

SITAPURA GEM & JEWELLERY INDUSTRIES ASSOCIATION
EPIP MAIN GATE, SITAPURA, JAIPUR

Ref. no.: SGJIA/2/2020-21.

Date: 30th April, 2020

Shri Ashok Gehlot,
Hon'ble Chief Minister of Rajasthan,
Jaipur

Sub: Seeking issuance of an advisory for the workers/ staff to return back to work during modified lockdown and/ or post end of lock down

Respected Sir,

The lock down was announced on 22nd March 2020 till 14th April 2020 which was again extended to 3rd May 2020. The Government at the Centre and State both has issued an advisory for the businesses/ industries to pay full salaries and wages to all of their employees/ workers including contract workers during the period of lock down and should not be laying off their employees and workers.

The Gems & Jewellery industry is complying with all the guidelines/ advisory issued by the Government in respect of labour despite of the fact that the industry is facing several issues in their cash flows on account of outbreak of COVID pandemic in India and in buyer countries. The industry is having no cash inflows during the period of lockdown and is having very less chances of receiving payments for the exports made prior to lock down as major markets like USA, Europe etc are still under lock down. Further, lock down being announced in the last week of March, being financial year end the industry has already released statutory payment of taxes etc which were due in the first fortnight of March.

We on behalf of our members who are manufacturer and exporter of gems & jewellery products and operating from SEZ and EPIP Zones of Sitapura Industrial Area of Jaipur would like to extend our sincerest gratitude for permitting start of manufacturing activities in Sitapura Industrail Area. This is a welcome step by the State Government under your able leadership as it will be helping gems & jewellery industry stand up again which is having exports of around Rs.5000 Crore from the State and employing more than 3 lac workforce in Jaipur.

Through this letter, we would like to apprise your good self about the challenges being faced by gems & jewellery manufacturing units in getting their workers back to work after resuming operations from 27th April 2020 in the modified lockdown period as permitted by the State Government.

The key issues being faced by industry for getting their employee/ workers back to work are:

- The workers are reluctant to get back to work even if they are not residing in hotspot/ containment zone. This is due to the fact that they are sure about getting their full wages without working.

- The workers who have joined for work are being pursued by other workers with their infected thinking and at the same time such workers are seeking incentives other than salary for which they are quoting a comparison with the non joining workers.

Further, the idea of Government to permit movement of workers to their native villages at this time would be serious damaging our chances to resume operations as the workers will not be returning back very soon. This will be having twin effect on the industry as on the one hand there would be lack of skilled workers and on the other hand the industry would be still paying them the wages.

Here, it is imperative to mention that the **gems & jewellery industry is wholly dependent on highly skilled workforce** who are trained through fairly long exposure in manufacturing and training new workforce who are similarly skilled requires lot of time, energy and efforts. Hence, replacement of workers is not an option before the industry and this empowers us to assure on behalf of gems & jewellery industry to employ all our workers post COVID.

Therefore, we seek **Government support and request for issuing of an advisory/ guideline for the workers stating that they are required to resume back to work** if their employing unit has resumed operations and have called them to join otherwise the employer is at liberty to take suitable actions which may lead in a salary cut or even lay off. This will ensure to disseminate a message to the workers that they have to resume back to work to be eligible to get paid and employed. This will create an environment to start the operations again by the industry by creating a feeling amongst workers that the freebies on offer would not be staying long for them as they have to resume back to work.

In this context, both the Government and Industry are convinced to be empathetic for the workers and are ensuring full payment of wages but at the same time **the reality to hold the situation for long, lies in the answer to the statement "What if employers are unemployed"**. Hence, we are looking forward for your kind support in this regard.

Thanking you,

Sincerely yours,

S/d-

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