

# Bulletin

## Occupational Health & Safety

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EDITORIAL

### DEMOCRACY DIES ANOTHER DEATH !

The upper most feelings while writing this piece, for Late Trade Union Leader Shri Shankar Guha Niyogi, are of shame and disgust. The brutal murder of Shri Niyogi of Chattisgarh Mukti Morcha (CMM) was done by some unidentified hired criminals on the night of 27 September, 1991 at his residence in Bhilai.

Shri Niyogi and his union have been in the centre of 11 month long struggle by contract workers of Bhilai - Urla - Tedesara Industrial Belt in Madhya Pradesh. Their main demand has been the implementation of Contract Labour (Regulation and Abolition) Act, passed by the elected representatives of the independent democratic India in year 1970, as one of the progressive legislations.

The struggle is being carried on by thousands of workers who continue to remain temporary till date even though they have been employed for as long as 15 years in jobs of permanent and perennial nature. A mere 5% of the total workforce is permanent. This is because the permanent workers are paid around Rs.2000 to 2500, while the others are not paid more than Rs. 600-700 per month. The latest update issued by CMM reveals, "Today the Bhilai Industrial area is witnessing a flourishing Goonda Raj under police protection. Industrialists use their private armies to mount brutal attacks on the struggling workers". The death of Shri Niyogi has put the signature on this statement.

Why was Niyogi killed? For struggling to get implemented what was passed by the highest house of Democracy! Asking for the due rights of workers! Such incidents of physical assaults and murders have been ever on an increase at a very alarming rate.

The blood stains of the murder of Safdar Hashmi have not dried as yet, and another voice of protest against gross injustice has been silenced. Distinct personalities like Safdar and Niyogi at least get publicly noticed, but what about those thousands of others who are attacked every year ?

It seems that the attack on activists involved in peaceful movements or struggles for justice has become a part of our lives. It is high time we put an end to such genocide by creating a force which will carry on the movement without being threatened or silenced in this struggle for justice ■

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