



Standing Committee Report Summary

The Plantations Labour (Amendment) Bill, 2008

- The Standing Committee on Labour submitted its 38th Report on The Plantation Labour (Amendment) Bill, 2008. The Chairperson of the Committee was Shri Suravaram Sudhakar Reddy.
- The Committee notes that the primary objective of the Bill is to provide a safety net to plantation workers, particularly those who handle agro-chemicals. They support this effort, but believe that the provisions in the Bill will be difficult to carry out without a well-defined monitoring mechanism.
- The Bill is only applicable to plantations with five or more hectares of land and employing 15 or more works. The government has not addressed how to deal with small and marginal growers who are equally exposed to these risks. The Committee strongly recommends that the government should provide a safety net to all workers.
- The Bill expands the definition of family to include a widow sister and dependent parents of a female plantation worker. The Committee supports this provision and requests the government to generate the resources so that a specific fund can be created to meet all the social security obligations.
- If medical facilities are not provided for plantation workers, the Bill stipulates that the chief inspector shall recommend state government hospitals for medical care. The Committee recommends that workers should go directly to designated hospitals, including reputed private hospitals, without the recommendation of chief inspectors.
- Given the remoteness of some plantations, there are 'group/garden hospitals' that have been created for easy access to medical facilities. The Committee notes that an absence of these hospitals will force workers to go long distances to access medical treatment. It strongly recommends strengthening this concept and upgrading all the medical facilities.
- The states regulate the conditions of employment, working hours, health, and safety of plantation workers. The Committee notes that implementation varies across states. Instead of vague provisions, the Bill should clearly address procedures for all activities that require contact with hazardous substances.
- The Committee notes that it is the government's responsibility to ensure that benefits reach the intended recipients. They recommend devising a system to cross-check the claims of State Governments regarding medical services provided to plantation workers.

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