

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
LABOUR
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1919
ANSWERED ON:04.08.2003
EXPLOITATION OF BEEDI WORKERS
RAM SHAKAL

Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

- (a) the steps taken by the Government to save beedi workers from the exploitation of their employers; and
- (b) the results achieved therefrom?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE FOR LABOUR AND PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR)

(a) & (b): Government have enacted the Beedi & Cigar Workers (Conditions of Employment) Act, 1966, to protect the beedi workers from exploitation of the employers. This Act regulates the conditions of employment in the beedi and cigar industry and lays down responsibilities on the employers in regard to various facilities to be provided to the beedi workers like cleanliness, sanitation, drinking water, ventilation, crÄches, washing facilities, first aid, canteen etc. It also prescribes the hours of work, wages for overtime work, interval for rest, weekly holidays, wages during leave period etc. It empowers the State Governments to frame rules in regard to various matters including the manner in which sorting or rejection of beedis and disposal of rejected beedis is to be carried out, the fixation of maximum limit of the percentage of the rejection of beedis, manner of payment of wages, supervision by the inspectors over distribution of raw materials, settlement of disputes etc.

Further, under the Minimum Wages Act, 1948, beedi making is included as a scheduled employment in the State sphere. State Governments are the appropriate Governments to fix and revise minimum wages and enforce payment thereof including overtime working hours, authorized deductions etc.

The enforcement of the provisions of above mentioned Acts, has contributed towards improving the working conditions of beedi workers and reduced their exploitation by regulating the rejection of beedis, supply of raw material and enforcement of minimum wages.