

Diseases among Industrial Workers

6214. SHRI S. S. SOMANI: Will the Minister of PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have conducted any survey regarding the diseases from which a number of industrial workers are suffering;

(b) whether industrial workers in the country suffer from one or the other eye trouble;

(c) if so, the reaction of Government in this regard; and

(d) what action, if any, is being taken to ensure proper health conditions for industrial workers?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND LABOUR (SHRI RAVINDRA VARMA): (a) The Central and Regional Labour Institutes have conducted studies in various industries such as storage battery, dichromate, viscose rayon industry, ferro manganese, insecticide manufacture and formulation, foundries and caustic soda plants in which workers are exposed to various toxic substances. These studies have shown the trend of incidence of occupational diseases in such industries. For instance, storage battery workers exposed to lead fumes—10.6 per cent, dichromate workers exposed to chromium compound—20.9 per cent refractory workers exposed to silica dust—21 per cent, ferro manganese plant workers exposed to manganese—35 per cent, pesticide formulation—40 per cent.

(b) and (c). The National Association for Prevention of Blindness which is functioning under the All-India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi studied 10,165 industrial workers and 6,551 non-industrial population to find out the incidence of eye diseases and

disorders. From the data presented by them many visual defects such as refractive error, corneal opacity, muscular imbalance, cataract, trachoma, etc. were prevailing among industrial workers to the same extent as they were prevailing in non-industrial population, such as, rural villagers, people from semi urban areas and urban non-industrial population, such as, bus drivers. This suggests that these diseases are not probably attributable to the industrial occupations but due to some nutritional and other factors prevalent in the general population as a whole.

Further Rajendra Prasad Centre for Ophthalmic studies issued a report entitled 'Visual Screening in industrial workers'. Their study also revealed that there is no difference regarding the incidence of eye complaints between clerical staff and other active industrial workers. This study has also observed that foreign bodies were found in the eyes of the industrial workers.

The Directorate General, Factory Advice Service and Labour Institutes, Bombay have carried out studies on the incidence of eye disorders and cataract amongst a sample of 520 welders who are exposed to ultra violet radiation. The incidence of disorders observed there was as follows:—

Conjunctivitis	44.8%
Kerato conjunctivitis	11.0%
Incipient cataract	06.7%
Foreign body	21.1%
Arc eye	10.0%

(d) Central and Regional Labour Institutes propose to undertake detailed multi-disciplinary industrial hygiene and occupational health investigations in selected industries and take suitable technical control measures, wherever necessary.