



Petrol pump workers in India

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ABSTRACT

India has 60,799 petrol stations as of November 2017 and has more than 15 lakh employees are working in these stations. In petrol pump outlets, petrol pump workers face lot of problems. In this article nature of work involved in petrol pumps and the problems faced by them are discussed in detail.

Key words: Petroleum, Petrol pump , workers , problems ,

INTRODUCTION

The word petroleum is derived from two Latin words Petra and Oleum. Petra means rock Oleum means oil. Petroleum is an oily flammable bituminous liquid that may vary from almost colourless to black, occurs in many places in the upper strata of the earth, is a complex mixture of hydrocarbons with small amounts of other substances, and is prepared for use as gasoline, naphtha, or other products by various refining processes (Merriam Webster dictionary) Petroleum products are mainly used for transportation and electricity generation. Also it is used for making the chemicals, plastics and synthetic materials that we use daily. Petrol filling stations are particularly hazardous workplaces which require to be licensed by Local Authorities because they store and sell a highly flammable liquid.

PETROL BUNKS IN INDIA

The oil industry in India dates back to 1889 when the first oil deposits in the country were discovered near the town of Digboi in the state of Assam. India imports 82% of its oil needs and aims to bring that down to 67% by 2022 by replacing it with local exploration, renewable energy and indigenous ethanol fuel. India was the third top net crude oil (including crude oil products) importer of 205.3 Mt in 2018. India has 60,799 petrol stations as of November 2017. 26,849 of these belong to Indian Oil (IOCL), 14,675 to Bharat Petroleum (BPCL) and 14,161 to Hindustan Petroleum. IOCL has more petrol stations than both Canada and the UK. The Punjab state of India has approximately 3,300 petrol stations, and the state of Haryana alone has more than 2,500 petrol stations. Many additional auto LPG and CNG stations have been planned due to high crude prices. Reliance Industries Ltd, Essar Oil, Shell India and ONGC have also opened petrol stations in India. Shell currently has 88 petrol stations in India. The current population of India is 1,380,937,553 as of Monday, July 27, 2020, based on World meter elaboration of the latest United Nations data. India 2020 population is estimated at 1,380,004,385 people at mid year according to UN data. India population is equivalent to 17.7% of the total world population. India ranks number 2 in the list of countries (and dependencies) by population. The population density in India is 464 per Km² (1,202 people per mi²). The total land area is 2,973,190 Km² (1,147,955 sq. miles) 35.0 % of the population is urban (483,098,640 people in 2020) The median age in India is 28.4 years.

CRISIL report says there is only room for less than half, i.e. about 30,000 fuel pumps, if the pumps are to maintain current throughput levels. Over 80% of the petrol pumps are attached with convenience stores to keep the pump economics favourable amid slowing fuel demand. The government plan to more than double the number of petrol pumps in the country does not make economic sense as more number of outlets would only cut into each other's sale, leading to some unprofitable (CRISIL Report) If only 30% of the proposed petrol pumps are commissioned, i.e. about 30,000 fuel pumps, it would be able to meet break-even throughput over the next 12 years; pump throughput is expected to remain at current levels of 160 kilolitres per month (KLPM), which will keep the dealer's returns stable at 12-15%," it said. However, at 50% pump throughput could decline below break-even for a few years and recover towards the end of the forecast period, provided the oil marketing companies do not add networks aggressively owing to already huge expansion in the previous years, and the absence of lucrative locations. Throughput will decline to 140 KLPM, but it will still be above break-even throughput, though returns will be affected to a certain extent. The substitution of petrol/diesel with compressed natural gas (CNG) is expected to increase in the coming years with the government aggressively pushing to develop gas infrastructure. The clear cost advantage of CNG over petrol/diesel in



the transport segment would see traction towards CNG wherever the gas network is commissioned, especially from cab operators.

We expect diesel demand substitution with liquefied natural gas (LNG) in the heavy vehicles segment as well, though development of the infrastructure for LNG fuelling stations has been extremely slow and there have been procedural delays," the CRISIL report said, adding blunting a higher fuel demand growth trajectory is also the entry of electric vehicles."The impact from electric vehicles will be visible post fiscal 2023, which is expected to see growth because of better cost of ownership vis-a-vis diesel/petrol vehicles, infrastructure availability, and government push in the form of incentives and subsidies," it added. In our country there are more than 10 Lakh workers in Petrol Pumps. Most of the families are directly or indirectly dependent on petrol pump workers.

Recently the Prisons Department in Kerala has created history of sorts as it joined hands with Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) to roll out fuel filling outlets in its four prisons where reformed inmates will be deployed as attendants. Named 'Freedom Fuel Filling Station', the outlets were set up in Thiruvananthapuram, Viiyur and Kannur Central Prisons and Open Prison in Cheemeni. Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan inaugurated the fuel outlets through video conferencing. This is the first time that a government department has started fuel stations

The prisons department's initiative was inspired by similar successful projects in Tamil Nadu, Telangana and Andhra Pradesh. Unlike other south Indian states Kerala will deploy inmates who are serving sentences.

Each proposed petrol pump in kerala will have 15 prisoners as employees. In other states, those who had completed their prison term were roped in as staff, but in Kerala inmates would be deployed. This will be an effective and futuristic step in correction and rehabilitation of prisoners(statement given by Rishi Raj Singh, Director General of Prisons, kerala)The outlets were built with an investment of Rs 9.8 crore of which Rs 9.5 crore came from IOC and the rest from the prison department.

The freedom fuel filling station has begun functioning on 1st August 2020 at Poojapura in Thiruvananthapuram district, kerala . The freedom fuel filling station is operated by the Prisons Department, Kerala and manned by prisoners , which is a first of its kind initiative in the country .The petrol station employs 15 prisoners who are currently serving their term, who were trained after being selected on the basis of good behaviour . They will be paid Rs .200 per day .(Times of India dated 1st august 2020)

PROBLEMS FACED BY PETROL PUMP WORKERS

Petrol pump workers work 10 hours/day and six days/week at most of the pumps. The Indian Institute of Petroleum and Reliance Industries Ltd have developed new technology that significantly reduces benzene levels in petrol, a major factor that causes health risks such as cancer for refinery workers and motorists. The World Health Organization has officially recognized the substance as a hazard for Petrol Pump workers and users. Also there are various researches happening on this particular domain and it's very relevant to get global attention, many sources said.

Petrol Pump regions are typical Industrial area that involving both workers and ordinary people. Work related health issues are increasing in these days specifically with blue collar jobs. There are roughly in excess of 60,709 petrol pumps all over the India as per the survey of few years back. There are many occupation which inherently pose various types of risks and dangers which the workers by being aware can take precautionary actions to avoid falling ill or becoming sick.

The greater part of the examinations shows that petrol pump workers aging from 31–45 years who have experience more than 5 years regularly or alternatively experience the joint pains which might be related with the repetitive action of joints while working.

The link between diesel fumes and cancer is not a new topic. In fact in 1988 the WHO's (World health Organization) International Agency for research on cancer (IARC) classified diesel fumes as carcinogenic. But in 2012 IARC gone one more step further that they reclassified the diesel fumes as a cause of lung cancer and will cause an increased risk of bladder cancer.

The health condition of petrol pump worker is important since many families in India are directly or indirectly dependent upon petrol pump workers . The inhalation of petrol fumes constitutes a high potential risk to the ill health to petrol workers and general population (Sangotola et al 2015). Workers exposed to petrol fumes and gas exhausts have been reported to have an increased prevalence of acute respiratory health symptoms (Ayres et al 1973). Petrol pump attendants attend each car frequently as much as possible , controlling more than one fuel dispenser hence increasing opportunity of exposure to petrol fumes (Bhide et al 2014)



Most of the petrol pump owners did not provide minimum wage envisaged by the government of India to their employees. Welfare facilities and safety measures are not upto mark in most of the petrol pump outlets .

CONCLUSION

Petrol pump workers face many problems due to the working conditions. Hence petrol pump owners should ensure that adequate safety measures are implemented in the petrol pump. Also petrol pump owners must provide minimum wage and welfare facilities for petrol pump workers .the petrol pump owners may take group life insurance policy for their employees since there is high chance for fire accidents .

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