



Occupational Health Day 2010 - Backgrounder

'Occupational Health beyond Statute: Advocacy and Practice'

The provisions of Factories Act (1948) had remained almost unchanged till Bhopal Gas Tragedy. The amendments to the Factories Act that followed in 1987 have addressed many Health & Safety issues and introduced the concept of occupational health centre for the first time. However, many more changes have become due in view of fast placed globalization and changes in the nature of work and risks.

All said and done, statutes at best define common minimum program to meet the SHE needs of the industry. What needs to be done is to go beyond statute and initiate measures to address workplace health & safety issues proactively. Many progressive organizations have initiated voluntary efforts in implementing Occupational Safety & Health Management System (OSHMS), which indeed is a laudable effort in the right direction. But the efforts would be incomplete unless we partake measures to engage the stakeholders, both internal and external.

Behavioral based approaches directed at attitudinal and cultural change would go a long way in sustaining measures directed at empowerment of the stakeholders, wellness, workability, quality of work life etc., and at the same time meet the aspirations of internal and external stakeholders in developing healthy and productive environment.

It is a fact that a large proportion of our working population, especially in unorganized sector and SMEs, does not have access to even basic health and safety services at workplace. Therefore, IAOH is progressively trying to spread awareness on occupational health & safety at workplace as was amply demonstrated by the themes we selected in the last few years. Many of our branches have actively moved in this direction and have succeeded in increasing awareness amongst the engineering, medical and entrepreneurial fraternities.

As a logical step forward, the theme of occupational health day - 2010, '**Occupational Health beyond Statute: Advocacy and Practice**'; precisely attempts to address the gap between "where we are, where we want to be and the road map". While Advocacy covers sensitization of all stakeholders, especially management and government; practice refers to the implementation of measures needed to protect the workers and the environment.

Based on the inputs and deliberations from various IAOH Branches, we **intend to** work out practical/innovative best practice guidelines for the benefit of all stakeholders in general and our members in particular.

"If you continue to do what you are doing, you continue to get what you are getting. Start by doing what is necessary, then do what is possible and suddenly you are doing what was earlier thought to be impossible".