

Enriching the lives of workers

In June 2016, the Supreme Committee for Delivery & Legacy (SC) announced Qatari contractor Al Balagh Trading & Contracting and India's biggest construction firm Larsen & Toubro Limited Joint Venture (ABLTJV) as the main contractor for Ahmad Bin Ali Stadium.

As early adopters of the SC's Workers' Welfare Standards, the SC recently recognised ABLTJV for their commitment to ensuring that workers' rights are protected for every step of their journey with the company – from recruitment fees reimbursements, to timely payment of wages and providing access to remedy.

Upholding the SC's stringent Standards takes commitment and strong management support, and at ABLTJV Hitendra Bahadur is the go to person for workers. Bahadur, a former Commanding Officer with 34 years of experience in the Indian Army was appointed as the SC Project Workers' Welfare Officer a year ago, and is responsible for ensuring that workers' wellbeing is always a priority.

"I have a close relationship with every worker. They can walk into my office or call me any time. Military life teaches you to maintain contact and stay tuned to the needs of your team round the clock," said Bahadur. His daily contact with the workers gives him insights into their needs and motivations. "Many of our workers hail from poor towns – and are sometimes sole earners for entire families. Their primary focus is getting a regular salary to support their families back home and for their own basic needs like food, accommodation and transport to be looked after. Our job is to make sure they are looked after and have a home away from home with us."

ABLTJV were also among the first contractors to adopt the Workers' Welfare Forums established by the SC as part of its grievance mechanisms. The Forums allow workers to share their issues and opinions without fear of retaliation. ABLTJV recognised the importance of this platform in giving workers a voice and have shown strong commitment to delivering them effectively. The SC-Building and Wood Workers' International Joint



"The concept of welfare has to be understood not just by the Workers' Welfare Officers but by the project management team. For a Project Manager, the work on site is important. So as Officers our job is to balance the needs of the project with that of the worker."

Hitendra Bahadur
Project Workers' Welfare Officer, ABLTJV

Working Group observed the proceedings of the Forums run by ABLTJV and noted that they were well managed, resulting in fair and open discussions.

One of the most common grievances raised at the Forums was the lack of salary increments. ABLTJV worked closely with the SC to establish a positive culture of growth for its workforce. As a result, in the last year, more than 700 workers were provided with free trainings and certifications to enhance their skills, and many workers were promoted to higher positions.

Abdulaziz Sulaiman, 28, from Ghana, transitioned from a labourer to a lifting supervisor, under ABLTJV. "As individuals, we must first know ourselves, and our strengths, and seize every opportunity to grow. I am happy with the opportunities that I have received at ABLTJV," said Sulaiman.

ABLTJV management team, working closely with their Workers' Welfare Officers and elected Worker Representatives, are leading the way in enhancing the lives of their workers. They are a great example of what can be achieved when there is a genuine commitment to workers' welfare.