

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2626

ANSWERED ON:28.07.2014

SAFETY AT WORKPLACES

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Will the Minister of LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a)whether the Government is aware that various hazardous workplaces including the ship breaking yard at Alang violates several national and international regulations related to pollution, hazardous waste and labour rights;

(b)if so, the details thereof along with the reaction of the Government thereto;

(c)whether a study points out about inadequate health facilities and abysmal track record of punishments;

(d)if so, the details of the finding and the various recommendations of the said study team; and

(e)the steps taken to protect the safety of the employees of such hazardous factories/industries including the ship breaking yard in Alang, Gujarat?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE FOR STEEL, MINES, LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI VISHNU DEO SAI)

(a) & (b): The Government has framed a comprehensive legislation i.e. the Factories Act, 1948 for taking care of the occupational safety, health & welfare issues of the workers employed in factories /manufacturing sector including the ship breaking yard. Under Chapter-IVA of the Factories Act, 1948, there are elaborate provisions, for the hazardous process industries:

The provisions are:

41A: Constitution of the Site Appraisal Committee: 41B: Compulsory disclosure of the information by the occupier; 41C: Specific responsibility of the occupier in relation to hazardous processes;

41D: Power of the Central Government to appoint enquiry Committee;

41E: Emergency standards; 41F: Permissible limits of exposure of chemicals and toxic substances;

41G: Workers participation in safety management;

41H: Right of workers to warn about imminent danger.

The enforcement of the provisions of the Act and Rules framed thereunder are carried out by the respective State Governments /Union Territories through their State Factories Inspectorates/Directorates.

State Government of Gujarat has reported that various hazardous workplaces including the ship breaking yard at Alang has violated labour rights under the Factories Act, 1948 in the State of Gujarat. During last three years, 84 prosecutions have been launched by the State Government against 62 factories for the violation of different provisions of the Factories Act, 1948.

(c) & (d): A study on impact of glass wool in ship recycling activities at Alang (Gujarat) was carried out by the Directorate General Factory Advise Service and Labour Institutes (DGFASLI) in 2012. The Study has observed that suitable engineering measures should be adopted to reduce the personal exposure of workers from glass wool during insulation removal and collection. Use of personal protective equipment, good personal hygiene and effective medical surveillance of the workers should be introduced to protect the health of the work force involved in ship recycling activities for glass wool handling. The major recommendations of the study include:-

(i) The work of glass wool removal is not stationary in nature in ship recycling yards. It is, therefore, suggested that Portable Local Exhaust Ventilation system may be introduced to capture glass wool dust/fibres generated during ship recycling activity.

(ii) It may be ensured that workers involved in glass wool handling should be provided with personal protective equipments.

(iii) Protective clothing gets contaminated with glass wool and should be changed as necessary.

(iv) In addition, exposed workers should shower the eyes and body at the ends of the work shift before changing the clothes.

(v) Hazards information and precautions for handling of glass wool should be displayed in the ship recycling units on prominent places in the language commonly understood by the workers.

(vi) The workers involved in the glass wool handling should be trained about the safe methods of handling of glass wool, occupational health, personal hygiene and use of personal protective equipment etc. at periodic interval in the language commonly known by them.

(vii) House-keeping in the ship recycling units should be improved and maintained in good condition. The glass wool as soon removed from the surface/equipments/pipelines should be collected and disposed in prescribed manner. If glass wool left unattended on the floor its fibres/dust will disperse in the work environment and will affect the health of the workers.

(viii) The workmen should be subjected to meticulous Premedical, Periodic medical examination using special diagnostic tests as provided in State Factories Rules.

(ix) Cases or Suspects of Occupational Lung Disease detected at any stages during the course of employment and during medical examination must be notified in the prescribed form to the Chief inspector of Factories of the State of Gujarat as required under State Factories Rules.

(e) Government has notified a Ship Breaking Code on 23.03.2013 which, inter-alia, covers provisions for management of Hazardous Wastes, Workers Safety and health aspects at Shipbreaking yards. Further, following steps have been taken to protect the safety of the employees of such hazardous factories/industries including the ship breaking yard in Alang, Gujarat.

(i) Personal Protective Equipments are provided to the workers.

(ii) All pressure vessels, lifting tools and tackles and dangerous machines are regularly tested by the competent persons.

(iii) Confined space entry certificate is issued before any entry in to the confined space of vessel/ship.

(iv) Qualified safety supervisors are being employed in hazardous factories/ship breaking yard.

(v) Mock drills are carried out for enhancing awareness.

(vi) Adequate firefighting facilities are available at hazardous factories.

(vii) Asbestos removal from the ship at Alang is carried out by approved agencies with due care of safety precautions.

(viii) Pre-employment and periodical medical examinations of workers are carried out. Self-breathing apparatus are provided where necessary and first-aid boxes are kept at different locations of the factories.