



Migrant Workers Given Mass Disinfectant Bath

drishtiias.com/printpdf/migrant-workers-given-mass-disinfectant-bath

Why in News

Recently, migrant labourers returning to their homes from urban centres were forced to take an open bath with disinfectant before they were allowed to enter **Bareilly (Uttar Pradesh)**.

It was done in order to prevent **COVID-19** from spreading even further in the town.

Key Points

- The nodal officer in-charge of **COVID-19** in the district confirmed that the disinfectant was only chlorine mixed with water and not a chemical solution.
- However, the Medical Officer of Bareilly has informed that **sodium hypochlorite solution** was sprayed on the migrants.
- The solution is also **being used in Gujarat, Maharashtra and Punjab** for disinfecting buildings and solid surfaces in a bid to wash away any presence of novel coronavirus.
- It was argued that the move was initiated for the safety of the incoming migrants who arrived in special buses run by the government as it was necessary to eradicate the possible spread of the disease.
- The District Magistrate has ordered action against officials who recklessly forced migrants to take bath with the disinfectant without knowing its harmful effects on humans.
 - In Delhi, a 1% sodium hypochlorite solution was used in the spray applied on migrant workers' belongings.
 - A **1% solution can cause damage to the skin** of anyone who comes in contact with it.

Sodium Hypochlorite

- Sodium hypochlorite is commonly used as a **disinfectant**, a **bleaching agent**, and also to **sanitise swimming pools**.

- It **releases chlorine**, which is a disinfectant and big quantities of chlorine can be harmful.
- **Uses:**
 - A **normal household bleach** usually is a **2-10%** sodium hypochlorite solution.
 - At a much lower **0.25-0.5%**, this chemical is used to **treat skin wounds** like cuts or scrapes.
 - An even **weaker solution (0.05%)** is sometimes used as a **handwash**.
- **Harmful effects on human beings:**
 - Sodium hypochlorite is **corrosive**, and is meant largely to clean hard surfaces.
 - If it gets inside the body, it can cause **serious harm to lungs**.
 - Even a 0.05% solution could be very **harmful for the eyes**.
 - It can cause **itching or burning** and is not recommended to be used on human beings, certainly not as a spray or shower.
- **Effect on the novel coronavirus:**
 - The **World Health Organization** (WHO), and the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, **recommend homemade bleach solutions** of about 2-10% concentration to clean hard surfaces to **disinfect them from coronavirus**.
 - A Michigan State University tutorial says that cleaning hard surfaces with this solution can disinfect them not just from novel coronavirus but also **help prevent flu, food borne illnesses, and more**.
 - However, it advises to **always use the bleach in a well-ventilated area and wear gloves** when handling the product or solution.

Source: TH