



## Silicosis: Unorganized industry affects workers' health

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Tags : [Kesrisinh Darbar](#), [National Institute of Occupational Health](#), [Dr Rajiv Paliwa](#), [Shri Krishna Hospital](#)

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The unorganised nature of the agate polishing industry in Khambhat in Anand continues to affect the workers' health and many of them **die of silicosis**.

Kesrisinh Darbar (36) died of the disease on Wednesday on the eve of World Day for Safety and Health at Work. He was the ninth member of a family, running a polishing unit at their home in Shakharpur outside Khambhat for four decades, to **die of silicosis**.

According to the National Institute of Occupational Health (NIOH), Ahmedabad more than a third of agate grinders in Khambhat and Jaipur (another hotbed of the industry) have silicosis, and it takes as little as five years for the workers to contract the terminal disease. If not silicosis, NIOH said on its website, tuberculosis infects 40 percent of these workers, and half of them have one or the other abnormality in pulmonary function.

Dr Rajiv Paliwa, a Professor of Pulmonary Medicine at the Shri Krishna Hospital, Karamsad says about a third of the 450 agate polishers from the area he has treated have been diagnosed with **silicosis**.

He said: "The root problem is illiteracy and poverty; that's why people are unable to help themselves. I think organising the industry may help. It's difficult to track workers like this. An organized industry will help implement better practices."

Avantika Singh, in-charge Collector of Anand district, said the government has set up special clinics at the TB hospital in Khambhat, but their work is limited as the disease is terminal and incurable.