

NJB SCHEMES FOR WORKERS' WELFARE IN THE JUTE SECTOR

Under the National Jute Board Act, part of the Board's charter is to provide for the welfare of workers in jute-producing units. To this end, the Ministry of Textiles seeks to formulate relevant schemes for the welfare of workers both in jute mills and in small units producing JDPs.

In the first phase, National Jute Board propose to utilise non-Plan funds to improve

- (a) the sanitation, health facilities and working conditions in the mill sector and
- (b) provide incentives to the small and medium JDP units for compliance with prescribed working conditions.

This Workers' Welfare Scheme therefore has 2 broad sub-schemes, one for the mills and one for the small sector. In both cases, proposals from mills or JDP units must be prepared by the management in consultation with the accredited unions.

Component I – Mill Sector

Sanitation facilities – A Scheme to provide hygienic sanitary facilities for mill workers and their families, first in the mill quarters and in the second stage in the working areas.

- Applications will be sought from mills for construction of sanitary facilities in mill quarters and in the working areas, which will be examined and appraised through an independent agency. Sanitary facilities will include designed sanitary blocks with toilet facilities for men and women, wash basins, sewage, etc.
- The total cost of constructing such sanitary facility will be borne by NJB, subject to a maximum of Rs. 60 lakh each.
- NJB will explore third-party tie-up with Sulabh International or such other reputed organizations especially those agencies which may have a government dispensation exempting them from participation in tender. This would speed up the process of construction.
- The concerned mill will first incur the expenditure for the construction and National Jute Board will thereafter reimburse 90% of the costs subject to a maximum reimbursement of Rs. 60 lakh, subject to submission of claim along with accounts and vouchers and physical verification of the facility.
- As far as possible, the facilities in the workers' quarters / living areas should be Pay-and-Use facilities where revenues provide the cost of maintenance for the agency managing them. In the case of facilities constructed in the mill working areas, the mill concerned will enter into

Annual Maintenance Agreement with Sulabh International or such other agency as may be selected. The mill concerned will bear the cost of maintenance.

- 10 mills will be afforded assistance each year on 'first receipt of subsidy claim application – first serve' basis.
- **Annual budget Rs. 400 lakh from non-plan budget of NJB.**
- Scheme will continue initially for 5 years and extendable for further period after review.

Component II – JDP / small & medium sector:

1. **Incentive for Social Audit** – The registered small sector units have to provide annual audit certificates for compliance with the prescribed working conditions.

Purpose

All authentic international, multi-national and national big stores require, as per respective country-law, audit certificate before or for placing orders on the manufacturers of lifestyle jute products which are manufactured by the MSEs in the Informal Sector of Jute. Hence export oriented MSEs in the Informal Sector of Jute shall conduct such social audits.

Coverage

Social audit is undertaken annually by the Firms like SGS, SEDEX, INTERTEK, STR LABs and the ISO certifying firms mainly under the following major heads:-

1. Child Labour.
2. Minimum Wages.
3. Social Security – ESI/P.F./Gratuity.
4. Working Hours.
5. Occupational Safety & Health Care.
6. Waste Disposal.
7. Non-discrimination.
8. Freedom of negotiation and formation of group or union.

Periodicity

One in every year (including renewal).

Cost

Up to Rs Two Lakh per year/per unit.

Assistance

It is proposed that NJB will provide 50% of the cost of annual compliance audit for each registered unit subject to a maximum of Rs. 1,00,000/- per unit per year.

Annual budget Rs. 50 lakh will be provided from non-plan budget of NJB.

2. **Health facilities** – NJB will extend health insurance benefits on the same lines with the mill sector as the Rajiv Gandhi Shilpi Swasthya Bima Yojana to registered workers of the small and medium scale units employing minimum 25 workers. Insurance companies would be invited to submit proposals for implementation of the Bima Yojana and the insurer would be selected through a bidding process.

Annual budget Rs. 50 lakh from non-plan budget of NJB will be provided.