

Report on Violations of Labour Rights and Human Rights in Fiber & Fabrics International Pvt. Ltd.

Report Date: March 30, 2006

Factory Addresses:

1) Registered Office & Washing Unit: Fiber and Fabrics International Private Limited, No.21-E 1, II Stage Peenya Industrial Area, Bangalore – 560 058 (Referred to as washing unit in this report)

2) Fiber and Fabrics International Private Limited, Industrial Suburb, Yashwantpur (Goreguntepalya), Tumkur Road, Bangalore (Referred to in this report as Production Unit - 1)

3) Jeans Knit Private Limited, 26 A, II Stage, Peenya Industrial Area, Bangalore – 560 008 (Referred to in this report as Production Unit - 2)

4) Jeans Knit Private Limited/Fiber and Fabrics International Private Limited, 36/A II Stage, Peenya Industrial Area, Bangalore – 560 008 (Referred to as Cutting Unit)

5) Jeans Knit Private Limited, 14th Cross, II Stage, Peenya Industrial Area, Bangalore – 560 008 (Referred to as finishing unit)

Dates of Interviews with Workers and Meetings: Several days from August 2005 culminating in a meeting with workers on March 26th, 2006.

Issues in Washing Unit: In this washing unit there are about 1600 workers almost all of whom are men. Most of them are between 18 to 30 years of age. Most of them are recent migrants (within the last year) from various rural districts of Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh. The factory works in three shifts and main operations are washing, dyeing, damaging, spraying and brushing. Majority of the production is jeans and jackets.

- Beating workers using sticks and bare hands, slapping them, kicking them with booted legs on any whichever part of the body by the supervisors and the laundry manager Ramesh Chauhan. The beating occurs whenever there are even minor faults in work and when workers cannot meet production targets that are unreasonable high.
- Stripping the workers naked and gathering all other workers around the victim and beating him/them to make a show of the punishment shouting obscenities and warning other workers that they would meet with the same fate if they do not obey.
- Paying musclemen to beat up the workers outside the factory. The ingenious way this is done is to put the more vocal workers in the night shift and when they return home during midnight, attacking them. Sometimes the musclemen search out the homes of the workers and they are assaulted even there.

- About four months back a worker was called out of the factory while on duty by about midnight and the next day his dead body was found near the railway track (We are enquiring with the local police for more details of the incident).
- No appointment letters are issued, no identity cards, lunch breaks are not regular, toilets cannot be used freely by workers, and signatures are taken on blank papers as well forms that may be used to show as dues are settled.
- Forcing workers to leave employment by making them do operations that they are not familiar with or have any training in. Inability of performing those tasks is then given as excuse to terminate their employment.
- Workers are not issued safety gear like gloves and masks regularly. It is only during social audits that these are provided.
- Harassment during physical check at the time of entry into the factory.
- Nearly 150 workers leave employment every month unable to bear the torture and abuse.
- Large number of workers fall ill due perhaps to the unsafe use of chemicals during operations.

Issues in the Finishing Unit: The numbers of women and men workers are almost equal here. There is about 600 workers altogether. Depending upon the work pressure, three or two shifts are operated.

- Workers in this unit are subjected to verbal units and obscene comments by the supervisors and the production manager.
- Many a days workers have to work continuously for 12 hours and most of the time, overtime wages are not paid.
- Employment is terminated immediately without any notice or enquiry if workers express any protest or difficulty in meeting the unreasonably high production targets.
- No appointment letters are issued, no identity cards, there is no crèche facility, no canteen, no regular breaks.

Issues in the remaining three Units: In production unit 1, there are about 1600 employees who work in three shifts. There is more or less equal number of women and men workers. In production unit 2 there are about 700 workers and the number of women and men workers is equal. In the cutting unit the number of workers is about 400 workers out whom the majority is men.

- Men workers are often physically assaulted.
- Men and women workers are subjected to verbal abuse.
- No appointment letters, identity cards are issued to a few workers only, no crèche facility.
