




Be Mains Ready

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Q. India's aspirations to industrialise should be founded on safety. Comment. (250 words)

Approach / Explanation / Answer

- Write an introduction highlighting the need for better safety regulations in industries in India.
- Highlight the shortcomings of safety regulations and inefficient implementation of laws along with examples.
- Discuss various issues associated with such compromises with safety standards.
- Conclude by summarizing the answer and suggest a way forward.

Answer

- Industrial accidents in India and elsewhere in the world constitute a major problem for industrial establishments. The most recent being, Neyveli and Visakhapatnam disasters.
- According to the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), in the recent past, over 130 significant chemical accidents have been reported in the country.
 - Since the 1984 Bhopal gas tragedy, India has seen many significant chemical industrial accidents that have resulted in the loss of hundreds of lives.
 - There are thousands of registered and hazardous factories and unorganised sectors dealing with numerous ranges of hazardous material posing serious and complex levels of disaster risks.

Shortcomings of Safety Regulations

- **Inefficiency in implementation:** Although the government of India has introduced various Acts to reduce the misery of the people facing such accidents, for example, the Indian Fatal Accidents Act, The worker's compensation Act, Indian Boilers Act etc, the inefficiency in implementation of these acts remains a problem.
- **Incompetent staff:** Occupational safety demands that boilers are operated by trained personnel, but the workers on the ground have been often not trained properly and are contractual employees.

- **Lack of maintenance:** The gas leak in Visakhapatnam apparently involving benzimidazole, a chemical used in pharmaceuticals, raises questions on maintenance and operational procedures.

In the Neyveli incident the boiler was not in operation and was in the process of being revived. Since the major operations of this equipment involve a furnace and production of steam, what led to an unexpected blowout.

Consequences of Accidents

Economic and social loss: Accidents as a result of the outcome of industrialisation produce much economic and social loss. It is true that in this globalising world, no country can resist industrialisation and it has become man's best hope for overcoming poverty and improving material conditions.

- But along with industrialisation the new problems are also introduced , for example, environment degradation, deteriorating the quality of life, industrial accidents etc.
- Accidents cripple industry and endanger human safety.

Recommendations of ILO

To strengthen the national system for preventing occupational accidents in certain industrial activities. The Ministry of Labour implemented the ILO's recommendations:

- A list of hazardous chemicals and flammable gases should be established, each having a specific quantity such that any factory handling any substance above the stated quantity should be a major hazard work black by definition.
- An inventory of major hazard works should be obtained for each state.
- The list of hazardous chemicals and the inventory of the major hazard works should be maintained in a computerized data bank.

Steps to Prevent Such Accidents

- **Safety Measures:** The first and foremost step that must be taken to prevent industrial accidents is enacting safety measures as prescribed by the government.
- **Disciplinary action:** Strict disciplinary action must be taken against the people responsible if such an accident takes place.
- **Training of employees:** The employees must be thoroughly trained regarding safety measures. They must be aware of the steps to be taken in case of an emergency. Also, employees must be encouraged to follow the safety measures by providing rewards.
- **Maintenance of Machinery:** The machinery used in the industries must be regularly checked for faults to prevent accidents.
- **Emergency planning:** Disaster is a next step of an accident, so proper training to deal with any accidents and emergency situations.

As industrial development can not be contained, it must be the responsibility of the people and the government for having more reliable safety practices and their practices do not endanger human life or the environment as a whole. Such accidents are mostly preventable, and occur rarely in the industrialised world, because of impeccable attention to safety. Industrial safety and work efficiency are directly related to each other. Security measures not only reduce industrial accidents but also improve industrial work efficiency.