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WHO moots better security for labourers



Team led by WHO director Rudiger Kerch at BL Kashyap's project site on Palace Road
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With construction areas being a huge segment where health-care can be promoted, especially in Karnataka which is host to a large number of construction sites, World Health Organisation director (ethics, equity, trade and human rights) Rudiger Kerch has suggested that better security be provided to migration workers. Kerch suggested that increasing the contract period so that the lessons that they are taught can be for longer and the quality of work can improve.

On Tuesday, Kerch visited a construction site of BL Kashyap and Sons Ltd on the Palace Road to launch a health campaign wherein general health check-ups were held as part of the ongoing 'healthy workplace through health promotion' to promote Right to Health of construction workers campaign.

"There has been a lot of development in India with regard to health compared to 10 years ago. However, there is scope for much more. Construction workers face many risks in life, many of them get into poverty

because of health issues," he said, adding that India should take up universal health coverage.

According to him, the 1% cess on construction work is a good move since it benefits especially when people have accidents. It is good that RSBY which has extended to other states. "There are 100 million people who plunge into poverty because of health issues," he said.

"Health is a human right, it is not restricted only to hospitals. The entire society needs to look into it. Health is the indicator for good policies and this is a good message for those parts of society which have not got it. When there is better social and mental health there is more security," he added.

A suggestion by Dr VR Pandurangi, founder and patron of CAMHADD/COMHAD was to create a health profile for each labourer. According to Prakash Pathak, general manager of BL Kashyap and Sons there has been an improvement in the health scenario since 2009 wherein it has increased from ₹ 282,000 per worker per year to ₹ 3,76,000 in 2012.

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