

IIT Gandhinagar bags prize for construction workers' welfare programme

Runa Mukherjee Parikh, TNN | Apr 25, 2014, 07.54 PM IST

AHMEDABAD: IIT Gandhinagar's construction workers welfare programme has been recognized with the national HUDCO Award for 'Best Practices to Improve the Living Environment 2013-14'. The award was handed out at the annual day of Housing and Urban Development Corporation (HUDCO) in New Delhi.

IIT-Gn was cited for the housing, safety and welfare practices it has implemented for construction workers and for the contributions of its community volunteer group, Nyasa, which runs educational programmes for the children of construction workers. Sudhir Jain, director, IIT-Gn, said, "Social engagement is a high priority for us. We strive to sensitize our students to their social responsibilities. We can only be effective in doing that if we demonstrate that same commitment in our own practice as an institution. We are therefore constantly looking for ways to engage with and contribute to the local community, of which we are a part."

The varsity ensures dignified and sanitary housing conditions for construction workers by including special conditions in all its contracts that obligate contractors to construct clean, hygienic and well ventilated workers' housing with adequate water supply, electrical and sanitation facilities.

To ensure worker safety, contractors are required to implement safety measures and two days of mandatory safety training for all workers. A comprehensive group insurance cover of Rs 50,000 to Rs 1,00,000 is also required for all workers and their supervisory staff. In addition, regular health camps are organized. It has created a Contract Worker Benevolent Fund to cover unforeseen medical emergencies and a Children's Education Fund, which provides financial assistance of up to Rs 10,000 per family per year for the educational expenses of their children. It has also established a Palaj Village Outreach Fund for outreach activities in the village.

In September 2013, the IIT Council commended the institute and recommended the adoption of its exemplary labor welfare practices by all IITs.
