

Building Act neglected, safety of workers thrown to the wind



• [Rajulapudi Srinivas](#)

Many foreign firms operating in capital region violate labour laws and Acts

The series of accidents in the capital region is creating panic among the labourers in the construction industry here. The incidents also highlight the negligence of safety and health measures of the workers in Amaravati.

Notwithstanding claims of the Government on welfare measures for workers, many foreign and corporate construction companies, which took up works in the capital area, are ignoring labour welfare and safety. Besides, the Government is losing cess in crores of rupees. The departments concerned, which are supposed to keep a vigil on the construction activity, are turning a blind eye to the violations with vested interests.

Under G.O.111 of the Andhra Pradesh Building and Other Construction Workers (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act 1996, all the government departments, Public Sector Units and Corporations should pay one per cent of the total estimated cost of the construction to the AP Building and Other Construction Workers Welfare Board (AP BOCWB).

As per G.O. 112, private contractors and builders should pay cess and the building plan approval authority should assess the cost of the structure. A District Coordination Committee headed by district Collectors and Deputy Commissioners of Labours (DCLs) and other officers as members to collect cess. Cess should be collected under BOCW Cess Act 1996. The Board will provide financial aid to the workers and their families during accidental deaths, disability, marriages, scholarships and other occasions to the labourers. But, many plan approval authorities are not collecting cess and the committees were not functioning in a full-fledged manner.

Many builders who are constructing multi-storeyed buildings are not following safety measures leading to accidents. The employer should provide safety belts, helmets, shoes, aprons, gloves and other material to the workers, particularly who are working atop the buildings, which is not being followed. The contractor should fix the working hours for a day and provide one day rest in a week. If the workers are engaged for a period, the employer should provide accommodation near to the site, with separate kitchen.

All the workers should have first aid, drinking water, toilets and electricity and canteen facilities in the accommodations.

But, the rules are violated and labourers are living in horrible conditions. However, many construction companies are not registered and the Labour Department officials do not have the list of the registered firms and the details of the workers engaged by the managements.

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