

Beedi
conciliation

Resolution

Presented to : Honourable Shree Bhupendrabhai Lakhawala, Honourable Labour
Minister, Gujarat State.
Presented by : Self Employed Women's Association, Ahmedabad.
Date : 25/ 11/ 99.
Place : Sanskar Kendra, Ahmedabad.

There are 1,50,000 beedi workers in Gujarat State and 15,000 in Ahmedabad city. 98% out of these are Women workers. They are all home based workers. If we look into the past of Beedi Industry, there were Beedi factories in Gujarat where Beedi workers used to sit to roll Beedies. When Factories Act came into effect, the owners closed down these factories and started giving out beedi rolling work at home.

In 1967 , Beedi And Cigar Workers Act and 1977 Welfare Act into effect and the beedi workers started getting the benefit of social security and legal protection.

In 1978, the Honourable Supreme Court gave a judgement in the case of P.M. Patel that the Home based workers also should get the benefit of Provident Fund. After that beedi workers in the whole country started getting the benefit of Provident Fund, but the employers of Gujarat introduced the system of sale - purchase and subcontractor to escape from the grip of the law. The only aim behind adopting these various methods was to make it extremely difficult to prove a direct relationship of employer - employee and the deprive the beedi worker women of their legal rights and benefits.

As per the law, SEWA also represented before the Provident Fund commissioner that the employers of Gujarat should cover the beedi workers under Provident Fund. But this was not acceptable to the employers - contractors so they stopped giving work for too months during Diwali festivals. In order to escape from the Provident fund, they tried to disprove the employer - employee relationship and started the sale - purchase system. This ruined the hardwork and earnings of years by the women workers. They have no security for future. Where will these unorganised sector workers go ? The Government should protect these workers. So today we 1,50,000 SEWA members and 15,000 beedi worker member ask the Government that.

- (1) The Government should get this new illegal sale - purchase system removed immediately.
- (2) The Government should get the beedi workers minimum wages.
- (3) The Government should get the beedi workers Provident Fund as per the law.