2.5
Total	1,950,662	62,518	26,905	10,952	38,979	24,323	159,923	12,689

(Source: Author's analysis from ATSC Firm data)

The company loses about 323,600 meters per weaving machine of grey fabric annually due to the maintenance problem (figure 4). The major contributors of the loss includes: shortages of spare parts 49.4%, due to machine break down 19.3 %, due to beam change 12.1 %, due to warp yarn breakages 8.3%, due to beam waiting 7.5% , and due to weft yarn breakages 3.4 %. Therefore, about 70% of machine stops is due to the maintenance problems (machine breakdown and spare parts) and the study has been focused on the machine breakdowns. High machine breakdown leads to serious problems of low productivity. And the machine breakdown is due to incorrect adjustment, poor cleaning, and due to poor lubrication and oiling systems. Moreover, there is no suitable preventive maintenance plans to avoid machine breakdown.

FIGURE 4: CAUSES OF MACHINE STOPS IN ATSC



(Source: Author's analysis from ATSC Firm data)

Generally, the maintenance system of the company is based on poor integration of all functions and processes in the organization, which results in: high maintenance cost, less availability and reliability of equipments, high total maintenance hour and man hour, frequent failure of machineries, low profit, low production, and low workers dissatisfactions.

4. METHODS

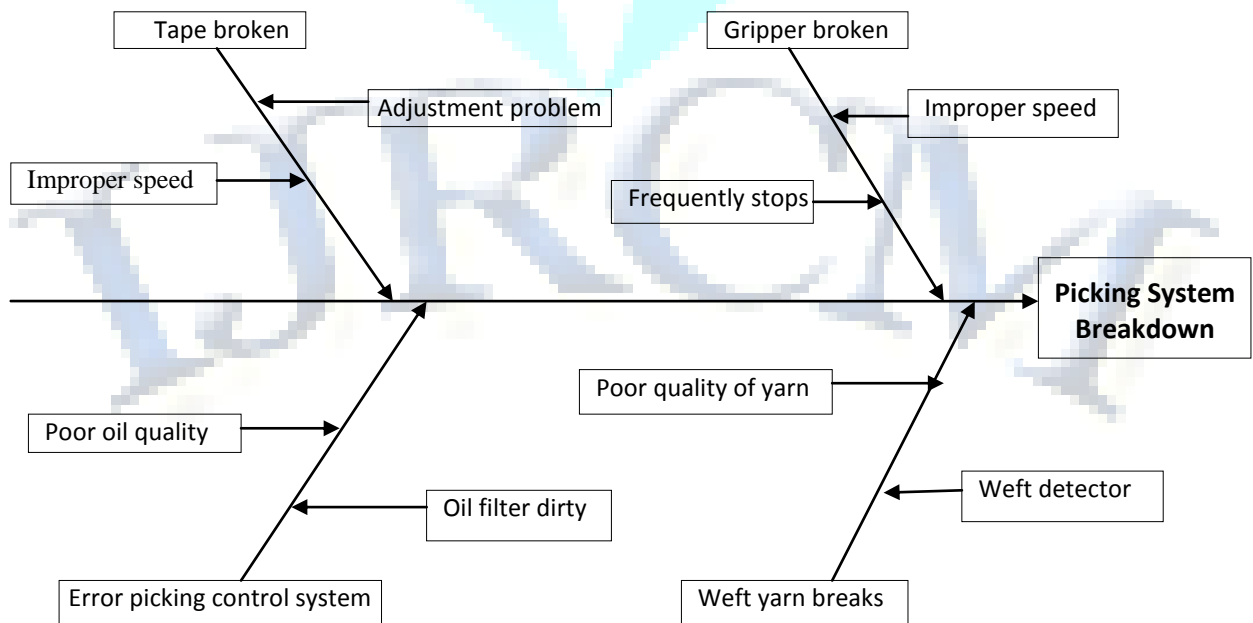
It is necessary to consider the improvement of mean time between failure (MTBF) and mean time to repair (MTTR) based on the data shown on table 2. The main problem of inefficiency is weaving machine breakdown. There are several causes for weaving machine breakdown, for example driving system, control system, shedding system, loom reed, picking – gripper problem, tuck-in system, lenos system as shown in table 3.

TABLE 3: CAUSES OF MACHINE BREAKDOWN IN ATSC (SOURCE: AUTHOR'S ANALYSIS FROM ATSC FIRM DATA)

Causes of breakdown	Before Preventive Maintenance		After Preventive Maintenance	
	Frequency (Times/month)	Average breakdown (Hours/ month)	Frequency (Times/month)	Average breakdown (Hours/ month)
Picking system (gripper)	4.73	37.8	1.03	7.50
Driving system	1.50	28.0	0.43	8.20
Control system	1.10	11.4	0.00	0.00
Shedding system	1.40	17.8	0.45	5.85
Loom reed	1.33	26.3	0.60	4.20
Tuck-in system	2.67	24.2	0.75	7.00
Lenos system	0.53	2.85	0.00	0.00
Total	13.26	148.35	3.26	32.75

The main cause of breakdown is picking mechanism that accounts an average of 37.8 hours per month and frequency of breakdown is 4.73 times per month. The cause and effect diagram has been considered to analyze the causes of breakdown due to picking mechanism (gripper problem). This helps to take corrective actions.

FIGURE 5: CAUSE AND EFFECT DIAGRAM OF PICKING SYSTEM BREAKDOWN



5. DISCUSSION

After the information of machine breakdown was studied and analyzed with cause and effect diagram, the maintenance plan is set as a daily, weekly, and monthly maintenance. Daily maintenance composes of cleaning, lubrication and adjustment plans. By working with maintenance plan, the average production output during 2012 fiscal year (September, October, and November) was 299,545 meters/machine. Before planned maintenance, it was 160,794 meters/machine and the output increased up to nearly 86.1 % to meet the target.

The results of comparing the machine performance before and after preventive maintenance are as follow. It was found that the weaving machine availability was 91.81% or increased by 28.9% while the percentage of machine breakdown was decreased to 62.91%. In contrast, mean time between failures: MTBF was increased to 122.70 hours/time while lost of machine breakdown was decreased 6.5%. Mean time to repair: MTTR was decrease to 10.05 hours/time and average of machine breakdown/month was decreased from 148.35 hours/month to 32.75 hours/month. Then, the efficiency of production before and after Preventive maintenance was compared. Production was more effective as shown by the increase of average efficiency to 138,571 meters/month/machine.

6. CONCLUSION

A preventive maintenance technique has utilized to improve the performance efficiency of machine in this study. As the information obtained from this study, machine breakdown times are analyzed. The data presented above shows many causes of system breakdowns. Due to the productivity improvement, preventive maintenance programs could be done for the higher machine capacity utilization and save the ATSC Textile manufacturing firm cost.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the analysis and discussions done so far, the solutions of this study improvement have been summarized as follows: 1) Instructor's manual for setup the balance shedding was necessary, 2) Daily maintenance inspection should set and used, 3) Well-trained operators are necessary for understanding the importance of the daily lubrication of parts and cleaning weaving machines, 4) It is necessary to set the weekly changing spare parts plan for each weaving machines, 5) Plan the annual lubrication oil changing and check the lubrication systems every two months, 6) Inspection manual for setup the weaving machine.

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