

# Scientists for People

## Submission of comments on 2<sup>nd</sup> Interim Report in

### OA 448 of 2022 to NGT, Delhi

The second Interim report of the Joint Committee appointed to inquire into two incidents of mass exposure at Brandix India Apparel City, Achutapuram is uploaded on 15 December 2022. Hearing of this case is scheduled on 16 December 2022. Due to a shortage of time, a short critique of the report is being submitted in public interest.

An extended joint committee with 10 experts has taken four months and submitted two interim reports without any final conclusion. Both interim reports are nearly the same with the second repeating most of the first report.

#### **Plagiarism in Interim reports:**

The first interim report copy pasted from the content of the Deputy Chief Inspector of Factories report on the second incident on 02.08.2022 now included in the second interim report from page 87.

DCIF Report:

#### **Details of enquiry:**

- On 01-08-2022 at about 10:30 PM, Sri. Koviri Mutyalu, age: 29 Years who has been working as Pesticide and Insecticide Spraying Operator from the contracting agency of M/s. Pest Cure Solutions & Fumigation Sprayed Beta Cyfluthrin 2.45SC of 50 ml with 05 liters of water to the outside walls of L, M1, M2, and N Blocks.
- At the time of incident there are 940 workers in M1 block, 727 in M2 Block and 254 in L block and a total of 1921 workers present in the factory.
- Out of the 129 female workers who were hospitalized, 122 employees of them from M1-Block and 07 employees from M2 Block.

First Interim Report:

committee visit. Some of the observations made by the committee are as follows.

- On 01-08-2022 at about 10:30 pm, Sri. Koviri Mutyalu, age 29 years, who has been working as pesticide and insecticide spraying operator from the contracting agency of M/s. Pest Cure Solutions & Fumigation, sprayed  $\beta$ -Cyfluthrin 2.45% SC solution prepared using 50 ml of the chemical in 05 liters of water all along bottom corner of the outside walls of L, M1, M2, and N Blocks.
- At the time of incident there were 940 workers in M1 block, 727 in M2 Block and 254 in L block and a total of 1921 workers present in the factory.
- Out of the 129 female workers who were hospitalized, 122 employees were workers from M1-Block and 07 workers from M2 Block.

## DCIF Report:

### **Internal issues in the factory prior to the incident:**

From 01.06.2022 onwards 2446 no of workers were taken into Brandix Intimate India Pvt. Ltd from nearby Quantum Clothing India Pvt Ltd in which operations were terminated due to financial crisis. Initially workers from Quantum Clothing India Pvt Ltd refused to work in Brandix Intimate India Pvt. Ltd but the management of the factory persuaded them by assuring provision of required amenities to them. The associates from Quantum (operators, quality and supporting workers) were engaged in M-1 building. Staff and executives were allotted to concerned departments based on hierarchy and at the time of assigning roles, there raised resistance from some departments especially from RMWH(Raw Material Ware House) department workers. By conciliating the employees from both the units, job roles were assigned accordingly. The 120 numbers of workers from RMWH department were taken to Kondakarla Ava Lake on 24.07.2022 as a part of outbound training program and a picnic like program was arranged and conciliated the workers from both the units.

## First Interim Report:

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## DCIF Report:

The main Hazardous chemical factories are located on South side of the factory. The management has provided 6 gas detectors namely 1. Carbon Monoxide, 2. Formoldehyde, 3. T VOC, 4. Ammonia 5. Chlorine. 6. Methyle mercaptain. Near the factory main gate which is at South west corner of the factory; the smell sensed by the workers on north side

## First Interim Report:

**7.11 The main Hazardous chemical factories are located on South side of the factory. The BIIL management has installed 6 gas detectors for detecting Carbon Monoxide, Formaldehyde, T VOC, Ammonia, Chlorine, Methyl Mercaptan gases near the factory main gate which is at South West corner of the factory. The unpleasant odor/smell was sensed by the**

These are a few examples of copy-paste from the DCIF report on the second incident. It is not good professional ethics.

**APPCB concluded ammonia leak from Porus as the cause of exposure:**

NGT in the order dated 03.08.2022 distorted our submission stating "The NGO has submitted that the gas released in the present case is from Seeds Intimate Apparel Factory and Porus Lab in APIIC SEZ, exposing 369 women workers to ammonia. There is also probability of incident on account of handling of viscose fabric for innerwear. NGO has accordingly, suggested a scientific study." Second Interim Report has been included on page 111 proceedings of member Secretary APPCB dated 04.06.2022. An excerpt copy pasted from it says "Over 100 women working in the Brandix SEZ in Achutapuram have fallen sick after inhaling ammonia, leaked from the nearby Porus chemical factory"

A gas leak incident occurred On 03.06.2022 from an chemical industry located at the APSEZ Atchutapuram leading to the illness of the female employees working in Brandix India Apparel Park, Atchutapuram. Vide reference cited it was reported in the news papers that Over 100 women working in the Brandix SEZ in Achutapuram have fallen sick after inhaling ammonia, leaked from the nearby Porus chemical factory. Reported that about 100 women in an apparel unit developed symptoms of headache, vomiting and a few fainted after inhaling the gas, Treatment has been provided to them and all are out of danger.

APPCB issued a stop production order to Porus labs.

**Report format defies NGT order:**

NGT order specified "Report of the Committee may be furnished within three months by e-mail at judicial-ngt@gov.in preferably in the form of searchable PDF/OCR Support PDF and not in the form of Image PDF" But both interim reports are submitted in image format.

**Speculation by the Collector-appointed committee:**

Inquiry report on the first incident by the committee appointed included in the second interim report from page 98 concluded

Hence, the committee concludes that the incident took place due to spraying of Chlorpyrifos 20% EC between the production blocks and the accumulated vapours underneath the roof were sucked into the inlets of 4 ducts of Air Handling Units installed in M1 & M2 Blocks, thereby leading to the incident.

No evidence is provided. Presence of chlorpyrifos in the air is not established. Chlorpyrifos is a solid substance with very low vapour pressure. The vapour pressure for chlorpyrifos has been estimated between  $1.0 \times 10^{-3}$  and  $3.35 \times 10^{-3}$  Pa. [Data from European Chemical Agency] It

may be noted that the safe limit for exposure to Chlorpyrifos is 0.2 mg/m<sup>3</sup>. The two halls M1 and M2 are 20000 m<sup>3</sup> each. For the workers to be exposed to 0.2 mg/m<sup>3</sup> without any adverse effect requires 2 x 20000 x 0.2 = 8000 mg or 8 g of chlorpyrifos to vapourize. It is simply out of question. Experts are not applying their minds.

**JC recommends further study by AU:**

JC recommends further study by AU to establish external sources of pollution in contrast to the earlier conclusion that the source is at Brandix only.

Committee to move closure to the conclusion at the earliest. The Committee has also expressed that the Andhra University at Visakhapatnam, being one of oldest and one of the best-rated Universities in the Country, may be requested for carrying out this study with a time line of 3 months. Therefore,

With due respect to AU, it is necessary to mention that the present committees had four professors from AU, three working and one retired but ended up at square one after ten experts spent four months. No fresh approach is possible with such thinking.

A study done in India at 30 workplaces with 30000 employees such as software companies observed that only one out of the 30 had acceptable indoor air quality. All the committees ignored the indoor air quality. Reports have not properly presented the AHU data. Interim reports simply copied that information from DCIF report.

Our systems reward mediocrity and pseudoscience.

Scientist for People is concerned about the spate of accidents in AP and the failure of suo motu cases in preventing their occurrence. Unfortunately, false investigation reports are forming the basis of action.

Dr K Babu Rao

