

FILE NAME: Shree Digvijay (SDV)

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**CONSUMER
EDUCATION AND
RESEARCH CENTRE**

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Gram : **CONSUMER**

Ph. No. 448833

23rd February, 1984

Mr Barry Castleman
Environmental Consultant
1722 Linden Ave.
Baltimore
Maryland 21217

Dear Mr Castleman

It was good to hear from you once again.

Negotiations with Shri Digvijay are going on - though not at the pace we would wish. The only reason for this delay is that we have been trying to probe and utilise all means and methods before we eventually go to the court. In this connection, we had approached the concerned State Minister for Labour, who had initially shown a keen interest in taking some action in the matter. However, nothing had happened and we lost time in sending reminders. Now we are seriously considering that since we have exhausted all our efforts at lobbying and advocacy, it is time to take to litigation. However the strategy is still not finalised.

Regarding the other questions that you raised in your letter, the answers are as follows.

- * Yes, there are 2 unions connected with the plant. However, the unions seem to take a position that they would prefer to confine themselves to payment of proper wages and bonus etc. rather than safety aspects. In any case, our several meetings with the union leaders have only evoked a luke-warm response from them.
- * Obviously what we hope to gain is provision of maximum safety measures to the workers, strict compliance with the provisions of law as regards safety and health provisions, thereby minimising the occupational health hazards and also minimising the environmental pollution.
- * *(without bringing about the closure of the plant.)*
The management's position is like that of any other management, non-committal and yet putting up a front that they would be willing to cooperate. However it would be unfair to say that things have remained the same since . 2.

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you visited Shri Digvijay last. Cloak rooms and showers have been commissioned and the process, as I pointed out earlier, has partially being changed to a wet one. At the same time a great deal remains to be accomplished and so far as the safety and health aspects in terms of routine check up, medical records, X-ray scans etc. the whole scene remains totally unsatisfactory.

On the other hand is the good news that the Centre for Education and Documentation, Bombay has recently released some important findings on asbestosis. The name of the report is: "Asbestos: the dust that kills." If you wish to communicate with them, their address is as follows:

Centre for Education and Documentation
8, Suleman Chambers
4, Battery St.
Behind Regal Cinema
Bombay 400 039

I hear that one worker from Hindustan Ferodo, Mr S. Rajagopal has already filed a claim for compensation because he has contracted asbestosis while working with Hindustan Ferodo for the past 23 years. I have already corresponded/this Centre and I am waiting with for another report which was put out by Central Labour Institute, Bombay on Shri Digvijay. As of today the Central Labour Institute is not making this document public. Once I have this report (and even if I don't get it after a reasonable time) I hope things will move one way or the other and I shall definitely keep you posted.

I should love to get a copy of your book whenever it does come out, and I will be doubly honoured if it will be inscribed by you. Sometimes I am struck by the fact that ordinary events can make friends of complete strangers and that too half way around the world !

With good wishes

Sincerely


Rani Advani
Legal Research Coordinator.