

CEOs Prefer Stringent Health, Safety Rules to Partial Lockdowns

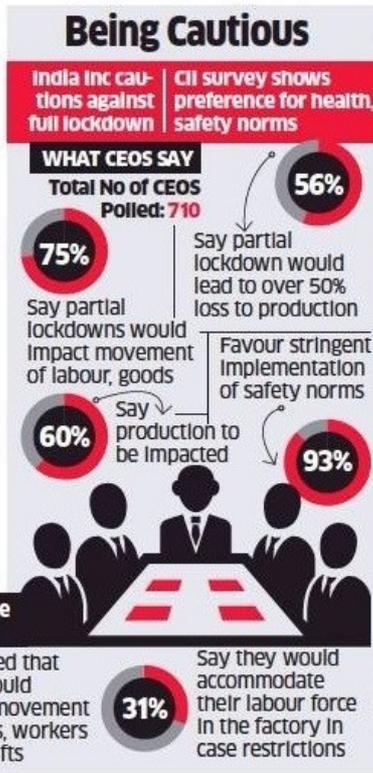
Our Bureau

New Delhi: A stringent implementation of health and safety norms would be better on any industrial operation than a partial lockdown, a private survey of CEOs across industries and firm sizes found on Saturday. Nearly 75% of respondents felt that partial lockdowns would affect the movement of labour and goods, and in turn affect their production with 56% expecting an over 50% loss to production.

About 93% of 710 CEOs surveyed by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) said they would prefer stringent implementation of safety norms since restrictions like a partial lockdown or a night curfew would dent production and sales. The CEOs polled pertained to both manufacturing and services, and 68% of the responding CEOs were from MSMEs, a CII statement said.

"Stringent enforcement measures to promote strict adherence to health and safety protocols are essential and any measures to restrict social gatherings should not be extended to regular functioning of industry and commerce," said TV Narendran, president-designate at CII.

About 60% of the CEOs polled said that their production could be affected if there are



restrictions on movement of labour during these partial lockdowns. In the event of the imposition of restrictions on movement, 60% of CEOs suggested that the government should permit the movement of goods and workers in all shifts during night curfews with adequate safety protocols. About 57% of the companies expressed the need to stock raw materials in excess of Just-in-time levels to meet any likely shortage of raw materials.

India Inc was prepared to implement stricter safety norms and protocols, with 96% of participants stating that they were equipped for any such measures. With significant knowledge on the pandemic and the Covid-19 vaccination programme in place, India should also focus on protecting livelihoods along with lives in its fight against the pandemic, the CII statement said.

While around 67% of CEOs said they would like to assist the government's vaccination drive by facilitating the vaccination of the eligible workforce above the age of 45, 31% stated they would accommodate their labour force in the factory in case of movement restrictions due to night curfew.

"Protecting livelihoods along with lives is essential and industry is keen to work with the government on universal coverage (18 years and above) of vaccination programmes and in implementing strict health and safety protocols," said Narendran.