



EMPLOYEE SATISFACTION AND ESI BENEFITS AMONG PUBLIC SECTOR TEXTILE WORKERS IN KERALA

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Abstract

The concept of social security has been playing a significant role in developed as well as developing economies. The Social security provides protection to the working class against contingencies like retirement, illness, maternity, aging, death, disablement and similar conditions. Social security in a welfare state like India has assumed great important in recent years. Social security is now spreading all over the world. To provide social democracy, social security is very necessary because without security, democracy can never be enjoyed. Social security is a complex but comprehensive concept and can be institutionalized through a number of instruments. Keeping in view the state of modernization and the idea of welfare state, the instruments of social security are generally placed on a statutory footing. The main objective of the study is to understand the satisfaction of public sector textile workers towards ESI schemes & benefits. The source of data collection is primary in nature. Judgment sampling is used as the sampling design tool for collecting data. The data was collected through structured questionnaires and was administered to 220 workers in the public sector textile mills. The data is analyzed with the help of SPSS and based on that conclusion is drawn. The study revealed that most of the employees working in the public sector textile mills are not satisfied with the benefits and services they are availing under ESI. In the light of this study the researcher suggest that ESI corporation

should take the necessary steps to enhance the benefits and should improve the quality of medical care provided through ESI dispensaries and hospitals.

Key Words: Disablement benefit, ESI, Medical benefit, Sickness benefit, Social security

I INTRODUCTION

Social Security is increasingly seen as an integral part of the development process. It helps to create a more positive attitude not just to structural and technological change but also the challenge of globalisation and to its potential benefits in terms of greater efficiency and higher productivity. In the last five decades, considerable progress in extension of social security cover at both State and Central level has been made. Social security is an important welfare measure for working class. It helps labourers at the time of their illness, accidents, invalidity and other hardships of life. To run the social security and labour welfare schemes efficient machinery is needed because without any effective administrative set-up it is very hard to run all these schemes. It can be said that non institutional measures of social security were working since time immemorial. They are in fact the backbone of present social security programmes and schemes. Such measures had been provided by joint families, community, creed, caste panchayats, orphan ages, widow homes and religious institutions. Then in 19th century industrialization started in India and this modern industrialization developed a new class of industrial proletariat. Due to the start of industries, new problems arose and with the

growth of modern factory system, various safety and health problems raised a demand for institutionalization of protection measures. Union activities increased to pressurized government to enact some social security legislations.

Before independence, British Government was not much interested in the welfare of working class so less legislation existed at that time. Fatal Accident Act, 1885 and Workmen's Compensation Act, 1923 were in force for the protection of workers and to compensate after any kind of mishappening, but the provisions of these Acts provided limited help to workers and it was very expensive and complicated to claim compensation under these Acts. After independence, Indian Government took keen interest to provide social security to workers. So, the parliament amended the existing legislations to make them more suitable and beneficial for the workers. Social security is such a type of help which ensures a person that he will surely get assistance at the time of his illness, injury, old age, invalidity and even after his death.

II OVERVIEW OF SOCIAL SECURITY LEGISLATIONS

A. Employees' Provident Funds and Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1952

The Employees' Provident Fund Act is enacted for social security of workers. This Act provides retirement benefits to the workers. It provides monetary help to the workers and their family at the time of crisis. Now, the following three schemes are working under the Act

- (i) Employees' Provident Funds Scheme, 1952;
- (ii) Employees' Deposit Linked Insurance Scheme, 1976;
- (iii) Employees' Pension Scheme, 1995.

The Employees' Provident Fund Act, 1952 is administered by the Employees' Provident Fund Organization (EPFO). This organization looks after all the working, investment, implementation of the Act in various establishments.

B. Employees' State Insurance Act, 1948

This Act provides for health care and cash benefit payments in the case of sickness, maternity and employment injury. Every employee including casual and temporary, whether employed directly or through any contractor, who is receipt of wages up to 15000

per month is entitled to be insured under the ESI. The ESI scheme is administered by a statutory body, called the Employees' State Insurance Corporation (ESIC). Employees' State Insurance is a contributory type scheme based on tripartite contribution principle in which employers, employees and state government is included. Presently, from the 1st January 1997 the rate of employees' contribution is 4.75 per cent and the employers' share is 1.75 per cent of an employee's total monthly wages which includes basic pay and dearness allowance.

C. Payment of Gratuity Act, 1972

The Payment of Gratuity Act provides the benefits to the employees after their retirement. This Act is applicable to all workers engaged in factories, mines, plantations, ports, railways, educational institutions and other establishments. This Act is enforced by the central and state governments jointly. Both has right to appoint a controlling authority for the administration of the Act. The government is enable to appoint the various area inspectors to find out, that the provisions of the Act are being completed or not.

D. Maternity Benefit Act, 1961

This Act is specially made for the working women. It provides them benefits and medical care at the time of their pregnancy. According to this Act, no employer can force any woman worker for work when she is pregnant. The Maternity Benefit Act provides them leave with pay. It enables them to get 12 weeks leave, 6 weeks before the birth of child and 6 weeks after the birth of child.

E. Workmen's Compensation Act, 1923

This Act is mainly to provide the compensation to workers for industrial injury, accidents and any mishappening at the time of work. All the workers, who are working in any hazardous job are able to get the benefits of the Act. The state governments have power to extend the scope of the Act to any class of workers'. The state governments administer the provisions of this Act through the Commissioners appointed for specified areas. The state government also makes rules for ensuring that the provisions for the Act are being implemented or not.

III LITRATURE REVIEW

S. Mini (2010) did a doctoral study on Social security of Labour in the new Indian Economy. The study annalysed the new

challenges stemming up in employment relation, efficacy of the existing measures for social security of labour in the present economic condition and suggestions for securing workers right to social security in the trade regime.

Kevin (1988) did a doctoral study, comparing the textile mills in Kerala and Tamilnadu. The study focused on comparing the profitability of mills as a whole as well as individuals units. Factors such as cost structure, machine and labour productivity were held responsible for the variation. The study featured a poignant face of the industry like low profitability, negative working capital and insufficient liquidity.

Deepu (1998) study, compiled over the welfare measures adopted in a textile mill in Kollam District, reiterated how systematic working methods had a vital bearing on labour productivity. The study also revealed the significance of welfare measures and work recognition on the status quo of a worker.

Molly Varghese (2002) for her doctoral thesis compared and analyzed the labour welfare measures provided to workers in major industrial units in Kottayam district, including textile mills in the public sector. Her study pointed out the disparity in welfare facilities provided to the workers of textile units compared to other units. The study also showered light on the minimal welfare measures given to mill workers.

B. Swapna(2011) conducted a study on social security regarding employee welfare. In her study she analysed various aspects of welfare and social security of labour in different wings of Singareni Collieries Company limited. The study tries to make a comparison on the provisions and implementation of the overall benefits of the workers in different wings of the same company and by giving the overall welfare activities of the company.

CP John in his work Social security & Labour welfare with special reference to construction workers in Kerla stated that the existing welfare fund for construction workers in the unorganised sector could not reach every worker due to lack of awareness and illiteracy.

IV RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

The study was conducted to analyze the satisfaction of public sector textile workers towards ESI benefits. On the industrial map of Kerala it can be observed that the textile mills are still having a significant presence especially

among the manufacturing industries. The industrial history of the state owes the mills a respectful place as some of the earliest large scale industrial units formed in Kerala were in the form of textile mills. The industry has witnessed its significance status diminishing with time but still remains a force to reckon with in the industrial blueprint of the state. Manufacturing units with probably the oldest heritage in Kerala, the textile mills have found themselves caught in a complex web of problems ranging from "labour unrest to declining profitability". Strikes and lockouts have been reported from the industry from many parts of Kerala and in recent times there have been several speculations and assumptions going on about the industry and its operations. Through this study it is possible to make a real understanding of how far ESI benefits are beneficial to the textile workers in Kerala. The reason for selecting textile industries as the universe of the study is mainly due to:-

1. The textile mill industry is one of the major labour oriented industries in Kerala.
2. Majority of workers in the textile mill industry covered under ESI since their wages are low.

With the above aspects put in contention, the study has been found relevant in nature

V OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To find out whether the Employees working at the public sector textile mills are satisfied with the ESI benefits.
2. To know whether the employees are satisfied with the services provided by ESI Corporation.
3. To find out whether the employees are satisfied with the administrative machineries under the scheme.

VI METHODOLOGY

This is an empirical study based on survey method. The universe of the study constitutes the workers of public sector cotton textile mills in Kerala. For the particular study only those mills which are fully owned by either Government of Kerala or Government of India are included in the category of public sector mills. The source of data collection is primary in nature. Judgment sampling is used as the sampling design tool for collecting data. There are 9 public sector mills

existing in Kerala and for the study 5 textile mills were identified and data was collected through structured questionnaires from 220 textile workers.

VII FINDINGS

Table 1 Preference of hospital and reason for preference

Preference hospital	No of Response	%
ESI hospital	134	60.9
Government Hospital	66	30.0
Private hospital	20	9.1
Reason for the preference	No of Response	%
Good Treatment	50	22.7
Free medical Care	125	56.8
Convenience to go	45	20.5

Table 1 clearly indicates that majority of the employees prefers ESI hospital for treatment because of free medical care.

Table 2 Satisfaction with regard to the benefits (response with percentage)

Category	S A	A	N	D A	S DA
Cash benefit useful	5%	14.5%	5.0%	46.8%	28.6%
Duration of sick leave sufficient	9.5%	20%	6.4%	40.0%	24.1%
Easy formalities for getting	8.2%	14.1%	---	45.9%	31.8%
Quantum of benefit sufficient	13.6%	16.4%	---	55.4%	14.5%
Settling claims easy	10.9%	30.0%	13.6%	33.2%	12.3%
Quantum of disablement benefit is sufficient	16.4%	23.2%	13.6%	46.4%	5%

Quantum of maternity benefit is sufficient	2.3%	10.0%	66.4%	0.9%	10.5%
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Table 3 Service of doctors

Opinion	Response	percentage
Highly satisfied	24	10.9%
Satisfied	62	28.2%
Neutral	
Dissatisfied	96	43.6%
Highly dissatisfied	38	17.3%

It is clear from Table 3 that majority of employees are not satisfied with the service of doctors

Table 4 Availability of medicines

Opinion	Response	percentage
Highly satisfied	12	5.5%
Satisfied	54	24.5%
Neutral	2	41.4%
Dissatisfied	91	27.7%
Highly dissatisfied	61	.9%

Table 4 indicates that 30 percent of employees are satisfied with the availability of medicines. But 41.4 percent are neutral.

Table 5 Lab Facility

Opinion	Response	percentage
Highly satisfied		
Satisfied	68	30.9%
Neutral	32	14.5%
Dissatisfied	99	45.0%
Highly dissatisfied	21	9.5%

Table 5 shows that employees are not satisfied with the lab facility provided by the corporation

Table 6 Information provided by ESI

Opinion	Response	percentage
Highly satisfied		
Satisfied	119	54.1%
Neutral	14	6.4%
Dissatisfied	65	29.5%
Highly dissatisfied	22	10.0%

Table 6 shows that employees are satisfied with the information provided by ESI corporation

Table 7 Approach of ESI staff

Opinion	Response	percentage
Highly satisfied		
Satisfied	57	25.9%
Neutral	7	3.2%
Dissatisfied	103	46.8%
Highly dissatisfied	53	24.1%

Table 7 shows that employees are not satisfied with the approach of ESI staff

Table 8 Grievance redressal

Opinion	Response	percentage
Highly satisfied	2	.9%
Satisfied	91	41.4%
Neutral	39	17.7%
Dissatisfied	68	30.9%
Highly dissatisfied	20	9.1%

Table 8 shows that employees are satisfied with grievance redressal machinery

Table 9 ESI Court

Opinion	Response	percentage
Highly satisfied		
Satisfied	125	56.8%
Neutral	63	28.6%
Dissatisfied	32	14.5%
Highly dissatisfied	

Table 9 indicates that Employees are satisfied with the working of ESI court

VIII SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- Enhance the Awareness regarding the schemes

Steps should be taken to enhance the level of awareness among the employees and the employers about ESI benefits & schemes.

- Improve the Quality of Medical Care

ESI the Corporation must take the necessary measures to improve the quality of medical care provided by the ESI dispensaries and hospitals.

- Relax the Eligibility Conditions and Simplify the Formalities

Relax the eligibility conditions and simplify the formalities for claiming the benefits so as to enable the employees to avail it easily.

- Hike in the amount of Cash Benefits

It is proposed that cash benefits as well as other benefits of ESI as well must be enhanced. ESI benefits must be enhanced with full wages to the insured persons who are unable to work due to sickness. Compensation for disablement &

maternity benefits may also be increased considerably.

- Change the Attitudinal Orientation of the Personnel

It is observed that a large number of employers are not satisfied with the working of the Inspectors and the attitude of officials of ESI due to their hostile attitude. The attitudinal orientation of the officers towards the employers needs a marked change. They can be more sympathetic, and courteous towards the employees. Their positive attitude and proper understanding will go a long way in the successful implementation of the ESI

- Timely Payment of Cash Benefits

Take the necessary steps to avoid the delay in payment of benefits. Proper guidance should be given to the employees about the formalities for claiming the benefits.

- Financial Assistance from the Central Government

The benefits under Social security schemes are contributory in nature. The fund is generated with the contribution of employer and employees and government is contributing anything to the fund. It should be designed in such a way to have a proportionate contribution by Central Government.

IX CONCLUSION

Social security is a dynamic concept that aims at upholding human dignity through participatory approach and collective social action in the event of economic distress and physical suffering arising from death, disease and disablement. The system is based on the principle of pooling smaller resources for larger individual and collective social gains. Thus, while taking care of the welfare of individuals, the social security systems protect and preserve the social usefulness of productive manpower – a pre requisite for achieving higher or better levels of productivity. Social security measures have two-fold significance for a developing country like India. They constitute an important step towards the goal of a welfare state, by improving the living and working conditions and guarding people against the uncertainties of the future. These measures are also important for every industrialisation plan, because not only do they enable workers to become more efficient, but they also reduce wastages arising from industrial disputes. The man-days lost on account of sickness and disability also constitute

a heavy drain on the slender resources of the worker as well as on the industrial output of the country. Social security is, therefore, not a liability, but a wise investment, which yields good dividends in the long run.

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