**Bangalore**

**28th Nov, 2020**

**IDEPL RESPONSE ON WORKERS PROTEST AT HINDUPUR UNIT**

We thank you for giving us an opportunity to share our response regarding the NEWS items in some local newspapers. Below are our responses against the issues mentioned in your mail.

1. Reports of over 800 women garment workers striking over being paid less than the minimum wage at your factory in Andhra Pradesh, India. The workers allege they are paid as little as 6,000 rupees

On 11/11/2020 as usual workers were entering the factory for work.  At around 8.55 am a few people came by auto, stood in front of our gate and stopped our workers from entering the factory. They asked the workers to protest asking for a hike in wages and a few other demands. We had no information about the protest since no demands had been submitted or discussed.

The factory management approached the workers and requested them to come inside and work, and if they had any concerns they could be discussed mutually and sorted out. Many workers came in but there were several outside the gate on the first day. This was what was published in the newspapers.

As a responsible business organization, we pay all workers applicable legal wages fixed by the Government of Andhra Pradesh, where the factory is located. Based on their skill, many of our workers are paid wages higher than the specified wages. Apart from the wages workers get all the statutory benefits.

1. Face harassment by their managers and poor working conditions.

We have works committee with well-trained members who understand their rights & responsibilities. The works committee looks into all the complaints of workers and we have generally not had any issues unresolved. We also have a third party NGO to look into the grievances of workers; the NGO tries to resolve issues in an amicable manner and ensures a conducive working environment inside the factory.  Factory has taken utmost care to ensure the welfare, health & safety of all our workers with the help of qualified Welfare, Safety & Medical Officers. We have given high importance to protect the rights of our workers to ensure good working conditions within the factory.

1. They are calling for a pay rise to 11,000 rupees per month

Yes, that was one of the demands due to instigation from outsides. Our company finances do not permit any increments during this pandemic period. Further, if we agree to a pay hike of 80-85% we will have to close the factory because the entire operation becomes unviable.

1. Transport allowance

Workers, right from the start, have made transport arrangements on their own as the factory is situated on the main road which is very reachable from the surrounding areas.

1. Free canteen facility

We have a canteen facility that is well maintained & subsidized, but most of the workers are bringing their lunch from their home.

1. Reduced workload,

Excess workload has not been imposed on the workers since average efficiency is only 50% to 60%. Quite often the efficiency is below 50%. In fact, efficiency will have to go up if the operations have to become financially viable. Further, we have several committees within the factory where the employees bring up such issues and management will definitely look into such issues.

Note: There is no protest outside our factory since the last few workers started attending work from Saturday, 21st November, 2020. By discussing with the workers we were able to apprise them of the challenges the industry is going through at present. The best way to resolve issues is through discussions in the factory committees we have.

Indian Designs respects the right of every worker and is willing to discuss their concerns in order to improve working conditions and maintaining good industrial relations. The result is we see positive response from our workers.