

WORKER U VS RODAMINE APPAREL INDUSTRIES

OVERVIEW:

For case -21, the worker has been represented as 'Worker U'. He worked as Ironing Master in the respective company for about 3 years and his son also worked the same. After the Covid-19 pandemic, the company refused to give bonuses to the workers for the Diwali festival. The chaos even started before, the company has increased the working hours. So, the 7 workers from Ironing approached the company management for a bonus. The company management has not responded and they sought the support of CITU. Then the company paid a bonus to the 7 workers and asked them to be relieved from the company. The workers too accepted and resigned their jobs.

BASIC INFORMATION:

1. Name of the Worker: Worker U
2. Gender of the Worker: Male
3. Age of the Worker (at the time of IDI): 46
4. Name of the Company: Rodamine Apparel Industries (P) Ltd - 32, Shed No:32, Nethaji Apparel Park, NH:47, Avinashi Road, Eeti Veeran Palayam-Po, New, Tiruppur, 641666
5. Designation of the Worker: Ironing Master
6. Years of work in the Company: 3 years
7. Dispute Type: Non payment of Bonus
8. Year of Dispute onset: 2020
9. Concluded/Ongoing: Resolved
10. Year of Conclusion (If applicable): 2020
11. Individual/ Collective: Collective

TIMELINE OF EVENTS:

DATE	EVENT
	Appointed as Ironing Master
March, 2020	Company shut down due to Covid-19 lockdown
July, 2020	Company started to work with 50% workers' population
1st October, 2020	Layoff given by the company after Lockdown for Ironing Masters
30th October, 2020	Approached HR manager regarding Bonus
2nd November, 2020	Approached CITU to help them to get their Bonus
12th November, 2020	Protested in front of the company and get their bonus

CASE HISTORY:

- a. About the worker

Worker U is 46 years old and has more than 25 years work experience in the Garments sector as Tailor, Checker, Ironing Master etc. He lastly worked as Ironing Master in Rodamine Apparel Industry - A subgroup of Eastman Exports. His son is also working with him as Ironing Master in the same company. Both have worked there for 3 years. His wife also worked as Tailor in an under piece rate contract system in some other garment industries. He had 2 more girl children who pursued their education.

b. About the Company

Rodamine Apparel Industry is working from 2015 in the Netaji Apparel Park, New Tirupur. They have units starting from spinning, weaving, stitching, printing to dispatching the finished products. They are the group of Eastman Exports. It has its head office at Sri Lakshmi Nagar, Pitchampalayam, Tirupur. Eastman Exports is one of the largest leading Apparel manufacturers & Clothing manufacturers in Tirupur, India. We are among the most preferred & trusted Knitwear Manufacturers in India engaged in manufacturing, supplying and exporting a wide range of Knitted garments to the clients across the globe for more than three decades. Eastman exports exhibit fully integrated knitwear setup starting from yarning, spinning, knitting, dyeing, finishing, embroidery, printing and garmenting.

c. Beginning of the Conflict

Rodamine Apparel Industry used to give decent wage to the workers. But overtime wages are very low. Several times worker U and other workers' overtime attendance was miscalculated. So, worker U used to ask about overtime wage and proper attendance to the management. Several times they had a quarrel with HR regarding attendance and also during the shipment period, HR pushed them to work 3 to 4 days continuously. They used to question the management for the continuous overtime too. But HR pretended to them that there was no biometric attendance registered, and the worker U requested to check CCTV camera attendance in the security office. Because during the night shifts the worker's used to put signatures on the gate. But HR refused to check all those documents.

These are the chaos already existing between worker U and the management. At the time of Covid pandemic, the company was shut due to the lockdown and later on from July, 2020 the government allowed the companies to work with 50% of the worker population. There 15 ironing masters from Tamil Nadu and other interstate migrants were at the Ironing department. They all had received the 2019 bonus for Diwali on time. From 2019, Diwali until the lockdown they had worked in the same factory. When the government allowed industries with 50% workforce in July, they started working from July. Then just 1 month before the Diwali of 2020, management gave 1 month leave to the workers at the ironing department by stating that due to lack of orders, they cannot give work to them. But they had orders and they produced from sub contract factories. To escape from giving the bonus only the company gave lay off to all the workers. The workers had waited for the bonus announcement till 2 weeks before the Diwali festival. Since they didn't get any message from the management, they had approached the HR regarding the bonus. Usually two weeks before the festival,

factory management used to get signatures from all the workers for a bonus. But, at that time, the workers didn't get any update regarding the bonus. So they went and asked about the bonus and their work. HR was saying that, since the workers had not turned out for the job for more than a month, they removed all the workers' names from the attendance and so they couldn't claim the diwali bonus this time.

The workers demanded that they don't leave the factory out of their interest. Management only gave lay off due to no orders. The workers are always waiting to get work. But the management stood strong on their argument and failed to provide a bonus to them.

d. Informal resolution process

Since management blamed the workers, Worker U and the crew went to the CITU trade union office to get our bonus. Com.Eswaramoorthy immediately came to the factory and spoke with the manager. He tried to approach the HR manager regarding the issue 3 and more times. But the management showed a rigid attitude over the CITU leader and the workers. So they started to protest in front of the factory gate. 20 workers participated in that protest by raising slogans to give bonus. When they raised slogans to give bonus, many north Indian workers also came outside the factory to join in agitation. But security and management didn't allow them to come out.

Already 3 times Eswaramurthy visited the factory to discuss the bonus issue. Till two days before the Diwali they didn't receive the bonus. But after the agitation created by the protest, the manager came out and communicated on the issue. Then only the workers came to know that the HR manager purposefully removed their name as they created so many issues by demanding OT wages, proper attendance and all. Only ironing masters didn't receive the bonus. Also, several North Indian workers also didn't get a bonus. In order to take revenge, the HR manager had done so, later all other workers received the bonus.

But all the ironing masters received only 9300 Rupees only as a bonus. But in 2019, they received more than 13000 Rupees as Diwali bonus. And in particular, those who participated in agitation only got their bonus. When they asked about a lesser bonus, management staff said that due to Covid and lack of orders, the company can give this much bonus only. The workers were all fed-up with the management. So, they didn't go again to fight with them to claim more bonus.

Com.Eswaramurthy also spoke several times to the management. After receiving the bonus, HR got a signature from each worker. In that paper they mentioned that the workers don't have to get anything from the factory hereafter. So after all this issue, management asked the workers who got in the protest to be relieved from the job. When there is a requirement for an ironing master, they don't employ those 20 workers. Even though they tried to work through contractors, the management didn't allow them to work.

When the management asked the workers to put signatures, they enquired regarding their wage settlement. But they said Rs.9300 including the settlement. Manager said, giving this Rs.9300 itself was very difficult during the Covid period and convinced the workers should accept the amount and relive. Also the manager was

saying that, from settlement money only the company had deposited Rs.5000 to workers account during the lockdown. Since it was locked down, the workers couldn't do anything against the management. So, they had accepted that minimum bonus and settlement.

e. Workers' view on the case process:

_____ Worker U says, "HR couldn't terminate us, so they gave us too much pressure to leave from the job by ourselves. We had thought that the company deposited Rs. 5000 at the time of lockdown from workers welfare or from their ESI contribution. Though very few workers only received that 5000 Rupees. Out of 23 ironing masters, only 5 workers got 5000 Rupees. During the bonus issue only we came to know that 5000 is our settlement money. Due to hard times during the covid, we couldn't raise our voices.

Without CITU intervention, getting a bonus is not possible. Several workers didn't get bonus. During the lockdown only 50% workers was involved in production. Within the 50%, only 20 to 30% workers only received our bonus. When we called the hostel people we came to know that none of the hostel workers receive the bonus. The management is really bad at the workers in these ways. They are trying to exploit us as we are not aware of our rights and entitlements.

One day my bike mirror was broken and my helmet was stolen in two wheeler parking. When we asked HR to check the CCTV camera, he was saying that none of the CCTV cameras were working. We fixed it for buyers' compulsion only. Then we didn't ask anything about it. Within the factory campus several helmets, mobile phones were stolen. But HR didn't take any action. During the issue only we came to know that HR can delete fingerprint attendance from the computer. He himself told this to threaten us.

Out of 15 Tamil ironing masters, only one worker is currently working in that factory. He used to inform the management. So management provides 10 Rupees more than other ironing workers. If one or two shifts we lose, we don't ask. But several times this same issue happened. Now my son and I are both working in a local company for a piece rate.

f. Available documents:

_____ ID card of worker U