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**STANDING COMMITTEE ON LABOUR, TEXTILES AND  
SKILL DEVELOPMENT**

**(2021-22)**

**(SEVENTEENTH LOK SABHA)**

**MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT**

**DEMANDS FOR GRANTS**

**(2022-23)**

**THIRTIETH REPORT**



**LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT**

**NEW DELHI**

**March, 2022/Phalguna, 1943 (Saka)**

**THIRTIETH REPORT**

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**(2021-22)**

**(SEVENTEENTH LOK SABHA)**

**MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT**

**DEMANDS FOR GRANTS**

**(2022-23)**

*Presented to Lok Sabha on 15.03.2022*

*Laid in Rajya Sabha on 15.03.2022*



***LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT***

***NEW DELHI***

**March, 2022/Phalguna, 1943 (Saka)**

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\*Not appended with this cyclostyled copy.

**COMPOSITION OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LABOUR, TEXTILES AND  
SKILL DEVELOPMENT (2021-22)**

**Shri Bhartruhari Mahtab - Chairperson**

**MEMBERS  
LOK SABHA**

2. Shri Subhash Chandra Baheria
3. Kunwar Pushpendra Singh Chandel
4. Shri Ravikumar D.
5. Shri Pallab Lochan Das
6. Shri Pasunoori Dayakar
7. Shri Feroze Varun Gandhi
8. Shri Satish Kumar Gautam
9. Shri B.N. Bache Gowda
10. Dr. Umesh G. Jadhav
11. Shri Dharmendra Kashyap
12. Shri Pakauri Lal Kol
13. Adv. Dean Kuriakose
14. Shri Sanjay Sadashiv Rao Mandlik
15. Shri Khalilur Rahaman
16. Shri Naba Kumar Sarania
17. Shri Bhola Singh
18. Shri Ganesh Singh
19. Shri Nayab Singh
20. Shri K. Subbarayan
21. Shri Giridhari Yadav

**RAJYA SABHA**

22. Shri Naresh Bansal
23. Shri Neeraj Dangi
24. Shri Dushyant Gautam
25. Shri Elamaram Kareem
26. Ms. Dola Sen
27. Shri M. Shanmugam
28. Shri Vivek Thakur
29. Shri Vijay Pal Singh Tomar
30. Vacant
31. \* Vacant

**SECRETARIAT**

- |    |                         |   |                     |
|----|-------------------------|---|---------------------|
| 1. | Shri T.G. Chandrasekhar | - | Joint Secretary     |
| 2. | Shri D.R. Mohanty       | - | Director            |
| 3. | Shri Sanjay Sethi       | - | Additional Director |
| 4. | Shri K.G. Sidhartha     | - | Deputy Secretary    |

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\* Vacancy occurred *vice* Dr. Banda Prakash resigned *w.e.f* 04.12.2021.

## **INTRODUCTION**

I, the Chairperson, Standing Committee on Labour, Textiles and Skill Development (2021-22) having been authorized by the Committee do present on their behalf this Thirtieth Report on 'Demands for Grants (2022-23)' of the Ministry of Labour and Employment.

2. The Committee considered the Demands for Grants (2022-23) of the Ministry of Labour and Employment which were laid on the Table of the House on 7<sup>th</sup> February, 2022. After obtaining the Budget Documents, Explanatory Notes, etc., the Committee took evidence of the representatives of the Ministry of Labour and Employment on 16<sup>th</sup> February, 2022. The Committee considered and adopted the Report at their sitting held on 14<sup>th</sup> March, 2022.

3. The Committee wish to express their thanks to the officers of the Ministry of Labour and Employment for tendering oral evidence and placing before them the detailed written notes and post evidence information as desired by the Committee in connection with the examination of the Demands for Grants.

4. For ease of reference, the Observations and Recommendations of the Committee have been printed in thick type in the body of the Report.

**New Delhi;**  
**14<sup>th</sup> March, 2022**  
**23 Phalguna, 1943 (Saka)**

**BHARTRUHARI MAHTAB**  
**CHAIRPERSON,**  
**STANDING COMMITTEE ON LABOUR,**  
**TEXTILES AND SKILL DEVELOPMENT**

**REPORT**  
**PART-I**

**I. INTRODUCTORY**

1. The Ministry of Labour & Employment, one of the oldest and important Ministries of the Government of India, is functioning to ensure improving life and dignity of labour force of the country by protecting and safeguarding the interest of workers, promotion of their welfare and providing social security to the labour force both in Organized and Unorganized Sector by enactment and implementation of various Labour Laws, which regulate the terms and conditions of service and employment of workers. The State Governments are also competent to enact legislation, as labour is a subject in the Concurrent List under the Constitution of India.

2. The Ministry of Labour and Employment has taken several initiatives, legislative as well as administrative, to provide decent working conditions and improved quality of life for workers, employment generation and simplification of Labour Laws for ease of doing business. The endeavour of the Ministry is to create a climate of trust that is essential for economic growth and development and for the dignity of the labour force of the country.

3. The endeavours of the Ministry are *inter-alia* directed towards enhancing welfare and social security provisions for unorganised sector workers; providing social security to organised sectors workers; eliminating child labour; promoting skill development; strengthening employment services; prevention and settlement of Industrial Disputes and strengthening Labour Laws enforcement machinery; and improving Safety conditions and ensuring safety of workers.

4. The Ministry of Labour and Employment (MoLE) presented their Detailed Demands for Grants for the Financial Year 2022-23 to the Parliament on 7<sup>th</sup> February, 2022 under Demand No: 64 detailing fund requirement under the following Major heads of Accounts:-

- (i) 2251 Secretariat Social Services
- (ii) 2225 Welfare of SC/ST and Other Backward Classes
- (iii) 2230 Labour Employment & Skill Development
- (iv) 2552 Lum-Sum Provision for North Eastern Region
- (v) 3601 Grants-in-aid to State Governments
- (vi) 3602 Grants-in-aid to Union Territories Governments
- (vii) 4225 Welfare of SC/ST and Other Backward Classes
- (viii) 4250 Capital Outlay on other Social Services

5. Total Allocation for the Ministry for the year 2022-23 is as under:-

<b>Budgetary Allocations 2022-23</b>			
(Rs. In Crore)			
Sl. No	Revenue	Capital	Total
1.	16846.37	47.31	16893.68

6. As may be seen from above, Budgetary allocation under Revenue & Capital is Rs.16846.37 crore and Rs.47.31 crore, respectively. Employees' Pension Scheme, 1995, with a Budget allocation of Rs.8485.00 crore accounts for 50.36% of Revenue budget allocation.

7. The Ministry have been allocated Rs.16893.68 crore for the year 2022-23. Major Schemes run by the Ministry includes Aatmanirbhar Bharat Rojgar Yojana (ABRY), National Career Services-Employment Exchanges Mission Mode Project, Welfare of SCs/ST job seekers through Coaching, Guidance and Vocational training, Social Security, Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maan-Dhan (PM-SYM), National Pension Scheme for Traders and Self-employed Persons, Labour Welfare Schemes (RIHS) - 2016, Social Security for Plantation workers in Assam, National Child labour Project, Rehabilitation of bonded labour, National database for unorganised workers (NDUW), Employees Pension Scheme 1995.

## II. OVERALL FINANCIAL PROPOSALS & PERFORMANCE

### (i) Proposals and Allocations for 2022-23

8. As regards the details of the proposed amount scheme wise and actual allocation as approved by the Ministry of Finance for the year, the Ministry submitted the following:-

Scheme-wise details of Budget Estimate Proposed & Received 2022-23			
Sl. No	Schemes / Programmes	BE (2022-23) Proposed	(in Crore) BE (2022-23) Received
A. The Budget Allocations, net of recoveris, are given below:			
<b>CENTRE'S EXPENDITURE</b>			
<b>Establishment Expenditure of the Centre</b>			
	1. Secretariat Services	88.55	83.60
	2. Labour Bureau	31.60	30.41
	3. Other Items related Chief Labour Commissioner, Central Government Industrial Tribunal, Research and Information Technology	128.28	107.88
	4. Directorate General of Factory Advice Services (DGFASLI)	55.70	49.50
	5. Directorate General of Minies Safety (DGMS)	142.69	97.29
	6. Internation Cooperation	29.00	27.00

	7. Directorate General of Employment								76.00	64.49	
	8.DG Labour Weflare Scheme (Estb..)								170.33	159.01	
<b>Total-Establishment Expenditure of the Centre</b>									<b>722.15</b>	<b>619.18</b>	
<b>Central Sector Schemes/Projects</b>											
	9. Labour and Employment Statistical System (LESS)								112.75	89.00	
	10. Labour Welfare Scheme								150.00	120.00	
<b>Social Security Schemes for Workers</b>											
	11. National Database for Uuorganised Workers								500.00	500.00	
	12. Bima Yojana for Unorganised Workers								0.10	0.10	
	13. Employees Pension Scheme, 1995								8485.00	8485.00	
	14. Social Security for Plantation Workers in Assam								60.00	60.00	
	15. Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maan-Dhan Yojana								500.00	350.00	
	16. National Pension Scheme for Traders and Self Employed Persons erstwhile Pradhan Mantri Karam Yogi Maan-Dhan Yojana								50.00	50.00	
	17 Atmanirbhar Bharat Rojgar Yojana								7865.50	6400.00	
<b>Total-Social Security Schemes for Workers</b>									<b>17460.60</b>	<b>15845.10</b>	
	18. National Child Labour Project								40.00	20.00	
	19. Scheme for Rehabilitation of Bonded Labourer								10.00	10.00	
<b>Total-Central Sector Schemes/Projects</b>									<b>17773.35</b>	<b>16084.10</b>	
Other Central Sector Expenditure											
<b>Autonomous Bodies</b>											
	20. Central Board for Workers Education								123.25	103.15	
	21. National Labour Institute								12.25	12.25	
	<b>Total-Autonomous Bodies</b>								<b>135.50</b>	<b>115.40</b>	
Total-Other Central Sector Expenditure									<b>135.50</b>	<b>115.40</b>	
TRANSFERS TO STATES											
<b>Centrally Sponsored Schemes</b>											
	22. Employment Generation Programs										
									22.01 Coaching and Guidance for SC,ST and Other Backward Classes	23.00	23.00
									22.02 Pradhan Mantri Rojgar Protsahan Yojna	0.00	0.00
									22.03 National Career Services	60.00	52.00
									Total- Employment Generation Programs	83.00	75.00
<b>Total-Centrally Sponsored Schemes</b>									<b>83.00</b>	<b>75.00</b>	



Other Grants/Loans/Transfers								
	23. Transfer to Reserve Fund							
		23.01 Gross Budgetary Support					0.00	0.00
		23.02 Less Recovery					0.00	0.00
	Net							
<b>Grand Total</b>							<b>1871 4.00</b>	<b>16893. 68</b>

9. As would be observed from the data furnished, during the Fiscal 2022-23, the BE proposal by the Ministry was Rs.18,714 Crore whereas BE received has been Rs.16,893.68 crore. On being asked about the premise under which the Ministry of Finance curtailed the budgetary allocation, the Ministry apprised as under:-

“Proposal for Budgetary allocation of Rs.18,714 Crore for the FY 2022-23 was sent to the Ministry of Finance. However, Rs.16893.68 was allocated in the BE 2022-23 by the Ministry of Finance. Ministry of Finance curtailed the budgetary allocation keeping in view the overall demands of the various Ministries.”

10. A perusal of the documents furnished by the Ministry revealed that the programmes like ‘Incentive for providing Maternity benefits’, ‘Scheme under Industrial relations’ and ‘Workers conditions and safety’ recorded ‘NIL’ allocation for the previous two years. On being asked about the current status of these schemes, the Ministry submitted as under:-

“As regard ‘NIL’ allocation for the previous two years in respect of Maternity benefits, the Code on Social Security 2020 has been passed by the Parliament on 28.09.2020 and notified on 29.09.2020. The Code has subsumed relevant provisions of various Acts related to the social security including the Maternity Benefit Act, 1961, as amended vide the Maternity Benefit (Amendment) Act, 1972 and the Employees’ State Insurance (ESI) Act, 1948. One of the salient features of the Code is to extend the ESI scheme pan-India and to establishments employing 10 or more employees. With the Social Security Code 2020 coming into effect, such women employees with wage earning less than Rs.15000/- p.m. as proposed under the incentive scheme shall be covered under the ESI scheme and they will be entitled for a host of benefits including the 26 weeks paid maternity leave automatically by virtue of being covered by the ESI scheme. The entire expenditure on account of maternity benefits would be provided by the ESI Corporation.

The proposed incentive scheme for entities that provide 26 weeks maternity benefits to their woman employees, as provided for in the Maternity Benefit (Amendment) Act, 2017 enhancing maternity leave from 12 weeks to 26 weeks, has been reviewed by the Government. It is observed that with the Social Security Code 2020 coming into effect, such entities, which were intended for incentivising 7 weeks wages to employers employing women workers and providing 26 weeks paid maternity leave to them, will prefer to join the ESI

scheme, by virtue of which their liability of even the 7 weeks wages to beneficiary women employees will not arise, as the entire expenditure on this account will be provided by the ESI Corporation. All that such entities will have to do is to make regular contribution of their share of 3.25% (existing rate of contribution) along with the employee's share of 0.75% (existing rate of contribution) of the wages to the ESI Corporation. Such women employees shall also become a host of other medical and cash benefits under the ESI scheme.

In view of above, the incentive scheme proposed for entities that provide 26 weeks maternity benefits to their woman employees, as provided for in the Maternity Benefit (Amendment) Act, 2017, will not be relevant with the commencement of the Code on Social Security, 2020.

The scheme relating to Workers Conditions and Safety has been discontinued from 2018-19 and merged with Establishment Expenditure. The activities relating to Working Conditions and Safety in Docks and Factories are being carried out from Establishment Expenditure."

11. On a pointed query about new social security schemes that have been envisioned for the financial year 2022-23 and the budgetary provisions earmarked for the purpose, the Ministry submitted that no new social security scheme has been envisioned for the FY 2022-23.

12. In response to a specific query regarding realistic projections made for the year 2022-23, the Ministry submitted as under:-

"Based on observations made by the Standing Committee on Labour, all Bureau Heads were requested to propose realistic budget provision for various schemes. They have assured a rigorous scrutiny of their budget proposals and accordingly the provisions reflected in the Demands for Grants have been made more realistic."

**(ii) Budgetary allocation and utilisation during 2019-20, 2020-21 and 2021-22**

13. The financial allocation and expenditure for the last three fiscals and BE 2022-23 are as under:

(Rs. in Crore)

Year	BE	RE	Actuals	% Expenditure over RE
2019-20	11184.09	11184.09	10083.75	90.16
2020-21	12065.49	13719.56	12920.38	94.17
2021-22	13306.50	14248.72	10984.49 (upto Dec' 21)	77.09 (upto Dec' 21)
2022-23	16893.68	-	-	-

**(iii) Budget allocation (2022-23) and Expenditure under major Scheme in 2021-22**

14. The Budget allocation (2022-23) and Expenditure under major Schemes in 2021-22 is as under:-

<b>(Rs. in crore)</b>						
Sl. No.	Description	BE 2021-22	RE 2021-22	Actual 2021-22 (Up to 14.02.2022)	% Exp over RE	BE 2022-23
1	Employees Pension Scheme	7364.00	7364.00	7364.00	100.00	8485.00
2	Aatmanirbhar Bharat Rozgar Yojana	3130.00	5000.00	3130.00	62.60	6400.00
3	Pradhan Mantri Rojgar Protsahan Yojana (PMRPY)	900.00	250.00	250.00	100.00	0.00
4	Establishment Expenditure of the Centre	550.50	543.17	459.78	84.65	619.18
5	Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Man Dhan Yojana	400.00	350.00	324.08	92.59	350.00
6	National Pension Scheme for Traders & Self Employed Persons	150.00	1.00	0.24	24.00	50.00
7	Labour Welfare Scheme	150.00	119.00	35.51	29.84	120.00
8	Labour and Employment Statistical System	150.00	90.00	20.19	22.43	89.00
9	National Data Base of Unorganised Workers	150.00	280.00	78.28	27.96	500.00
10	National Child Labour Project (NCLP) including Rehabilitation of Bonded Labour	120.00	30.00	3.79	12.63	30.00
11	Grant to Autonomous Bodies	105.00	121.55	93.24	76.71	115.40

12	Social Security for Tea Plantation Workers in Assam	60.00	50.00	30.00	60.00	60.00
13	National Career Services (NCS)	57.00	32.00	13.17	41.16	52.00
14	Coaching and Guidance for SCs, STs and OBCs	19.90	17.90	13.28	74.19	23.00
15	Bima Yojana for Unorganised Workers	0.10	0.10	0.00	0.00	0.10
	<b>Total</b>	<b>13306.50</b>	<b>14248.72</b>	<b>11815.74</b>	<b>82.92</b>	<b>16893.68</b>

15. On being asked whether the Ministry would be able to utilize the pending amount of Rs.2,432.98 Crore during the remainder of 2021-22 fiscal, the Ministry submitted as under:-

“An expenditure of Rs.11816.16 Crore has been incurred by the Ministry by 17.02.2022 in FY 2021-22 and it is likely that complete budget will be utilized by the end of this fiscal.”

16. On being asked to justify the increased allocation at RE stage despite some shortfalls in expenditure during the last two years, the Ministry submitted as under:

“BE 2021-22 for the Ministry is Rs.13306.50 which was enhanced at RE 2021-22 stage to Rs.14248.72. Budget has been increased due to an overwhelming response received to newly launched e-SHRAM portal for registration of workers of unorganized sector. Initially, the target was to register 5 Crore workers in FY 2022-23 but over 25 Crore workers have been registered till date. Another reason for enhancement at RE stage is due to higher demand under ABRY.”

17. When asked about the measures contemplated for optimal utilisation of earmarked allocations during 2022-23, the Ministry stated as under:-

“Instructions are issued from time to time to the concerned administrative divisions of the Ministry of Labour & Employment to ensure full utilisation of funds. They have been advised to make the Budget Estimates more realistic. Further, Bureau Heads are also advised to ensure proportionate expenditure during the year by fixing quarterly targets and also to review actual expenditure *vis-à-vis* targets on regular basis. Pace of expenditure is also reviewed at Secretary/AS& FA level.”

18. Asked to state whether the Ministry was strictly adhering to the Budget Division (Ministry of Finance) guidelines in regard to ceiling limit of expenditure *i.e.* 15 percent in last month of financial year, the Ministry responded as under:-

“Guidelines of the Ministry of Finance in regard to ceiling limit of expenditure *i.e.* 15% in last month of financial year is being followed by the Ministry. The expenditure in last quarter of FY 2020-21 was Rs.591.07 crore which is 4.94% of the BE 2020-21.”

### III OVERALL ACHIEVEMENTS - PHYSICAL TARGETS

19. Scheme wise physical targets and achievements along with reasons for shortfall in achievements of the targets during 2021-22 for the major schemes have been stated to be as under:-

#### (i) Labour Welfare Scheme

Name of the Scheme/Project/ Programme	FINANCIAL		PHYSICAL	
	Targets	Achievements (up to Dec 2021)	Targets	Achievements
Revised Integrated Housing Scheme (RIHS).	89.94cr	10.40cr	Only 2 <sup>nd</sup> /3 <sup>rd</sup> installment are being paid under this scheme. The scheme has now been converged with Pradhan Mantri Aawas Yojana.	3001 (2 <sup>nd</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> installments)
Health Scheme	11.90cr	6.80cr	Health is a continuous activity hence it is not possible to fix a target in this category. Benefits under this scheme will be extended to all eligible workers and their dependants	9.00 lakh
Education	47.60cr	16.89cr	4 lakh	1.11 lakh

(ii) **National Child Labour Project (NCLP) scheme including Grant-in-Aid Scheme**

Name of the Scheme/Project/ Programme	FINANCIAL		PHYSICAL	
	Targets	Achievements (up to Dec 2021)	Target	Achievements
National Child Labour Project (NCLP) scheme including Grant-in-Aid Scheme.	110 cr	0.83cr	(i) To attain new enrolment of 50000 working children in special training Centres  (ii) Mainstreaming of 40000 children to formal education system	(i) 2514 new enrolments made  (ii) 5334 children mainstreamed  Decrease in the number of proposals received and closure of STC because Covid 19

(iii) **Rehabilitation of Bonded Labour, 2016**

(Rs. in Crore)

Name of the Scheme/Project/ Programme	FINANCIAL		PHYSICAL	
	Targets	Achievements (up to Dec 2021)	Target	Achievements
Rehabilitation of Bonded Labour	10 crore	0.99 crore	No target can be fixed. As and when existence of bonded is detected, such persons are identified for rehabilitation	1174

(iv) **Coaching-cum-Guidance Centres for SC/ST jobseekers through Coaching, Guidance and Vocational Training**

(Rs. in Crore)

Name of the Scheme/Project/ Programme	FINANCIAL		PHYSICAL	
	Targets	Achievements (up to Dec 2021)	Targets	Achievements
Coaching-cum-Guidance Centres for SC/ST	19.00 crore	12.89 crore	To provide vocational guidance, career counselling, typing and shorthand facilities to 1300 SC/ST job seekers and also prepare them for competitive examination/selection tests for Group 'C' posts.	2300 SC/ST candidates would be imparted training under special coaching scheme. The target will be fully achieved.
Computer Training to educated SC/ST job seekers			To provide Computer Training to 1050 educated SC/ST job seekers	Computer Training to 2000 educated SC/ST job seekers is being provided  The Computer Hardware Maintenance Training was provided to 1000 SC/ST jobseekers

(v) National Career Service

(Rs. in Crore)

Name of the Scheme/Project/ Programme	FINANCIAL		PHYSICAL	
	Targets	Achievement (up to Dec-2021)	Targets	Achievement (up to Dec-2021)
National Career Service	57.00 crore	9.57 crore	100 MCC to be operationalised 978 Emp. EX to be interlink with NCS portal Organisation of Job Fair at district level Training to Emp. Officers on NCS.	41 925 (Cumulative) 702 412

(vi) Aatmanirbhar Bharat Rojgar Yojana

(Rs. in Crore)

Name of the Scheme/Project/ Programme	FINANCIAL			
	Targets	Achievement (up to Dec-2021)	Targets	Achievement (up to Dec-2021)
Aatmanirbhar Bharat Rojgar Yojana (ABRY)	3131.00 crore	2396.00 crore	The estimated beneficiaries is 71.80 lakh for the entire period of the scheme i.e. 31.03.2022	43,02,481



(vii) Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maan-Dham (PM-SYM) Yojana

(Rs. in Crore)

Name of the Scheme/Project/ Programme	FINANCIAL		PHYSICAL	
	Targets	Achievement ( up to Dec-2021)	Targets	achievement
Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maan-Dham (PM-SYM) Yojana	400.00 crore	324.00 crore	To enroll 1 crore new beneficiaries	1,10,791  The physical progress is slow due to pandemic Covid-19 and subsequent lockdown across the country.

(viii) National Pension Scheme for Traders, Shopkeepers and Self-Employed Persons

(Rs. in Crore)

Name of the Scheme/Project/ Programme	FINANCIAL		PHYSICAL	
	Targets	Achievement (up to Dec-2021)	Targets	Achievement
National Pension Scheme for Traders, Shopkeepers and Self-Employed Persons:	150.00 crore	0.23 crore	To enroll 25 lakh new beneficiaries	4249  The physical progress is slow due to pandemic Covid-19 and subsequent lockdown across the country.

**IV SCHEME WISE ANALYSIS**

**A. EMPLOYMENT SCHEMES**

**(i) National Career Services (NCS)**

20. National Career Service (NCS) Project is a Mission Mode Project for transformation of the National Employment Service to provide a variety of employment related services like job matching, career counselling, vocational guidance, information on skill development courses, apprenticeship, internships etc. This project consists of three important components namely- (i) NCS Portal ([www.ncs.gov.in](http://www.ncs.gov.in)); (ii) Model Career

Centres; and (iii) Interlinking of Employment Exchanges with NCS portal. The services under NCS are available online and can be accessed directly, through Career Centres, Common Service Centres, Post Offices, mobile devices, cyber cafes etc. The various stakeholders on the NCS platform include job seekers, industries, employers, employment exchanges (career centres), training providers, educational institutions and placement organizations. These services are available free of cost. The portal also facilitates organization of job fairs where both employers and job seekers can interact. As on 31st December 2021, over 1.35 crore active job seekers and over 1.75 lakh active employers are registered on NCS portal. Around 92 lakh vacancies have been mobilised through NCS portal. The Ministry has engaged with several institutions and organisations to bring more and more job opportunities to our workforce with some of the leading organisations/ job portals such as Hire me, Times Job, Freshers world, Freshers live, Qess Corp. Limited, TCS ION, Cassius Technologies Pvt. Ltd., First Job, etc. As per DOPT instructions it has been decided that advertisement of vacancies shall now be mandatory placed at the National Career Service Portal.

21. The NCS Project also envisaged setting up of Model Career Centres (MCCs), a brick and mortar model of NCS, which have state-of-the-art infrastructure and will act as a hub of career counselling and also provide career related services (such as organising job fairs, mobilise the employers, provide career counselling at local level etc). in collaboration with States and other institutions to the jobseekers and employers through outreach activities. As of now, Government has approved 207 MCCs (including 07 on non- funded basis). Further, establishment of 200 more MCCs has also been proposed during the 15<sup>th</sup> Finance Commission. The NCS Project has also been enhanced to interlink 997 Employment Exchanges with NCS Portal and under this scheme, Govt. of India is providing funds to the states for organizing job fairs, up-gradation of IT and refurbishment of infrastructure of employment exchanges. The portal also facilitates organization of job fairs where both employers and job seekers can interact. DGE has conducted more than 6700 Job Fairs (online and offline) since inception (till 26<sup>th</sup> January 2022)out of which 1362 Job Fairs were conducted during 1<sup>st</sup> January to 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2021.

22. The financial allocation and expenditure for the last three fiscals under NCS project and BE 2022-23 are as under:

<b>(Rs. in Crore)</b>					
<b>Sl. No.</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>BE</b>	<b>RE</b>	<b>AE</b>	<b>Short fall/ Excess expenditure</b>
1.	2019-20	50	66	63.93	2.07 (-)
2.	2020-21	79.39	49.63	43.77	5.86 (-)
3.	2021-22	57	32	12.64 (upto Dec. 2021)	19.36 (-)
4.	2022-23	52	--	--	--

23. On being asked to furnish the reasons for under utilization of funds for the year 2021-22 despite downward revision of RE amount to Rs.32 crore from BE of Rs.57 crore, the Ministry submitted as under:-

“Selection of a new Project Consulting Agency & Implementing Agency to upgrade and optimize the NCS functionalities during 2021-22 was planned which could not materialize due to disruption of activities during Covid-19 pandemic. Besides this, proposals for release of second and third instalments of MCCs and Interlinking of Employment Exchanges with NCS portal could not be received from State/UT Governments due to slow down of administrative machineries in State/UTs for a considerable period on account of pandemic. Hence, funds earmarked for the foregoing purpose remained unutilized. However, the expenditure of remaining amount w.r.t. RE 2021-22 is planned and is likely to be utilized by the end of Financial Year.”

24. Asked to state the measures proposed to maximize utilisation of Rs.52 crore in Financial Year 2022-23, the Ministry submitted as under:-

“In order to maximise utilisation of Rs.52 crore earmarked for 2022-23, it is planned to transform existing technology of National Career Service Project for enhancement of user interface and experience, foster rapid e-KYC processes & enables flexible registrations for all worker segments, bring on-board dynamic, effective career advancement content etc.”

25. The Committee then desired to know the plan of action on the part of the Ministry to expedite/realign fulfillment of targets with respect to operationalisation of 59 Model Career Centres (MCCs) and inception of 50 new MCCs in the Financial Year 2022-23. In response, the Ministry stated as under:-

“Total 200 MCCs were planned to be operationalized in collaboration with State Government to provide career related service to the job seekers of country. Out of these, 141 MCCs have been operationalized so far. Funds have already been released to State/ UTs for remaining 59 MCCs. States/UTs could not utilize the funds for the establishment of MCCs mainly due to spread of Covid-19 pandemic. Further, the MCCs are under the Administrative control of States/UTs governments. However, efforts are being made to pursue State/UTs Govt. through meetings, letters, etc. for early operationalization of MCCs.”

26. On being asked to state the reasons for only 141 Model Career Centres (MCCs) being operational as against 207 sanctioned MCCs, the Ministry responded as under:-

“141 MCCs out of 207 Model Career Centres (MCCs) (including 7 Non-funded) are operational till date. Under this component, existing employment exchanges are converted into Model Career Centres (MCCs) in collaboration with States and other institutions to deliver career related services and to maximize the reach of NCS. States/UTs could not utilize the funds for the establishment of MCCs mainly due to spread of Covid-

19 pandemic. Further, the MCCs are under the Administrative control of States/UTs governments.”

27. The Ministry supplemented as under:-

“.....The Ministry has already approved an amount of Rs. 23.45 Cr for establishment of remaining 59 MCCs out of which Rs. 14.37 Cr has been released to State Government as first instalment. However, due to Covid-19 pandemic the funds could not be utilized by the State Governments to operationalize these 59 MCCs. This Ministry is continuously pursuing the State Government for early operationalization of these MCCs.”

28. On the progress of work done in various States by MCCs, the Ministry stated as under:-

“Remaining MCCs are in various stages of being operationalised by the State/UT Governments. Funds have already been released for remaining 59 MCCs. The matter is being followed up with States/UTs for the operationalisation of rest of the MCCs at the earliest.”

29. The Committee desired to be apprised of the number of job seekers registered with Model Career Centres (MCCs) in various States. In response, the Ministry furnished the following detailed information:-

**State/UT-wise list of Job seekers registered in MCCs as on 10.02.2022**

<b>Career Center State</b>	<b>Job Seekers registered</b>
Andaman and Nicobar Islands	2308
Andhra Pradesh	22093
Arunachal Pradesh	807
Assam	10485
Bihar	130346
Chhattisgarh	46799
Delhi	4087
Goa	3309
Gujarat	86660
Haryana	24030
Himachal Pradesh	13978
Jammu and Kashmir	12947
Jharkhand	16155
Karnataka	41847
Kerala	4692
Ladakh	1225
Lakshadweep	580
Madhya Pradesh	36523
Maharashtra	10845
Manipur	3557
Nagaland	432

Odisha	31713
Puducherry	1590
Punjab	18105
Rajasthan	66804
Tamil Nadu	15266
Telangana	204058
Tripura	100341
Uttar Pradesh	57461
Uttarakhand	9533
West Bengal	65898
<b>Total</b>	<b>1044474</b>

30. Asked to furnish the placement figure with respect to regular/ad-hoc/part-time/contract employments generated in 2020-21 and 2021-22, the Ministry submitted that:-

“Reporting of hiring figure by employers is not mandatory on NCS portal.”

31. The Committee then queried about State-wise details of inter-linked employment exchanges with NCS portal and the efforts made by the Ministry to persuade the States in inter-linking the employment exchanges with the NCS Portal. The Ministry, in this regard, submitted as follows:-

“API Integration of State Employment Exchange Portal with the NCS portal has been completed with 12 States/UTs, 5 States/UTs are directly registering on NCS Portal, API Integration is in process with the remaining states. Details of API Integration with States/UTs is as under:

<b>API Integration Status</b>	<b>States/UTs</b>	<b>No. of employment exchanges</b>
Completed	Madhya Pradesh	54
	Rajasthan	35
	Maharashtra	33
	Goa	1
	Puducherry	5
	Uttar Pradesh	75
	Telangana	37
	Himachal Pradesh	33
	Andaman and Nicobar	1
	Punjab	46
	Jharkhand	43
	Haryana	54
Directly Registering on NCS	Karnataka	34
	Tripura	6
	Chandigarh	2
	Bihar	47
	Arunachal Pradesh	25

32. On being enquired about the average time taken between the registration and offer of employment for candidates who actually received offers, the Ministry stated as under:-

“The National Career Service (NCS) project is being implemented by the Government to provide a variety of employment related services like job search and matching, career counselling, vocational guidance, information on skill development courses etc. through a digital platform [[www.ncs.gov.in](http://www.ncs.gov.in)]. The NCS project aims to provide seamless access to Jobseekers and employers, decent employment opportunities to the aspiring youth of the country and to facilitate career development assistance. The NCS Portal brings together Jobseekers and employers on one platform to facilitate job opportunities and career related services to the Jobseekers of the country. Registration on the portal by the job seekers is voluntary in nature. Since the confirmation of final hiring/offer figure is not mandatory on NCS Portal, the average time taken between the registration and offer of employment for candidates who actually received offers is not available on NCS portal.”

33. Responding to a query about the number of job seekers re-registered after completing the term of their employment on ad-hoc/part-time/contract basis, the Ministry submitted as follows:-

“The registrants including job seekers remain registered on NCS till they want. Job seekers can register on NCS portal irrespective of their employment status. A job seeker can continue his/her registration on NCS portal even if he/she is employed. Moreover, the final hiring is not available on NCS portal.”

34. In response to a specific query about the number of job melas organized in the year 2021-22 and the number of employers/industries who participated in these job melas, the Ministry submitted as under:-

“The portal also facilitates organization of job fairs where both employers and job seekers can interact. Based on the data maintained at NCS Portal, in FY 2021-22 (As on 8 February 2022) 1097 Job Fairs have been conducted wherein 2285 Employers have participated across 18 Industries.”

35. The Committee asked whether MoUs have been signed with Industries and the ratio of jobs *vis-a-vis* employment generated by these MoUs/Industries. The Ministry responded as under:-

“No separate MoUs have been signed with Industries and participating employers in the Job Mela’s in the year 2021-22.”

36. As regards the specific number of job seekers and employers registered and jobs mobilized during the years from 2019-20 to 2021-22, the Ministry furnished the following data:-

S. No.	NCS data	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22 (as on 31 <sup>st</sup> January, 2022)
1	Job Seekers registered	30,11,524	28,47,513	58,34,096
2	Employers registered	54,253	83,119	54,929
3	Jobs Mobilized	30,00,459	12,61,066	10,02,556

37. On being asked about the reasons for decrease in the number of job seekers and employers registered as well as the less number of jobs mobilized in spite of the increase in the number of registrations, the Ministry responded as under:-

“The MoLE has taken proactive steps to enhance the coverage of NCS portal both from the jobseekers and employers perspective. In this regard, integration with EPFO and ESIC has been made to bring more employers on NCS portal. Similarly, integration with private job portal is done to bring vacancies of private job portals also on NCS. Further, integration is done with Skill India to onboard skilled jobseekers of NSDC on NCS portal.

It may be seen that decrease in number of jobseekers in year 2020-21 is only 1.64 lakh against 30 lakh which is normal fluctuation. Further, jobseeker number has increased in year 2021-22 due to onboarding of jobseekers from Skill India Portal

The increase in number of employers on NCS in year 2020-21 was due to integration with EPFO/ESIC from where bulk backlog data of employers flowed to NCS. Thus, the integration has helped on boarding more number of employers on NCS. In subsequent year, the flow of data from EPFO/ESIC has been stabilized.

During the year 2019-20, bulk vacancies were received from private portals subsequent to integration with them. In succeeding years the flow of vacancies, from all sources have been stabilized. Moreover, in year 2021-22, as on 16.02.2022, 11.2 lakh vacancies have been mobilized and it is likely to cross 2020-21 figures.”

(ii) **National Career Service (NCS) Centres for SCs/ STs (erstwhile coaching centre and guidance for SC, ST and OBCs)**

38. National Career Service Centres for SC/STs were established by Directorate General of Employment & Training (now Directorate General of Employment), Ministry of Labour & Employment, Govt. of India. These Centres provide services to SC/ST job

seekers registered with Employment Exchanges for enhancing their employability through coaching, counselling and related training programmes. Some of the programmes organized by these Centres cover confidence building, individual guidance, mock interviews, training in typing, shorthand and computer, etc. The main objectives of the CGCs Scheme are:-

- i) To render vocational guidance and career related information;
- ii) To channelize educated SC/ST job-seekers registered with the Employment Exchanges in appropriate vocations; and
- iii) To increase their employability through coaching/training/guidance.

39. The financial allocation and expenditure under NCS Scheme for the last three fiscals and BE 2022-23 for the NCS Scheme are as under:-

**(Rs. in crore)**

Sl. No.	Year	BE	RE	AE	Short fall/ Excess expenditure
1.	2019-20	18	18	15.24	2.76 (-)
2.	2020-21	17	10	10.76	0.76 (-)
3.	2021-22	19.90	17.90	12.86 (upto Dec. 2021)	5.04 (-)
4.	2022-23	23	--	--	--

40. Asked to state the steps taken to re-align targets for 2022-23 in view of Covid restrictions, the Ministry responded as under:-

“In the scenario of ongoing COVID -19 pandemic, coaching/ computer training facilitated through online/offline/blended mode by institutes depending on the situation and concerned State guidelines issued from time to time. All 25 centres have provided career counseling and Guidance services through online mode also.”

41. On the percentage of SCs/STs who have since got employment after undergoing such training programmes, the Ministry stated as under:-

“The NCSCs are set up to enhance the employability of SC/ST educated jobseekers through Coaching/ training/counseling etc. However, the experience gained over the years has revealed that the scheme has made the positive impact to enhance the employability of SC/ST job seekers.”

42. Asked to state the steps taken by the Ministry for facilitating registration of SC/ST candidates in the Startup India Entrepreneurship programme so as to enable such candidates to reap the benefits under the Start up programme, the Ministry responded as under:-

“All National Career Service Centre for SC/STs have been directed to register the candidates after completion of their coaching/training on the Startup portal of Ministry of Commerce and Industry.”

43. The Committee then desired to know the steps taken to make SC/STs residing in remote parts aware of such opportunities. In reply, the Ministry submitted as under:-



“NCSC for SC/STs were established in the states as model institutes to enhance the employability of SC/ST jobseekers through guidance/coaching/training. Vocational guidance, dissemination of career information and confidence building activities are undertaken in various schools, colleges and educational institutions located in different places including remote parts of the country for creating awareness.”

44. As regards measures taken to operationalise a Management Information System (MIS) under the National Career Service portal to facilitate easy access to Candidates database, the Ministry made the following submission:-

“The employers registered on NCS portal can access profile of registered jobseekers. Further, Management Information System (MIS) reports are available on NCS portal.”

45. In response to another specific query, the Ministry submitted that the MIS module in NCS portal has been made operational.

## **B. SOCIAL SECURITY SCHEMES**

### **(i) Aatmanirbhar Bharat Rojgar Yojana (ABRY)**

46. ABRY was announced as a part of Aatmanirbhar Bharat 3.0 package to boost the economy, increase the employment generation in post Covid recovery phase and to incentivize creation of new employment along with social security benefits and restoration of loss of employment during COVID-19 pandemic. This scheme is being implemented through the Employees Provident Fund Organization (EPFO), reduces the financial burden of the employers of various sectors/industries and encourages them to hire more workers. Under ABRY, the Government of India is crediting for a period of two years both the employees' share (12% of wages) and employers' share (12% of wages) of contribution payable or only the employees' share, depending on employment strength of the EPFO registered establishments. Under ABRY, benefits are provided to every establishment registered with EPFO and their new employees (earning wage less than Rs. 15,000/- per month) if the establishments take new employees on or after 1.10.2020 and upto 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2022 or those who lost jobs between 01.03.2020 to 30.09.2020. Approximately 71.8 Lakh employees are likely to get benefited during the scheme period. The beneficiaries registered upto 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2022 will continue to receive the benefits for 2 years from the date of registration under the scheme.

47. The Committee were informed that as on 14.02.2022, total benefits of Rs. 3130 Crore have been given to 48.95 lakh beneficiaries through 1,29,672 establishments.

48. The financial allocation and expenditure under ABRY for the last two fiscals and BE 2022-23 have been stated to be as under:-

(Rs. in Crore)

Sl. No.	Year	BE	RE	AE	Short fall/ Excess expenditure
1.	2020-21	-	1000	405	595 (-)
2.	2021-22	3130	5000	2396 (upto Dec. 2021)	2604 (-)
3.	2022-23	6400	--	--	--

49. As would be seen from above data, during the year 2021-22, a sum of Rs.5000 crore has been allocated for the Scheme at Revised Expenditure(RE) stage whereas the Actual Expenditure (AE) as on 31.12.2021 stood at Rs. 2,396 crore indicating a shortfall of Rs. 2,604 crore. On being asked about the reasons for under utilisation of funds during the fiscal year 2021-22, the Ministry responded as under:-

“The Ministry has released complete BE 2021-22 of Rs. 3130 Crore to EPFO. Out of which, the Actual expenditure under ABRY for F.Y. 2021-22 (up to 06.02.2022) is Rs. 3054 Crore. Further, expenditure of Rs. 1013 Crore is expected in months of February 2022 and March 2022 as per current trends.

ABRY scheme requires both establishments and employees to fulfill eligibility conditions on month-on-month basis for availing benefits under the scheme. The frequent outbreak of Covid waves affects the establishments to meet the required criteria on month to month basis.”

50. Asked to state the plan of action for optimal utilisation of funds during 2022-23, the Ministry submitted as follows:-

“..... the Actual expenditure under ABRY for F.Y. 2021-22 (upto 06.02.2022) is Rs. 3054 Crore while projection for remaining period of FY 2021-22 is Rs. 1013 Crore. It is expected to meet the target by the end of financial year. Further, awareness is being created among the employers to encourage them for registration.”

51. In evidence the Committee asked about the specific steps taken to ensure enrolment of large number of employees. In response, the Secretary, MoLE deposed as under:-

“Certainly, we have taken that point. It requires much more publicity. In fact, the EPFO is not only sending SMSs to the employers, they are also sending letters, and they have also organised webinars. In fact, in their specific portal, they have also been sending letters to the employers to join this Scheme. But the only issue is that, until and unless they are eligible, they may not be able to benefit because many of them are not finding eligible as per the eligibility conditions. Therefore, despite creation of employment, they may not be able to get the benefit of this Scheme. But we will definitely look into those issues. We would take up further awareness programmes”.

52. The Committee then wanted to be apprised of the number of employees benefitted under the Scheme till date, out of the estimated targeted beneficiaries of 71.80 lakh. In response, the Ministry submitted as follows:-

“As on 06.02.2022, a total of 47.06 Lakhs beneficiaries have been benefitted under the Scheme, out of the estimated targeted beneficiaries of 71.80 lakh by 31.03.2022.

53. Asked to state the initiatives taken to cover all the targeted beneficiaries by the end of 2021-22 financial year, the Ministry apprised as under:-

“The employers registered with E.P.F.O. are encouraged for registering themselves and their new employees on the Employer's Portal of EPFO for availing benefits under ABRY by conducting webinars, follow-ups through Unified Portal of EPFO; and Awareness about the scheme through Workshops & Seminars has been conducted in prominent industry clusters & sites of state industrial corporations.”

54. On being asked to furnish the break-up of funds disbursed towards contribution of employee and employer share of EPF contribution in establishments employing upto/ more than 1000 employees, the Ministry submitted the following data:-

<b>Establishments with up to 1000 employees</b>		<b>Establishments with above 1000 employees</b>	
Employees Share (In Rs. Lakh)	Employers' share (In Rs. Lakh)	Employees Share (In Rs. Lakh)	Employers' share (In Rs. Lakh)
1,48,443.30	1,48,490	45,016.39	(**)11.62

\*Note the above data is as on 24/01/2022

(\*\*) As per scheme provisions, an establishment will continue to get support of employer's share even if the number of contributing EPF members with UAN exceeds 1000 in any wage month during the scheme period. The amount mentioned is disbursed to such establishments.

55. The Committee specifically desired to know the reasons for deviation from the guidelines issued by the Minister of Finance prescribing 15% ceiling of expenditure in the last month of Financial Year. In response, the Ministry *inter-alia* stated as under:-

“It is also understood that guidelines of Ministry of Finance regarding ceiling of 15% expenditure in last month of FY is applicable on entire budget and not for individual schemes. Thus, there are no reasons or attributing same to ABRY expenditure.”

56. In response to another query on the number of employees holding Aadhaar validated UAN drawing monthly wages less than Rs.15,000 and were not enrolled/registered with EPFO before 1<sup>st</sup> October, 2020, the Ministry submitted as follows:-

“New-Joiners are those who joins employment in any EPFO registered establishments for the first time from 01.10.2020 to 31.03.2022, is allotted Aadhaar validated UAN and drawing wages less than Rs 15000/- per month.”

57. As regards the number of employees drawing monthly wage less than Rs.15,000 who have availed benefit of the Scheme despite having exited from employment during COVID-19, the Ministry apprised as under:-

“Re-Joiners are those EPF members who made exit from employment during 1.03.2020 to 30.09.2020 and join in any EPFO registered establishment between 1.10.2020 to 31.03.2022. As on 06.02.2022, a total of 5.42 lakh such employees have availed the benefit under the scheme.”

58. Asked to state the specific measures taken/proposed to ensure registration of 71.80 lakh beneficiaries by 31st March 2022 under the Atmanirbhar Bharat Rojgar Yojana (ABRY), the Ministry submitted as under:-

“The actual disbursement of ABRY benefits is contingent upon fulfilment of specific eligibility conditions by the establishment / employees on month-to-month basis i.e.

- i. For establishments already covered registered with EPFO as on 30.09.2020, contributory UANs in ECR for wage month Sept. 2020 is the Reference base of employees.
- ii. Establishments with reference base up to 50 employees have to add minimum 2 new employees and establishments with reference base more than 50 employees, have to add minimum 5 new employees, while retaining the employees as per reference base.
- iii. Establishments covered from 1.10.2020 to 31.03.2022 were entitled to benefits for all new employees without there being any reference base of employees.
- iv. Employers of registered establishment are required to file one ECR for all their employees for each wage month, within 60 days of close of the wage-month.
- v. The employees' wages shall be less than Rs 15000 p.m to avail and continue the benefit.

As on 14.02.2022, 1,29,672 establishments have availed benefits with respect to 48,95,597 employees after fulfilling requirements under ABRY.”

59. The Ministry further stated as under:-

“To increase awareness for registrations under ABRY, following measures are being undertaken: -

- i. Employers not registered under ABRY are being informed through messages on EPFO's Employer portal.

- ii. Webinars are being conducted through Zonal & Regional offices of EPFO with employers / employer associations.
- iii. Awareness via social media outreach.”

**(ii) Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maan Dhan Yojna (PM-SYM)**

60. Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maan-dhan (PM-SYM) was launched in February, 2019. This is a voluntary and contributory pension scheme for providing monthly minimum assured pension of Rs. 3000/- after attaining the age of 60 years to the workers of unorganised sector. The workers in the age group of 18-40 years whose monthly income is Rs. 15000/- or less and not a member of EPFO/ESIC/NPS (Govt. funded) can join the scheme. Under the scheme, 50% monthly contribution is payable by the beneficiary and equal matching contribution is paid by the Central Government. Enrolment to the Scheme is done through the Common Service Centres, with its network of about 4.00 lakh Centres across the country. The Life Insurance Corporation of India is the fund Manager to this Scheme. In addition eligible persons can also self-enroll through visiting the portal [www.maandhan.in](http://www.maandhan.in). As on 09.01.2022, over, 46.00 lakh beneficiaries have been enrolled under the scheme.

61. The financial allocation and expenditure under PM-SYM for the last three fiscals and BE 2022-23 were as under:-

Sl. No.	Year	BE	RE	AE	(Rs. in Crore)	
					Short Excess	fall/ expenditure
1.	2019-20	500	408	352.20	55.80	(-)
2.	2020-21	500	330	319.71	10.29	(-)
3.	2021-22	400	350	324.08 (upto Dec. 2021)	25.92	(-)
4.	2022-23	350	--	--	--	--

62. Asked to explain the reasons for downward revision of the RE provisions during the last three fiscals and yet under utilization of funds, the Ministry stated as under:-

“PM-SYM is launched in March 2019 to provide old age protection in the form of monthly pension to unorganized sector workers having monthly income not exceeding Rs.15000/- and not a member of EPFO/ESIC/NPS (govt. funded) and not an income tax payee. RE for the FY 2019-20 and 2020-21 was allocated Rs.408.00 Crore and Rs.330.00 Crore respectively. However, in the Financial Year 2021-22, the RE was again slightly increased to Rs.350.00 crore. It is relevant to mention that due to outbreak of COVID-19 Pandemic and related lockdown, the enrolment drive under PMSYM Scheme was adversely affected and due to which the RE for 2020-21 was slightly reduced. It is matter of fact that the scheme is a demand driven contributory pension scheme and beneficiaries are also required to contribute from Rs.55/- to Rs.200/- monthly, depending upon their entry age into the scheme. The enrolments were adversely affected due to Covid outbreak. However, the Ministry has taken concerted efforts to increase the enrolment under PMSYM Scheme due to which the

enrolments in during recent months have been increased. The month wise trends of the enrolments under the scheme is as under:

Month	Enrolment/Registration under PMSYM
September, 2021	115
October, 2021	8777
November, 2021	7634
December, 2021	14178
January, 2022	27406

It is evident from the above trends that the enrolments under PMSYM scheme are increasing and it is expected that in upcoming months more unorganised workers may be associated with this scheme and optimum utilisation of funds allocated for the PMSYM scheme may be ensured.”

63. When asked about the reasons for shortfalls in utilisation of funds under PM-SYM and the efforts made to address the constraints, the Ministry *inter-alia* stated as under:-

“The Government is committed to extend the benefits of Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maandhan (PM-SYM) to the workers of unorganized Sector. It is a matter of fact that the outbreak of COVID-19 Pandemic affected the unorganised workers which resulted in a decline in enrolment under the scheme, hence LIC has raised less demand in the schemes. However, the Ministry has taken concerted efforts to increase the enrolment under PM-SYM Scheme. Few measures that have been taken recently are as under:-

- a) Holding periodic review meeting with States/UTs at Secretary and Joint Secretary DGLW level
- b) To create awareness among e-Shram beneficiaries 5.24 Crore SMS sent to eligible subscribers registered under e-Shram in the age group of 18-40 Years
- c) Convening review meetings with Common Service Centers (CSCs) state heads to encourage them to mobilize the eligible beneficiaries.
- d) Launch of extensive social media campaign
- e) IEC activities undertaken through states for which IEC fund allocated to them
- f) VLEs wise targets assigned to Districts by CSC
- g) Meeting with DFS, PFRDA, and VVGNNLI on saturation of pension scheme
- h) Strengthening of dedicated call centres and Grievance Management System.”

64. Asked to state the concrete measures taken for maximum utilisation of funds during 2022-23, the Ministry submitted as under:-

“The government is mandated to the welfare of unorganized sector workers and extends the benefits of PM-SYM to most of these workers. Government contribution is not directly released to any beneficiary or State Government rather it is released to LIC of India which is pension fund manager. LIC in turn deposit the co-contribution/matching contribution of the Central Government in the pension account of the

beneficiaries. With the improved enrolments under the scheme, it is expected that fund will be utilized optimally. Besides this, the Government is also considering to launch extensive media/social media campaign to reach out the targeted beneficiaries and allocate the funds to state/UT governments for IEC activities.”

65. As regards the breakup of the total number of subscribers as on date enrolled through Common Service Centres/self enrolled during the years 2020-21 and 2021-22, the Ministry submitted the following data:-

Year	Self-Enrolled/Non-CSC	Enrolled by CSC
2020-21	11,980	1,60,031
2021-22	19,478 (as on 08.02.2022)	76,423 (as on 08.02.2022)

Source: CSC-SPV.

66. Regarding the year-wise breakup of funds disbursed to the enrolled beneficiaries under PM-SYM as 50 percent matching contribution by Central Government during the last three fiscals, the Ministry submitted as under:-

Year	Fund disbursed to enrolled beneficiaries as 50% matching contribution by Central Government
2018-19	Rs. 31.68 Crore
2019-20	Rs. 281.71 Crore
2020-21	Rs. 327.59 Crore
2021-22	Rs. 220.62 Crore (as on 31.01.2022)

67. On being asked to furnish a detailed note on the operation/implementation of the Scheme highlighting the exact role/responsibilities of the Ministry of Labour & Employment, LIC and CSC, the Ministry stated as under:-

“PM-SYM was launched in 2019 to provide old age protection in the form of monthly pension to the workers of unorganised sector. The enrolment is done through CSC-SPV with its network of approx. 4.0 lakhs centres across the country whereas LIC of India is acting as Pension fund Manager and responsible for pension pay out. The government’s matching contribution is released to LIC. In order to ensure the successful implementation of the scheme, a collaborated implementing mechanism has been adopted and state governments have been requested to mobilise the beneficiaries through their government mechanism. Further, all the State/UT Governments have been requested to constitute State Level Monitoring Committees under Chief Secretaries and District Level Implementation Committee under DM/DC. Apart from this Information, Education and Communication (IEC) activities undertaken through states for which IEC fund was allocated to them. Simultaneously, Meetings with Trade Unions, Business Association were also held. Besides this, a pension Saptah (30th November, 2019 to 6th December, 2019) was also launched by the Hon’ble Minister(L&E) approx. 4.0 lakh CSCs to popularize the scheme and enhance enrolment.

The role/responsibilities of Ministry of Labour & Employment, LIC and CSC are as under:-

Ministry of Labour and Employment:

- a. Ensure that the various agencies of the Government and the parties hereto work collectively with each other in a coordinated manner;
- b. Support awareness campaigns to drive adoption and usage of the Scheme;
- c. Undertake the overall design, management and implementation of the project on ground across all the locations through various agencies/partner and the parties involved for this project;
- d. Co-ordinate with various Government Departments/agencies/regulators for issuance of guidelines, notifications, advisories for implementation and management of the Scheme and issue necessary directions from time to time;
- e. Undertake the responsibility of redressal of grievance of the subscriber or any other party in connection with the Mandate registration or wrong debit in co-ordination primarily with LIC or any other party involved in the process.

Life Insurance Corporation of India:

- a. Prepare and share the data mandate as per prescribed format with Sponsor Bank (IDBI Bank) for upload to National Automated Clearing House ( hereinafter referred to as "NACH");
- b. Preserve the soft copies of the Mandates for further reference in case of dispute and audit by any authority;
- c. Share the response data with accept/reject reason form customer bank with CSC on receipt from IDBI Bank;
- d. Ensure that the transactions are generated only on the mandates that are confirmed by banks as valid. In case LIC generates a transaction on a mandate that has been rejected by the bank, such transactions will be rejected by NACH at the time of upload itself;
- e. Ensure the debit transactions are presented to NPCI on staggered cycle dates (after 10th of each month) so that they are evenly distributed throughout the month to enable the detention bank to process the transactions without any constraint;
- f. Address the disputes arising out of auto debit, if any, under the schemes;
- g. Set up a call centre or dispute resolution mechanism to handle customer complaints and disputes in co-ordination with MOLE and CSC-SPV;

Common Service Centre (CSC-SPV):

- a. Ensure customer related information is validated using customer bank passbook before completing the registration process;



- b. The onus of recording the correct details of the customer and validation of customer will be on CSC;
- c. Post successful registration, CSC-SPV to prepare data mandate as per the format prescribed with the consent of the parties for transmission to LIC.
- d. Register the grievance of the subscribers and act on the same in consultation of MoLE and LIC.
- e. CSC-SPV to ensure confidentiality and security of the beneficiary data and not to pass on the same to any organisation other than the signatories to this MoU.”

68. The Committee asked whether there was any proposal for Third Party Audit of the PM-SYM Scheme. In response, the Ministry submitted as under:-

“MoU signed among MoL&E, LIC and CSC has the provisions of inspection and audits. According to the said provision, CSC and LIC shall allow MoL&E or its nominated agencies / auditors to inspect the systems/ application (if any) developed by CSC, LIC and its partners that are used or will be used to deliver the services stated in this MoU and related proposals.”

69. On being enquired whether a beneficiary enrolled under PM-SYM becomes ineligible subsequently, could continue contribution and the status of such contribution, the Ministry submitted as follows:-

“In case, a beneficiary becomes ineligible as his/her income exceeds Rs. 15000/- / becomes a member of ESIC / becomes an income tax payee after joining the scheme, he/she may continue the scheme. However, in case, a beneficiary becomes a member of Government funded NPS after joining the scheme, he/she has to exit the scheme and the amount will be refunded to the beneficiary as per exit policy guidelines of the PM-SYM scheme.”

70. Asked to specify the efforts made by the Ministry to coordinate with the State Governments so as to mobilize the unorganized work force and get them registered under PM-SYM on priority, the Ministry submitted as under:-

“Due to subsequent waves of Covid-19, the enrollment under the PM-SYM Scheme has stagnated in recent years. However, various steps have been taken to increase the enrollment viz. including convening meetings with State/UT Governments through VCs, meetings with State CSC heads, target set by CSC for VLEs, awareness campaign through SMS to eligible beneficiaries registered under e-Shram lying in the age group of 18-40 years.”

**(iii) National Pension Scheme for Traders and Self Employed Persons (erstwhile Pradhan Mantri Karam Yogi Maan-Dhan Yojana)**

71. NPS Traders has been launched on 12.09.2019. It is a voluntary and contributory pension scheme. The traders in the age group of 18-40 years with an annual turnover, not exceeding Rs. 1.5 crore and who are not member of EPFO/ESIC/NPS (govt funded)/PM-SYM or an income tax payer, can join the scheme. Under the scheme, the subscribers, after attaining the age of 60 years, are eligible for a monthly minimum assured pension of Rs. 3,000/-. Enrolment to the scheme is done through the Common Service Centres, with its network of about 4.0 lakhs Centres across the country. The Life Insurance Corporation of India is the fund Manager to this Scheme . In addition eligible persons can also self-enroll through visiting the portal [www.maandhan.in](http://www.maandhan.in). Under the scheme, 50% monthly contribution is payable by the beneficiary and equal matching contribution is paid by the Central Government. As on 09.01.2022, the total 47,956 beneficiaries have been enrolled under the scheme.

72. It has been observed from the documents furnished to the Committee that physical targets set under NPS-Traders during 2021-22 have not been achieved owing to effects of the pandemic and subsequent lockdown, i.e., enrollment of 4,249 against 24 lakh beneficiaries originally envisioned. On being enquired whether the Ministry proposed to realign their targets of achieving 50 lakh enrollments during 2022-23 in view of under-achievement of targets during 2021-22 and in light of this huge gap, the awareness campaigns undertaken to encourage traders towards enrollment under the scheme, the Ministry stated as under:-

“National Pension Schemes for Traders and Self Employed, was launched in 2019 for providing a monthly pension of Rs. 3000/- to traders after attaining the age of 60 years. The Traders in the age group of 18-40 years with an annual turnover, not exceeding Rs.1.5 crore and who are not members of EPFO/ESIC/NPS (govt. funded)/PM-SYM or not an income tax payer are eligible to join the scheme. It is informed that the NPS Traders scheme has been adversely affected by the consecutive outbreaks of pandemic Covid-19. The reasons other than Covid-19 pandemic for low registration under the scheme are as under;

- (i) It is a contributory and a voluntary scheme.
- (ii) Long-term financial commitment is required by the beneficiaries.
- (iii) Awareness, persuasion and mobilization of beneficiaries is required.

However, this Ministry has taken various measures to increase the coverage of the scheme but overall demand is low from the intended beneficiaries of the scheme. In view of this, the targets for the NPS Traders Scheme are required to be realigned in consultation with State/UT Governments, Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises and Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) and CSC-SPV which is an implementing agency of the scheme.”

**(iv) Labour Welfare Scheme (Revised Integrated Housing Scheme (RIHS))**

73. Revised Integrated Housing Scheme (RIHS), 2016:- Under RIHS, subsidy of Rs.1,50,000/- (per beneficiary) is provided in 3(three) installments in the ratio of 25:60:15 to Beedi/Iron Ore Mines, Manganese Ore & Chrome Ore Mines

(IOMC)/Limestone Mines, Dolomite Mines (LSDM)/Mica Mines and Cine Workers for construction of own pucca houses. As per direction of Expenditure Finance Committee (EFC), the RIHS scheme has been converged with Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojna (PMAY) in 2018. Now, no new sanction under RIHS is being made and only disbursement of residual second and third installment is being made.

74. On being asked to furnish a factual note on the progress of transition of RIHS to PMAY, the Ministry explained as follows:-

“As per directions of Expenditure Finance Committee, a timeline and a transition plan was to be drawn up when all new sanction under RIHS were stopped and housing subsidy were drawn from PMAY. In compliance of the transition plan, all welfare commissioners (WC) were directed:-

(i) To examine all the applications received by them and bifurcate them as per eligibility for PMAY (G) and PMAY (U).

(ii) The applications which are eligible for housing assistance under PMAY (Urban), should be sent to the respective municipalities/Urban local bodies (ULB) for further processing. Welfare Commissioners should also pursue the matter with the competent authority to facilitate the applicant to get housing assistance under PMAY (U). The Ministry of HUA will also write to the State Governments & ULBs in this regard. Accordingly, all WCs have sent the applications to respective offices.

(iii) Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD) will share the list of beneficiaries prepared for providing assistance under PMAY (G) with O/o DGLW, Ministry of Labour & Employment who in turns will share it with welfare commissioners. The MoRD will also write to all the State Governments/District Authorities to share the date with welfare commissioners. The WCs will check which Beedi/LSDM/IOMC/Mica/Mines/cine workers has been included in the above list. If it is found that any of the above mentioned worked has been left out of the list but are otherwise eligible to get housing assistance under PMAY (G), the concerned WC should take up the matter with the concerned Gram Sabha to get their name included in the list of eligible person for getting assistance under PMAY (G).”

75. The Committee desired to know the steps taken/proposed by the Ministry of Labour & Employment in coordination with Ministry of Urban Development to popularize and promote this Scheme among the targeted beneficiaries. In reply, the Ministry made the following submissions:-

“A meeting was held to discuss the issues regarding Convergence of Revised Integrated Housing Scheme (RIHS) with Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY) (Grameen) and Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY) (Urban) in light of the directions conveyed in the EFC meeting held on 11.5.2018 under the chairmanship of Secretary (Expenditure). As per decision taken in the meeting, all Welfare Commissioners (WCs) were directed to examine all the applications as per eligibility and to send the

applications to the concerned Offices as per eligibility either under PMAY (Grameen) or under PMAY (Urban) as the case may be. Also they were directed to popularise the scheme among the targeted beneficiaries. Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs was also requested to create a special category for Beedi workers, Non-Coal Mine workers and Cine-workers within PMAY to provide them Housing under PMAY (U) and to give them privilege for getting house/assistance for constructing own house under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana.”

76. In response to a specific query about the number of workers who have availed the benefits under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY) since the transition, the Ministry replied as follows:-

“A total of 4,147 workers have availed the benefits under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY) since the transition.”

77. The financial allocation and utilization under the Scheme for the last three fiscals and BE 2022-23 provisions have been stated to be as follows:-

Sl. No.	Year	BE	RE	AE	(Rs. in Crore)	
					Short Excess expenditure	fall/
1.	2019-20	164	147	135.06	11.94	
2.	2020-21	150	100	55.62	44.38	
3.	2021-22	150	119	34.29	84.71	
4.	2022-23	120	--	--	--	

78. As would be seen from the above data, during the year 2021-22, BE for the Scheme was estimated at Rs.150 crore which was revised downward to Rs.119 crore at the RE stage and the Actual Expenditure upto 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2021 stood at only Rs.34.29 crore. On being asked about the reasons for underutilisation of funds during 2021-22 despite the reduced RE, the Ministry responded as under:-

“Continuation of Labour Welfare Scheme (LWS) beyond 31.3.2021 is under process. No expenditure was allowed to be incurred beyond 30.9.2021. The meeting of SFC has already been held. As per direction of Ministry of Finance, no expenditure can be incurred before the scheme is approved for 15th Finance Commission cycle. Necessary order for continuation of LWS is likely to be issued soon and entire fund under RE 2021-22 will be utilized.”

79. Asked about the steps proposed by the Ministry to utilize Rs.120 crore as allocated for the year 2022-23, the Ministry stated as under:-

“2022-23 is going to be the sunset year for RIHS. So, all the eligible pending installments under RIHS will be released by 2022-23. Also the amount of Financial Assistance for Education to the wards of Beedi/Cine/IOMC/LSDM/Mica Mines workers` is going to be increased

from 2022-23. Therefore, the entire fund under BE 2022-23 will be utilized.”

80. The Ministry supplemented as under:

“Meeting of SFC for continuation of Labour Welfare Scheme has already been held. It will facilitate to process the pending applications under RIHS (2nd and 3rd installments) and scholarship and facilitate to utilize the entire fund allocated at RE 2021-22 under Labour Welfare Scheme.

**(v) Bima Yojna for Unorganised Workers**

81. In order to provide social security benefits to the workers of unorganised sector, Government enacted the Unorganised Workers Social Security Act, 2008. In 2017, the Government has converged Aam Admi Bima Yojana with Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana (PMJJBY) and Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana (PMSBY). Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana (PMJJBY) and Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana (PMSBY) provide insurance cover to a set of unorganised workers. The benefits under the schemes are Rs.2 lakh on death due to any reason and permanent disability, Rs. 4 lakh on death due to accident and Rs.1 lakh on partial disability. The annual premium for both the schemes is Rs 342/- (Rs 330 for PMJJBY+ Rs. 12 for PMSBY). PMJJBY and PMSBY is available for the age group of 18-50 years and 18-70 years respectively. As on 31.10.2021, the cumulative registrations under PMJJBY and PMSBY are 11.67 crore and 26.85 crore respectively. As per the decision of the Government of India taken in Sept, 2019, the beneficiaries of the converged PMJJBY and PMSBY are to be transitioned from subsidy regime to full premium payment with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April, 2020. These schemes are being implemented directly through banks and administered by Department of Financial Services, Ministry of Finance

82. The BE and RE in respect of ‘Bima Yojana for Unorganized Workers’ for FY 2021-22 is Rs. 10 lakh, however the expenditure as on 28.01.2022 was ‘NIL’. BE for FY 2022-23 for this Scheme is also Rs.10 lakh. Asked to furnish the reasons for non-utilisation of funds under this scheme in the fiscal year 2021-22, the Ministry stated as under:-

“The Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana (PMJJBY) and Pradhan Mantri Surksha Bima Yojana (PMSBY) have been transferred to Department of Financial Service, Ministry of Finance with effect from 01.04.2020. The amount Rs. 10 lakh has been kept in the schemes as token money and may be utilized for past liabilities. At later stage, the funds may be surrendered, if unutilised.”

**(vi) Social Security for Plantation Workers in Assam**

83. Social Security for Plantation workers in Assam is operated through the State Government of Assam. The following two Schemes are dealt by Assam Tea EPFO:-

- (i) Deposit Linked Insurance Scheme
- (ii) Family Pension cum Life Assurance Scheme

## Deposit Linked Insurance Scheme

The Deposit Linked Insurance Scheme was introduced in the year 1984. Deposit Linked Insurance Scheme provides Assurance benefit (payment linked to the average balance in the Provident Fund Account of an employee, payable to a person belonging to his family or otherwise entitled to it in the event of death of the employee, while being a member of the Fund) to all the employees in the Tea Plantation Assam. Central Government pays contribution towards Deposit Linked insurance (DLI) Scheme under DLI Fund @ 0.25% (Contribution) and 0.05% (Administrative Charges) of the wages of the PF members. The Government of India had released a sum of Rs. 4.24 crore for the year 2020- 2021 under the Deposit Linked Insurance Scheme for the Plantation workers in Assam. Further, a sum of Rs. 6.185 crore has been released during the year 2021-2022 (upto 31.12.2021) under the said scheme.

## Family Pension cum Life Assurance Scheme

The Family Pension Scheme came into force with effect from 01-04-1972. Family Pension cum Life Assurance Scheme covers the cases of Pension/Family Pension to all the members of the Assam Tea Plantations Provident Fund Scheme on retirement, premature cessation and family pension to their families on death while in service. The Central Government pays contribution towards Family Pension Scheme under Assam Tea Plantation Provident Fund and Pension Fund @ 1.16% of the wages of the PF members. The Central Government is also paying Administrative Cost towards the Scheme fully.

During the Calendar year, 2021, ATEPFO has settled 200131 no. of claims amounting to Rs. 30.42 crores. The Government of India had released a sum of Rs. 23.14 crore for the year 2020- 21 under the Family Pension cum Life Assurance Scheme for the Plantation workers in Assam. Further, a sum of Rs. 23.815 crore has been released during the year 2021-2022 (upto 31.12.2021) under the said scheme.

84. The financial allocation and expenditure for the last three fiscals and BE provisions 2022-23 for the Scheme were stated to be as under:-

(Rs. in crore)					
SL. No.	Year	BE	RE	AE	Short Excess expenditure fall/
1.	2019-20	19.90	19.90	19.04	0.86 (-)
2.	2020-21	40	40	27.38	12.62(-)
3.	2021-22	60	50	30 (upto Dec.21)	20.0 (-)
4.	2022-23	60	--	--	--

85. On being asked about the reasons for the shortfalls in utilisation of funds during 2020-21 and 2021-22, the Ministry responded as under:-

“It is stated that as per Survey Report furnished by Assam Tea EPFO, the percentage of SC and ST beneficiaries are 1.84% and 1.05% respectively.

Therefore, less release of funds to the tune of Rs. 12.62 crore during the year 2020-21 was mainly due to less demand from Assam Tea EPFO under SC and ST components. Further, out of the total allocation of Rs.50 crore in 2021-22, Rs. 30 crore has been released so far, which comes to about 60%. The balance amount of Rs. 20 crore is being released. Therefore, the amount of Rs.50 crore will be fully utilized during 2021-22.”

86. Asked about the steps proposed to ensure the optimal utilization of Rs. 60 crore, BE in 2022-23, the Ministry submitted as under:-

“The details of funds released to Assam Tea EPFO for the plantation workers in Assam during the last three financial years are as under:

(Rs. in crore)				
Sl. No.	Year	BE	RE	AE
1.	2018-19	35.00	22.00	22.00
2.	2019-20	19.90	19.90	19.05
3.	2020-21	40.00	40.00	27.38

There was less release of funds in the year 2018-19 due to reduction in budget at RE stage. In the year 2020-21, less release of funds to the tune of Rs. 12.62 crore was mainly due to less demand from Assam Tea EPFO under SC and ST components. During the year 2021-22, Rs.30 crore has already been released and a further sum of Rs.20 crore is being released. Thus, an amount of Rs.50 crore will be released. It may be seen that there is an increase trend in utilisation of funds over the last few years. On the same analogy, it is expected that the earmarked amount of Rs.60 crore will be utilized during the year 2022-23.”

87. Asked to state the specific measures taken/proposed to register plantation workers under the ‘Social Security for Plantation Workers in Assam’ Scheme so as to extend them the benefits under the scheme, the Ministry apprised as under:-

“Assam Tea Employees Provident Fund Organisation (ATEPFO) is a social security organisation that provides social security benefits to the Tea Garden workers of Assam. The schemes implemented by ATEPFO for which financial assistance is provided by the Central Government include (a) Family Pension-cum-Life Insurance Scheme; and (ii) Deposit Linked Insurance Scheme.

The Central Government provides the following assistance to Assam Tea EPFO:

FPS		DLI	
Contribution	Cost of administration of Scheme	Contribution	Cost of administration of Scheme
1.16% of wages	Entire cost is borne by Central Government	0.25% of wages. (50% of the rate of contribution by the employer) [Section 3 (4)(b)]\$	0.05% of the wages. (50% of the rate of contribution by the employer) [Section 3 (4)(d)]\$

\$ The Assam Tea Plantations Provident Fund, Pension Fund and DLI Fund Scheme Act, 1955

Registration of Plantation workers is an ongoing process. The matter of registration of coverage of workers is pursued regularly by ATEPFO and inspections are carried out and several awareness programs are done on regular basis to cover the eligible plantation workers under the Scheme.

ATEPFO has now proposed to carry out inspections vigorously on the basis of the database provided by the Tea Board of India in order to register workers under the Scheme.”

88. The Committee then desired to know the steps taken to offer coverage to plantation workers under the ambit of ESIC. In reply, the Ministry apprised as under:-

“The Plantations Labour (PL) Act, 1951 regulates the conditions of work in plantations and provide for the welfare of plantation labour. The Act requires the employers to provide the workers with housing, medical facilities, sickness and maternity benefits and other forms of social security measures.

At present the Employees State Insurance (ESI) Act, 1948 is applicable to all factories (excluding seasonal factories) employing ten or more persons, located in ESI notified areas. Employees earning wages upto Rs.21000/- per month in such ESI covered factories/establishments are coverable under the ESI Act. Plantation or any manufacturing process which is incidental to or connected with the manufacture of Plantation is included as Seasonal Factory as per the provisions under Section 2 (19A) of the ESI Act and hence Plantation Workers are excluded from coverage under ESI Act.

As per the provision of the Sec 2(29) of SS code 2020 Plantation workers are covered under the definition of the establishment. Once the code is implemented the plantation workers will be covered by ESI Corporation.”

89. As regards measures taken to redress the grievances of plantation workers especially of Hills and Forests with regard to difficulties being faced by them in linking their Aadhaar with PF accounts, the Ministry explained as under:

“To safeguard the interests of workers, Section 142 of the Code on Social Security, 2020 has been notified with effect from 03.05.2021. This makes the Aadhaar mandatory for establishing the identity of the employees and other beneficiaries. Aadhaar seeding was, therefore, made mandatory from 01.06.2021 for all EPF accounts. However, on the persistent demand of stakeholders due to mismatch in EPF data and Aadhaar data of members, the mandatory filing of PF returns with Aadhaar-verified universal account numbers (UAN) was extended till September 1, 2021 so as to enable the workers to rectify any mis-match.

Further, considering the concentration of establishments in remote localities & in areas affected by insurgency, frequent change in work sites of the workers and other attendant constraints in the Classes of establishments - Beedi making, Building and Construction and Plantation industries (Tea, Coffee,



Cardamom, Pepper, Jute, Rubber, Cinchona, Cashewnuts, etc.) and for the 7 NE States due to low Aadhaar penetration, the time for mandatory seeding of Aadhaar in UAN for filing ECR was extended till 31.12.2021.

This apart, EPFO has been directed to facilitate and coordinate with UIDAI to organize camps for Aadhaar enrollment and corrections in Aadhaardata of EPF members to facilitate Aadhaar seeding in UANs and monitor the progress on weekly basis.”

90. The Committee desired to be apprised of the progress made on the request made by the Ministry to the State Governments of West Bengal and Assam to arrange to conduct a survey on the number of tea plantation and garden workers in their respective States and to furnish a detailed ATR on the survey data. In response, the Ministry apprised as under:-

“The Chief Secretaries of the State Governments of Assam and West Bengal have been requested vide Secretary(L&E)’s D.O. letter dated 16.07.2021 and 31.12.2021 to furnish a detailed Action Taken Report covering all the aspects as recommended by the Hon’ble Committee. The Ministry is constantly pursuing with these two State Governments. Once the report is made available by the concerned State Governments, the outcome will be apprised to the Hon’ble Committee, as desired.”

## **V. OTHER PROGRAMMES/PROJECTS/STATUTORY BODIES**

### **(i) Rehabilitation of Bonded Labour**

91. The Government of India has implemented a Central Sector Scheme for Rehabilitation of Bonded Labour – 2016 for providing rehabilitation assistance to the released bonded labour. As per the Scheme, financial assistance is provided to following categories of Bonded Labour:

- (i) Rs.one lakh for rescued adult male bonded labourer.
- (ii) Rs.2 lakh for special category beneficiaries such as children including orphans or those rescued from organized & forced begging rings or other forms of forced child labour, and women.
- (iii) Rs.3 lakh in cases of bonded or forced labour involving extreme cases of deprivation or marginalization such as trans-genders, or women or children rescued from ostensible sexual exploitation such as brothels, massage parlours, placement agencies etc., or trafficking, or in cases of differently abled persons, or in situations where the District Magistrate deems fit.

92. In addition to the financial assistance, the beneficiaries are also provided the following benefits by the State Governments:-

1. Allotment of House/site & agricultural land.

2. Land development.
3. Provision of low cost dwelling units.
4. Animal husbandry, diary, poultry, piggery etc.
5. Wage employment, enforcement of minimum wages etc.
6. Collection and processing of minor forest products.
7. Supply of essential commodities under targeted public distribution system.
8. Education for children.
9. Any other welfare Scheme of Central/State Government.

93. Achievement under the Scheme on Rehabilitation of Bonded Labour upto December, 2021 has been cited as Rs. 0.99 crore against the target of Rs.10 crore. Further the proposed allocation for the year 2022-23 is Rs.10 crore. Asked to state the plan of action to utilize the earmarked funds in the absence of any targets fixed by the State Governments, the Ministry stated as under:-

“An amount of Rs. 2.96 crore has already been spent under Central Sector Scheme for Rehabilitation of Bonded Labour 2016 till date in the financial year 2021-2022. Proposals amounting Rs. 2.34 crore are under examination/submission for release of fund to State/UT Governments. The details are as under:

Sl. No.	State/UT/object	Amount (in lakh)
1.	Bihar	27.00
2.	Tamil Nadu	29.60
3.	Madhya Pradesh	41.08
4.	Rajasthan	10.00
5.	Odisha	26.80
6.	Hiring of IT Experts to develop & run the Bonded Labour Portal	19.83
7.	Uttar Pradesh	80.00
	<b>Total</b>	<b>234.31</b>

94. The Ministry further submitted that the term of Central Sector Scheme for rehabilitation of bonded labour - 2016 had ended on 31.03.2021. The scheme was extended up to 30.09.2021 by Ministry of Finance for the purpose of release of fund. With the approval of the competent authority the scheme has been extended vide O.M dated 07.02.2022 for a further period of five years from the financial year 2021-22 to 2025-26. After extension of the scheme the proposal for release of fund is under process and the amount of Rs.234.31 lakhs would be released shortly. Any further demand of fund by States/UTs would also be released before 31.03.2022. In the year 2021-22, 1330 bonded labourers have been released and rehabilitated.

95. In response to another pointed query, the Ministry deposed as under:-

“For the current financial year i.e. 2021-22, budget has been earmarked as per following component wise:

<b>Object Head</b>	<b>BE 2021-22</b>	<b>RE 2021-22</b>
Advertising and Publicity	0.01	0.01
Professional Services	0.50	0.50
Grant in –aid General	5.97	5.97
NER	1.00	1.00
SCSP	1.66	1.66
TSP	0.86	0.86
<b>Total</b>	<b>10.00</b>	<b>10.00</b>

The fund is allocated for SC, ST, General Category and NER components of bonded labour and as such fund for SC, ST and NER components has to be utilized exclusively within the component. The utilisation of the fund for the next financial year can not be anticipated in advance for the Bonded Labour Scheme as this is a demand driven scheme and fund is provided/reimbursed to the State/UT Governments on receipt of proposals from States/UTs.”

96. The Committee then asked about the robust mechanism put in place to identify the prevalence of bonded labour so as to effectively utilize the allocated funds for their rehabilitation. In reply, the Ministry submitted as under:-

“The State/UT Govts are being advised regularly to identify the districts where survey and other ancillary activities for welfare of bonded labourers could be undertaken. As per extended Scheme, immediate financial assistance has been enhanced from Rs. 20,000/- to upto Rs. 30,000/- and amount of assistance for each evaluatory study (maximum 5 evaluatory studies per year) has also enhanced from Rs. 1.00 lakh to Rs. 1.50 lakh for each evaluatory study conducted for eradication of bonded labourer. As a pro-active approach, State/UT Govts is advised/approached regularly to conduct more and more survey, awareness generation and evaluatory studies to identify and release the bonded labourers.”

97. On being asked about the efforts made by the Ministry for real time transmission of data on cases of Rehabilitation of Bonded Labour, the Ministry stated as under:-

“Ministry of Labour & Employment is committed to have a National Portal for Bonded Labour for the management of the scheme and other connected matters. For this purpose one Technology Consultant already been engaged for development of National Portal for Bonded Labour who is responsible to perform as-is analysis of the existing system, assist in preparation of required documents, monitoring of implementation of the portal and to coordinate with all stakeholders of the scheme to develop National Portal for Bonded Labour. A proposal to hire 3 developers to facilitate the Technology consultant for ancillary works is under submission for approval of the Finance Division.”

98. Asked to furnish District Wise Data of corpus funds utilisation by different States for the year 2021-22, the Ministry submitted the following data:-

Sl. No.	State	Fund utilized (in Lakhs)	Name of the District
1.	Chhattisgarh	50.00	No. of Total Districts : 7 Jajgir, Bilaspur, Bustar, Mungeli, Gariabandh, Baloda Bazar, Dhamtari.
2.	Tamil Nadu	175.13	No. of Total Districts: 25 Kancheepuram, Sivagangai, Vellore, Thiruvannamalai, Erode, Thanjavur, Theni, Namakkal, Dharmapuri, Thiruvallur, salem, Ramanathpuram, Coimbatore, Krishnagiri, Cuddalore, Madurai, Dindugul, Thiruvarur, Trichy, Tiruppur, Villupuram, Pudukkottai, Chennai, Karur & Perambalur
3	Bihar	30.80	No. of Total Districts: 5 Nawada, Khagaria, Purnia, Supaul & Gaya.
4	Rajasthan	10.00	No. of Total District: 1 Shriganganagar

For Bonded Labour Scheme fund is released to the State Government. No details regarding District-wise utilisation of corpus fund is maintained centrally. “

99. With regard to maintenance of District-wise data by Centre, the Secretary, MoLE, while tendering oral evidence deposited as under:

“.....This is a very important issue which we need to focus. Our understanding about this programme was that since bonded labourers are identified by the State governments, they have the machinery to identify them. When they report to us, then, we release the money for that bonded labour programme. There is a corpus which is available which gets replenished as and when the demand comes. You were very correct when you said that it is the Central Government scheme, there has to be a Central data base; and it has to be a district level data base which we should be maintaining. We have started working in that direction. What we have done is, we would be starting a portal. In the last meeting on the child labour, you had asked us to give district wise details. In fact, we have been asking the districts and States but the issue is that normally these are not responded to. The best way of doing it is, we have a Central portal, in the child labour that is PENCIL portal. So, we will make PENCIL portal such that all the information automatically comes from the State Government on real time basis. Similarly, for bonded labour also we are doing the same that there should be a portal on which this district level information should be coming to us. That we will definitely be taking up.”

100. In the post evidence information, the Ministry supplemented as follows:-

“For this purpose Ministry of labour & Employment is committed to have a National Portal for Bonded Labour for the management of the scheme and other connected matters. One Technology Consultant already been engaged for development of National Portal for Bonded Labour who is responsible to perform as-is analysis of the existing system, assist in preparation of required documents,

monitoring of implementation of the portal and to coordinate with all stakeholders of the scheme to develop National Portal for Bonded Labour.”

101. When asked about the progress on setting up of special fast track Courts for speedier trial and award of penalty to violators, the Ministry responded as follows:-

“The Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1976 provides for a summary trial with imprisonment for a term which may extend to 3 years and also with fine upto Rs. 2000/-. For speedy conviction, there is a provision under Section 21 of the Act, according to which the State Government may confer, on an Executive Magistrate, the powers of a Judicial Magistrate of the first class or of the second class for the trial of offences under this Act; and on such conferment of powers, the Executive Magistrate on whom the powers are so conferred, shall be deemed, for the purposes of the Code of criminal Procedure, 1973 (2 of 1974), to be a Judicial Magistrate of the first class, or of the second class, as the case may be. Setting up of Fast Track Court is under the purview of the State Government.”

102. The Ministry supplemented as under:-

“Standard operating procedure for identification and rescue of bonded labourers and prosecution of offenders has been framed and issued to all the State Governments for strengthening the prosecution machinery. Regular sensitization programmes and coordination with the field level functionaries such as District Magistrate/Superintendent of Police/Labour Department officials at the district and State level are held under the aegis of National Human Rights Commission and State Human Rights Commissions for improving the conviction rate in such cases.”

103. The Committee then desired to know whether any study has been conducted to increase the threshold of corpus fund at the disposal of District Magistrates especially in States with higher reported cases of bonded labour. In response, the Ministry submitted as under:-

“No such study has been conducted. The amount of corpus fund at the district level in each State/UT is Rs. 10 lakhs in every District which is utilized for extending immediate financial assistance to the release bonded labourers. The corpus fund of Rs.10 lakh is renewable. The amount of fund utilized by the State/UT Governments for providing financial assistance to the released bonded labour is simultaneously reimbursed by the Central Government immediately as per demand of the State Government and, therefore, there appears to be no need to increase the threshold of the corpus fund at the disposal of the District Magistrates.”

104. On being asked about the number of States which have recorded the maximum incidence of bonded labour and the efforts made by the Ministry to act in unison with the State Governments concerned to eradicate the social evil, the Ministry *inter-alia* stated as under:-

“Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Tamilnadu and Uttar Pradesh have recorded the maximum incidence of bonded labour. During the year 2021-22, Govt. of Tamil Nadu has reported maximum number of bonded labourers. A total of 1014 bonded labourers have been identified and released by the State Govt. All rescued bonded labourers have been provided with immediate financial assistance @ Rs. 20,000/-. Out of 1014, for 876 rescued bonded labourers from 25 Districts of the State, Rs. 1.75 crore has already been reimbursed towards expenditure incurred by the State Govt. as immediate financial assistance under the Central Sector Scheme for Rehabilitation of Bonded Labourers 2016. For remaining 138 bonded labourers rescued from 12 Districts of the State, a proposal for Rs. 29.60 lakh is under process for releasing the amount.”

105. Post this year’s Budget announcement, the scheme for rehabilitation of bonded labourers was revamped allowing for certain proportion of the fund to be put into annuity. On being enquired about the action taken by the Ministry in this regard, the Ministry stated as under:-

“In order to assist the State Governments in the task of rehabilitation of identified and released bonded labour, a Central Sector Scheme for Rehabilitation of Bonded Labourer-2016 is in operation since 17.05.2016. The scheme has been revamped recently on 07.02.2022 and extended for a further period of five years for financial year 2021-22 to 2025-26. The provision of annuity was already there in the Central Sector Scheme for Rehabilitation of Bonded Labourer – 2016 and the same provision of annuity has been retained in the Central Sector Scheme for Rehabilitation of Bonded Labourer – 2021. Fund for the rehabilitation of bonded labourer is released by the Central government to the State Government which is further released by the State Government to the concerned District Magistrate. Amount of fund is deposited in the annuity scheme by the District Administration in the name of concerned rehabilitated bonded labourer.”

106. On being asked to state specifically the jurisdiction of the States in fund utilisation of corpus in the functioning of a Central Sector Scheme, the Ministry stated as under:-

“As per provision of the Central Sector Scheme for Rehabilitation of Bonded Labourer-2021 a Bonded Labour Rehabilitation Fund shall be created at the District level by each State with a permanent corpus of at least Rs. Ten lakhs at the disposal of the District Magistrate which would be renewable. This fund will be utilised for extending immediate financial assistance to the released bonded labourers. The entire penalties recovered from the perpetrators of the bonded labour upon conviction, may be deposited in the corpus. No fund is provided by the Central Government for creation of corpus fund. Fund utilization of corpus fund is entirely in the jurisdiction of the State Government.”

(ii) **National Database of Unorganised Workers (NDUW) Project/Shramik Setu Portal**

107. Ministry of Labour and Employment has launched the e-shram portal on 26.08.2021 for creating a National Database of Unorganized Workers (NDUW), seeded with Aadhaar. It will have details of name, occupation, address, educational

qualification, skill types and family details etc. for optimum realization of their employability and extend the benefits of the social security schemes to them. The portal also provides portability of the benefits to the migrant and construction workers. It will also provide a comprehensive data base to Government for tackling any National crisis like COVID – 19 in future. It is the first-ever national database of unorganised workers including migrant workers, construction workers, gig and platform workers, etc. All eligible registered unorganised workers are entitled to get an accidental insurance benefit of Rs. 2.0 lakh in case of death and Rs. 1.0 lakh in case of permanent disability for a one year free of cost.

108. The portal has been made available to the States/ UTs for registration of unorganised workers including construction workers, migrant workers, domestic workers, agricultural workers, street vendors and similar other sub – groups of unorganised workers. Registration on e-SHRAM portal is completely free. As on 16.02.2022, more than 25 crore unorganised workers have been registered on the portal.

109. On being asked on the concrete progress made in the establishment of NDUW, the Ministry submitted as under:-

“The e-Shram portal as National Database of the Unorganised Workers was launched on 26.08.2021. As on 16.02.2022 more than 25 crore unorganised workers have been registered on the portal out of an estimated figure of 38 crore unorganised workers in the country.”

110. The Committee then queried whether any time limit has been prescribed for completion of registration exercise of the remaining workers, the Ministry stated as under:-

“The estimated size of the unorganised workforce in the country is 38 crore. After the launch of e-Shram portal on 26.08.2021, as on 16.02.2022 more than 25 crore unorganised workers have already been registered on the portal. From time to time, Ministry of Labour & Employment have been issuing necessary directions to State/UT Governments to mobilise the unorganised workers and complete the registration work at the earliest. To expedite the registration of remaining unorganised workers, State Sewa Kendras of State/UT Governments are also on-boarded along with already more than 4 lakh Common Service Centres. Further, Portal capacity has been revamped up to 20 lakh registrations per day to complete the registration process at the earliest.”

111. While tendering oral evidence, the Secretary, MoLE, deposed as under:

"... What we have estimated is that 38 crore workers will be in the unorganised sector. Out of 38 crore workers, 25 crore workers are already registered. Now, this is an on-going kind of a programme because anybody who becomes more than sixteen years old, he or she can register on this portal. So, new generation will also be coming in. Every year, there will be new addition. So, we cannot put an end point or a sunset clause to this registration. This registration will continue. We are expecting that soon all the unorganised sector workers should get

covered... We have started the migrant survey which is being done by the Labour Bureau. We are expecting, by August, they should be able to come out with the report

112. Further, Additional Secretary, MoLE, supplemented as under:-

“More than 400 occupations are being incorporated and registered under this portal. Once this portal is ready, then we will have the interoperability and connection of database of benefits of other Ministries also. It will help in the long run...

...Once Aadhaar seeding is completed, then this data can be used. We can go forward to give benefits to labours. The problem faced by migrant labours is that they are registered at their home, they do not get the benefit of the scheme at the workplace, or if they go back to their homes and if they are registered at the workplace, they do not get the benefit. That problem will be, to a great extent, sorted out by this”.

113. Under the Scheme it has been observed that the Ministry were able to utilize 91% of the budget allocation for the year 2020-21. However, during the year 2021-22, as on 31.12.2021 the Actual Expenditure has been a meager 12.22 percent of the RE. On being asked to explain such under performance, the Ministry submitted as under:-

“For the year 2021-22, more than 78 crore rupees expenditure has been incurred. Remaining expenditure is planned and will be met by the end of financial year.”

114. On being asked to highlight the plan of action for optimum achievement of both financial and physical targets during 2022-23, the Ministry responded as under:-

“Considering the present scenario, it is expected that estimated 38 crore unorganised workers will be registered by the end of March 2023 with the help of more than 4 lakh CSCs centre, State Sewa Kendras of State Government . In due time the matter of accidental coverage under PMSBY may be finalised and MoLE will pay accidental premium to DFS.”

115. During the budget speech 2022, it was announced that various portals like e-Shram (National database of Unorganised workers), National Career Service (employment related services) and Atmanirbhar Skilled Employee Employer Mapping (ASEEM) would be interlinked, with an aim to formalise the economy. On being asked about the action plan of the Ministry for seamless interlinking of these portals, the Ministry replied as under:-

“Ministry of Labour & Employment have already initiated discussions on finalizing the business scope of interlinking the portals with stakeholders of UDYAM, ASEEM and e-Shram. On basis of the business scope finalized, the functional flow of citizens or portal end-users will be finalized. This will be followed by analysis and identification of data fields that need to be shared between these systems, along with the consent mechanism, data security and overall data



governance aspects, so that the interlinkages can be leveraged for maximizing good governance. The next step would be to undertake technical API based integration between the portals to meet the business scope, functional requirements and adherence to data governance standards, which will then be followed by a pilot, testing and minor enhancement stage. Subsequent to successful pilot, the interlinkage will go live.

Government envisages e-Shram, Udyam, Aseem& NCS portal to work in an interoperable manner i.e., the ability to exchange information and make use of information without affecting the functionality of other systems. e-Shram also envisages interoperability, standardization and convergence amongst schemes. The process of interlinking of these portals is underway. Interlinking of these portals will facilitate unorganised workers employment opportunities, identification of matching skill set workers from the target group to provide career opportunities for their livelihood, Skilling, Re-Skilling, benefit of Credit Guarantee Schemes, etc.”

### **(iii) Employees’ Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO)**

116. The Employees’ Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) came into existence under the provisions of The Employees’ Provident Funds and Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1952 [Act 19 of 1952]—an Act to provide for the institution of provident funds, pension fund and deposit-linked insurance fund for employees in factories and other establishments. M/o Labour & Employment is only providing 1.16% Government Share towards Employees’ Pension Scheme’1995. The Employees’ Pension Scheme, 1995 (EPS, 1995) is a Scheme framed under EPF & MP Act, 1952 came into effect from 16<sup>th</sup> November, 1995. On introduction of EPS, 1995, the erstwhile Employees’ Family Pension Scheme, 1971 ceased to operate and all the assets and liabilities of the old scheme were transferred and merged with the Employees’ Pension Fund.

Under the Employees’ Pension Scheme (EPS), 1995, the Government contributes @ 1.16 per cent of wages, up to an amount of Rs.15,000 per month through budgetary support. Further, the Government, for the first time, provided a minimum pension of Rs. 1000 per month to the pensioners under EPS, 1995 from 01.09.2014 by providing additional budgetary support.

Benefits under the proposed of EPS-95, to the members and their families:- Member Pension upon retirement/superannuation, Member Pension upon disablement while in service, Withdrawal Benefit upon leaving service after putting in less than 10 year but more than six months of service, Spouse Pension upon death of member, Spouse Pension upon death of member as pensioner, Children Pension along with spouse pension (up to age 25) for two children at a time, orphan Pension upon death or remarriage of spouse (up to age 25), Disabled Child Pension to children/orphan (life-long), Nominee Pension to the Nominee when no family exists, Dependent Parent Pension when no family and nominee exist.

Multiple Banking System :- Instead of only one bank .i.e. SBI; the establishments have the option of making direct payments through 13 banks now. They are SBI,

Canara Bank, Central Bank of India, Indian Bank, PNB, UBI, Bank of Baroda, ICICI Bank, HDFC Bank, Axis Bank, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Indian Overseas Bank, IDBI Bank.

117. When enquired about the reasons for 'NIL' allocation under Pradhan Mantri Rojgar Protsahan Yojana (PMRPY) in BE 2022-23, implying that the scheme has been discontinued, the Ministry replied as under:

“Under the Pradhan Mantri Rojgar Protsahan Yojana (PMRPY), the benefits in respect of 'new employees' was being provided for the first 3 years of employment. The terminal date of registration for employers to register their new employees was 31.03.2019. No funds would be required for FY 2022-23 under the PMRPY Scheme as the scheme is expected to close on 31.03.2022 as the last of the registered beneficiaries in March, 2019 would be completing three years from their date of joining.”

118. Asked to specify the number of new beneficiaries added during 2021-22 under the Scheme, the Ministry submitted as follows:-

“No new beneficiaries were added during 2021-22 as the terminal date for registration of beneficiary through establishment was 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2019.”

119. As regards the number of new employment generated since the introduction of the Scheme, the Ministry stated as under:-

“Total number of beneficiary employees i.e. “New Employees” under the PMRPY Scheme, till date are 1,21,69,960.”

120. On being asked about the amount received by the EPFO towards 12% *vis-à-vis* the amount reimbursed to the employers on this count, the Ministry submitted as under:-

“During the F. Y. 2021-22 under PMRPY an amount of Rs. 250.00 Crore released to EPFO for PMRPY scheme. However, The funds received and disbursed under the PMRPY Scheme from inception till date are as under:-

<b>Financial Year</b>	<b>Total funds received (Rs. in Cr)</b>	<b>Total Subsidy Disbursed (Rs. in Cr)</b>
2016-17	167.69	2.58
2017-18	470.25	491.96
2018-19	3,493.88	3870.87
2019-20	3,400.00	3393.60
2020-21	1,255.15	1197.84

2021-22 (till Jan-22)	250.00	290.64
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\*It is also informed that Rs. 262.25 Crore disbursed to ineligible beneficiaries has been recovered from employers and used in FY 2019-20.”

121. On being enquired about the introduction of Multiple Bank System facility which enables establishments to have the option of making direct payments through 13 banks on new enrollments, the Ministry responded as under:-

“Presently, collection of contributions is being received from the establishments through 13 Banks directly. Establishments having their bank accounts with other than these 13 banks have the option to deposit the EPF contributions through SBI aggregator. In this regard, it is to state that option for direct payments through 13 Banks has facilitated Employers especially new employers in promptly depositing EPF contributions with instant deposit resulting in:

- Faster reconciliation for payments received directly from 13 banks.
- EPF accounts of subscribers are credited with the received contributions after the reconciliations are done faster in case of deposit through these 13 banks.”

122. Regarding the progress made on the proposal to appoint a custodian auditor to track and evaluate fund managers, the Ministry *inter-alia* apprised as under:-

“EPFO has also appointed following agencies to evaluate and audit investments made by EPFO:

- a. Consultant: carries out regular performance evaluation and provides research reports.
- b. External Concurrent Auditor (ECA): ECA carries out regular monitoring and conduct audit of the investment transactions as well as conducts overall monitoring of investments.
- c. Custodian: Acts as the custodian of EPFO's investments and also monitors the timely receipt of interest and maturities of investments.

Regular monitoring and performance evaluation of Portfolio Managers is carried out with the assistance of the Consultant and the ECA. The reports of the performance evaluation are also submitted to the Finance, Investment & Audit Committee (FIAC) as well as the Central Board of Trustees, EPF.”

123. There was a proposal to enhance the minimum pension of Rs. 1,000 per month to Rs. 2,000/3,000 per month under EPS, 1995. However, additional allocations on this count have not been proposed in BE 2022-23. When enquired about the present status in this regard, the Ministry replied as under:-

“The Employees’ Pension Scheme (EPS), 1995 is a ‘Defined Contribution-Defined Benefit’ Social Security Scheme. There is a pooled account for providing pension under EPS consisting of (i) contribution by the employer @ 8.33 per cent of wages; and (ii) contribution from Central Government through budgetary support @ 1.16 per cent of wages, up to an amount of Rs.15,000/- per month. Amount of member’s pension under the Scheme is determined taking into account the pensionable period of service and pensionable salary as per following formula:

Pensionable Service X Pensionable Salary

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It is evident that the amount of pension is based on a predefined formula. However, the Government, for the first time, provided a minimum pension of Rs. 1000 per month to the pensioners under EPS, 1995 from 01.09.2014 by providing additional budgetary support wherever the pension was falling short as per above determined formula.

Representations have been received from individual pensioners as well as pensioners associations to increase the minimum pension under the Employees’ Pension Scheme (EPS), 1995. Therefore, Ministry constituted a High-Empowered Monitoring Committee for complete evaluation and review of the Employees’ Pension Scheme, 1995 on 04.01.2018. The Committee had submitted its report on 21.12.2018 to the Government. The Committee had, inter-alia, recommended that minimum monthly member pension payable to the member /widow/ widower pensioners may be raised to at least Rs.2000 per month, provided the Central Government budgetary support is provided for the same on yearly basis. Further, this may be considered along with modification of the scheme prospectively to disallow pre-mature withdrawal benefit and fix a minimum monthly contribution.

Presently, Ministry of Finance has not agreed to any such enhancement in minimum pension beyond Rs. 1000/- per month.”

124. While tendering oral evidence, the Secretary, MoLE, deposed on the matter as under

“...As everybody is well aware this scheme is run by EPFO. Only in 2014, the Government decided that there will be Rs.1,000 minimum pension and the difference between what EPFO provides, and the Rs.1,000 benchmark would be provided by the government, which the government has been doing. In this budget, government is providing for that. The only issue that to raise this minimum pension limit from Rs.1,000 to Rs.3,000 or more. This issue has been discussed in detail by several committees. Every time this issue came up that EPFO has actuarial assessment for all its pension schemes. Unless and until the actuarial deficit is there we cannot get into revising this pension. So, the only issue is that it has to come from somewhere else. How this is going to happen? This is a very difficult question but we are seized with this issue. In fact, the hon. Minister has created four committees, one of the committees is on pension. We are

looking into this issue how the members of the pension scheme can contribute more."

125. On being asked about the action plan to redress grievances pertaining to PF, e-nomination and online transfer claims of beneficiaries, the Ministry submitted as under:-

"EPFO, in tune with its objectives, lays strong importance to customer service and the redressal of grievances of all stakeholders. The Organization has a robust mechanism to handle the grievances of its stakeholders i.e. employers, employees and pensioners through a network of its offices spread throughout the country.

The claim settlement is a dynamic process with continuous receipt and settlement of the claims. The steps being taken for providing faster settlement of all types of PF claims are as under:

- I. Allocation of Universal Account Numbers (UAN) to members of PF for consolidation of previous PF accounts and portability in case of change of employment.
- II. Online Transfer Claim Portal (OTCP) has been introduced to facilitate seamless transfer of claims.
- III. The facility for submission of claim forms through online mode has been introduced for those subscribers who have seeded their KYCs against the UAN.
- IV. The services of EPFO for employees have also been integrated and offered through the Unified Mobile Application for New-age Governance (UMANG) Application, which enables a member to access his passbook, track the status of his claim, submit online claim form, etc.
- V. A single-page Composite Claim Form has been introduced by replacing the erstwhile multiple Claim Forms for withdrawals.
- VI. A member is no longer required to submit documents e.g. medical certificate and may only self-certify to avail withdrawals.
- VII. The entire payment to subscribers is done electronically through National Electronic Funds Transfer (NEFT) system.

It is also added that as a part of celebration of Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav (AKAM) to commemorate the 75 years of India's Independence, EPFO has started a drive to encourage members to file e-nomination. It will give EPFO's members a new level of independence for availing EPFO services. To spread the awareness among the stakeholders, creative's, youtube videos and GIF are being regularly posted on the social media by EPFO."

**(iv) Employees State Insurance Corporation (ESIC)**

126. Employee's State Insurance Corporation is a statutory body under the Administrative control of Ministry of Labour & Employment, Government of India. The Chairman of the Corporation is appointed by the Central Government and the members are appointed by Central and State Government, representing the Central/State

Governments respectively and also representatives of employers and employees recognized for the purpose by Central Government. The Employees' State Insurance Corporation does not receive any grant-in-aid/budgetary allocation from Government of India. The Employees' State Insurance Act, 1948 applies to all non-seasonal factories employing 10 or more persons. The provision of the Act are being extended area-wise by stages. The Act contains an enabling provision under which the "Appropriate Government" is empowered to extend the provisions of the Act to other classes of establishments – industrials, commercial, agricultural or other-wise. Under these provisions, several State Governments have extended the provisions of the Act to shops, hotels, restaurants, cinemas including preview theatres, road motor transport undertakings, newspaper establishments, educational and medical institutions employing 10/20 or more employees. Twenty four State Governments have reduced the threshold of coverage of shops and other establishments to 10 or more persons. Employees of factories and establishments covered under Act drawing monthly wages upto Rs.15,000/- (Rs.21000/- w.e.f. 01.01.2017) p.m. and Rs.25,000/-p.m for physically challenged employees are covered under the Scheme. To encourage employers to engage physically challenged persons, Govt. of India fully bears the employers' contribution for 3 years.

127. On being enquired about the overall performance of ESIC since enhancement of Wage ceiling under ESI Act from Rs.15,000/- per month to Rs.21,000/- per month w.e.f 01.01.2017 as well as enhancement in the expenditure ceiling per Insured Person (IP) from Rs.2,150 to Rs.3,000 per annum w.e.f 1.4.2017, the Ministry responded as under:-

"The performance of Employees' State Insurance Corporation (ESIC) after enhancement of wage ceiling from Rs.15,000/- per month to Rs.21,000/- per month w.e.f. 01.01.2017, in respect of contribution income is as under:

<b>F.Y.</b>	<b>No. of Employees</b>	<b>Revenue Income ( Rs. in Crore)</b>
2017-18	31118680	20077.18
2018-19	31401920	22286.76
2019-20	30966930	17813.19*
2020-21	24672150	13086.74*

\* The Rate of contribution has been reduced from 6.5% to 4% w.e.f 01.07.2019.

Previously, ESIC used to pay 7/8 of actual expenditure and 1/8<sup>th</sup> was borne by the State Govt. The ESI Corporation has taken a decision to bear 100% of expenditure of three years, beginning 2019-20. There is a per capita ceiling of Rs.3000/- per insured person per annum."

128. As per the Scheme, employers are required to pay contribution at the rate of 3.25 percent of wages of the covered employees. The rate of contribution for the employees is 0.75 percent of their wages. Now, wage workers drawing wages upto Rs.176 per day are exempted from paying their share of contribution. The State Governments bear 1/8<sup>th</sup> of the expenditure of medical care within a per capita ceiling of Rs 1500 per insured person per annum. On the mechanism put in place to ensure that contribution from employees and employers being paid regularly, the Ministry apprised as under:-

“The following steps are taken by ESIC to ensure that contribution of low paid workers drawing upto Rs.176/- per day is honestly paid by employers:

- a. Inspections are marked from Shram Suvidha Portal based on the transparent Labour Inspection Scheme through computerized system on risk based criteria.
- b. In case of default by the employer in payment of the contribution, the employer is issued Show Cause Notice and in case employer still fails to pay the contribution then a reasoned order is passed against the employer under Section 45A followed by recovery proceedings as per the provisions under Section 45 C to H of the ESI Act, 1948.
- c. On the basis of information received from various sources such as Association of the Employees, Trade unions, Individual complaints, the same is examined at Regional office & Hqrs office and if found fit to take further action, inspection through established nodal branch at Hqrs. Office level i.e. Central Analysis and Intelligence Unit (CAIU) for inspection of the defaulting units is marked/conducted month-wise to know the correctness of payment of contribution made by the employer.
- d. Mechanism undertaken by Corporation to ensure regular contribution paid by employers, the Penal action available in the ESI Act, 1948 are exercised against willful defaulting employers.”

129. Regarding details of account of arrears, arrears ‘recoverable’ as well as ‘non-recoverable’ during 2019-20 and 2020-21, the Ministry submitted that during 2019-20 the total dues were Rs.4332.52 crore (recoverable-Rs.2132.39 crore, non-recoverable Rs. 2200.13 crore) and during 2020-21, the total dues were Rs.4459.67 crore (recoverable-Rs. 2296.17 crore and non-recoverable Rs. 2163.50 crore)

130. On being enquired about the steps taken by ESI for speedy recovery of arrears during last two years and outcomes of the efforts made, the Ministry responded as under:-

“The following steps are taken by ESIC for speedy recovery of arrears during last two years:

- a) Recovery Target is fixed every year Regional Office/Sub-Regional Office- wise to recover the outstanding dues.
- b) Monthly performance report of each region is closely monitored and necessary instructions are issued for compliance.
- c) Special drive launched every year from 1<sup>st</sup> December to 31<sup>st</sup> March in order to ensure maximum recovery of dues of the Corporation.
- d) Regional Directors/Joint Director (I/c) are advised to depute additional staff in Recovery Cell.
- e) Attaching the Bank Account of the defaulters, recourse to garnishee proceedings, attachment of moveable/immovable properties, arrest of defaulters are taken in a judicious manner.

131. In evidence, the Committee asked whether the terms used *i.e.* 'recoverable' and 'non-recoverable' were appropriate contextually. In response, the DG, ESIC deposed as under:

"Sir, these are dues of the previous year. There are two parts – recoverable and non-recoverable. Non-recoverable are where we find that the company has closed down and we cannot contact anybody. So, there is no possibility of collecting those dues whereas recoverable are those where the company exists and we can get it. There may be constraints in terms of legal cases but we can still recover it. That is the broad definition."

132. The Secretary, MoLE, however, submitted that the issue could be examined further

133. On the issue of taking over of the State Government run ESIS hospitals by Central Government on account of their under-performance/below-par functioning in the respective States, the Ministry explained as under:-

"At present, there is no proposal received by ESIC from any State Government to hand over State run ESIS Hospitals owing to their underperformance/below-par functioning.

ESI Corporation in its 186<sup>th</sup> meeting held on dated 04.12.2021 has given approval for taking over of state run ESIS Hospital, Tinsukia, Assam by ESI Corporation.

Further, ESI Corporation has sought views of State Govt. of Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh regarding handing over of following state-run ESI hospitals to ESI Corporation:

1. ESIS Hospital, Nagpur, Maharashtra
2. ESIS Hospital, Aurangabad, Maharashtra
3. ESIS Hospital, Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh
4. ESIS Hospital, Nagda, Madhya Pradesh
5. ESIS Hospital, Kota, Rajasthan

In this regard, response from State Governments is awaited."

134. As regards, the progress made to address various issues regarding inadequacies in performance of State Government run ESI Hospitals to ensure better management of hospital services, procurement of required equipment, recruitment of adequate medical manpower etc., the Ministry submitted as under:-

"In this regard following measures have been taken to provide quality health care services to ESI beneficiaries:

- To ensure better management of state run ESI hospital services, a management dash-board has been functionalized in order to get real time



status of beds, existing functional services, manpower, OPD attendance and Bed Occupancy Rates.

- Structural audit is being undertaken for dilapidated buildings, based on which demolition and reconstruction works are being undertaken. For improving the regular maintenance activities, works are assigned to PSUs through bidding process.
- Increase in per capita ceiling on medical expenditure for State Govt. from Rs. 2150/- to Rs.3000/- per IP
- Provision of Rs. 200/- per IP per annum over and above the ceiling to the State Govt., where bed occupancy in all State ESIS hospitals is more than 70% during the concluded financial year.
- Facilitating formation of ESIC Society at State level so that they have adequate administrative and financial freedom to take decision for improvement of medical services.
- Sanction of funds under Project Implementation Plan (PIP) for State ESI Scheme.
- Enhancement of 50% bed strength, if bed occupancy is more than 70% in ESIC/ ESIS hospitals during last consecutive three years.”

**PART-II**  
**OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Overall Financial Performance**

1. The Committee note that a total amount of Rs. 13,306.50 crore was allotted as BE 2021-22 which was increased to Rs. 14,248.72 crore at RE stage whereas the actual expenditure as on 17.02.2022 was Rs. 11,816.16 crore constituting 82.92% of the RE amount. The scheme wise analysis of utilization of funds for the fiscal 2021-22 upto 14.02.2022 reveals that the Employee's Pension Scheme (EPS) and PMRPY are the only schemes which recorded expenditure of 100% *vis-à-vis* RE whereas for most other schemes, the percentage of utilization has been to the extent of 60 to 92.60%. In case of National Child Labour Project (NCLP), NPS Traders, NDUW, Labour Welfare Schemes, the utilization recorded has been between 12.63% to 29.84%. The Ministry have stated that complete earmarked budget will be utilized by the end of financial year 2021-22. The Committee impress upon the Ministry to leverage their spending pattern on those schemes where the utilisation percentage is not upto-the-mark so as to ensure optimal achievement of the 2021-22 budgetary allocations by 31st March, 2022.

2. In the context of ABRY, the Ministry have stated that the guidelines of Ministry of Finance regarding ceiling of 15% expenditure in last month of financial year is applicable on entire budget and not on individual schemes. However, the Committee find that as per Budget Circular 2021-22 dated 01.10.2020 and guidelines dated 21.08.2017 issued by the Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance, the restriction of 15% of expenditure of Budget Estimates in the last month of a financial year is to be observed both scheme wise as well as Demand for Grants as a whole. The Committee, therefore, exhort the Ministry to ensure that the instructions issued by the Ministry of Finance are scrupulously

adhered to and the endeavour of the Ministry should be to evenly utilize the budget allocations across all quarters and schemes for ensuring maximum impact of these schemes on the labour force of the Country.

3. The Committee are concerned to find that against the Ministry's proposal for budgetary allocation of Rs. 18,714 crore for the FY 2022-23, the Ministry of Finance have allocated Rs. 16,893.68 crore only. The Committee are not convinced with contention of the Ministry of Labour & Employment that the Ministry of Finance curtailed the budgetary allocation keeping in view the overall demands of various Ministries. It is an established fact that the performance in utilisation of earmarked funds in a particular financial year largely determines the budgetary allocations for the subsequent year. It, therefore, becomes imperative on the part of the Ministry to enhance their performance in annual utilisation of funds so as to ensure receipt of the proposed/projected amount from the Ministry of Finance.

4. The Ministry have assured that they are undertaking several measures by issuing instructions to the Administrative Divisions, Bureau Heads etc. to ensure proportionate and full utilisation of funds and making Budget Estimates more realistic. The Committee desire that the monitoring mechanism be further strengthened to ascertain strict compliance with the instructions issued to the Divisions/Bureau Heads so as to secure annual fiscal prudence.

#### **Overall Physical Targets and Achievements**

5. The Committee are concerned to note that in case of a large number of major schemes, the Ministry have not been able to achieve the physical targets during 2021-22. To illustrate, the physical targets for new enrollments of working

children in Special Training Centres (STCs) under NCLP could be achieved only to the extent of 2514 new enrollments against a target of 50000 children and out of 40000 children targeted to be mainstreamed to formal education system, only 5534 could be mainstreamed. As regards Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maan-Dhaan Yojana (PM-SYM), while the target fixed was 1 crore new enrollments, the beneficiaries enrolled has only been to the extent of 1,10,791 persons (as on December 2021). Out of 100 Model Career Centres (MCCs) proposed to be operationalised, only 41 could be operationalised. Under Labour Welfare Schemes while the target for education was 4 lakh, the achievement was 1.11 lakh. Similarly, for the National Pension Scheme for Traders, Shopkeepers and self employed persons, the enrollments have been a miniscule 4249 *vis-à-vis* the target of 25 lakh beneficiaries. The low level of enrollments has been attributed mainly to the outbreak of the Covid-19 Pandemic and the subsequent lockdowns imposed across the country during the period. The Committee acknowledge the bottlenecks/constraints encountered by the implementing agencies in the process of achieving the targets. However, now that the effect of the Pandemic has eased to a considerable extent, the Committee call upon the Ministry to energise their resources with renewed vigour so as to offset the shortfalls experienced in optimal achievement of physical targets in some major schemes.

### **National Career Services**

6. The Committee find that the Government have approved establishment of 207 Model Career Centres (MCCs) under the National Career Service (NCS) Project in the States out of which 141 are functional as on date. Funds have also been provided to 28 States/UTs for interlinking of employment exchange and organizing job fairs at the District level. Further, the Ministry have approved funds

for establishment of remaining 59 MCCs for their early operationalisation. As on 31st December, 2021, over 1.35 crore active job seekers and over 175043 active employers have been registered on the NCS portal and as many as 92.12 lakh vacancies have been highlighted through the portal. The Committee also observe that despite the pandemic 1097 job fairs have been conducted during 2021-22 wherein 2285 employers have participated across 18 industries. With a view to improving upon the service delivery and IT infrastructure along with imparting skills to the enrolled beneficiaries, the Ministry have engaged leading organizations like Times Job, TCS-ION etc. As the NCS is a mission mode project for transformation of the national employment service and to provide a variety of employment related services like job search and matching, career counseling, vocational guidance, information on skill development courses etc. through a digital platform, the Committee stress that the efforts made by the Ministry towards achieving the goal be intensified in its totality. Particular attention needs to be paid towards establishment and operationalisation of the remaining 59 Model Career Centres (MCCs) in different States as well as completing API integration of State Employment Exchange Portal with the NCS Portal concerning all the States/UTs.

7. The Committee further recommend that adequate focus be placed on organizing large scale awareness campaigns and job fairs to popularize the scheme in such areas where there are infrastructural constraints like web connectivity. It is equally crucial to keep track of the actual benefits accrued to the job seekers registered with the NCS portal *vis-à-vis* the vacancies highlighted so as to embark upon further proactive measures wherever warranted.

### Guidance to SC/ST job seekers

8. The Committee appreciate that NCS Centres for SCs/STs have been established in various States as model institutes to enhance the employability of SC/ST job seekers through guidance/coaching/training. It is equally encouraging to find that with a view to creating awareness among SC/ST job aspirants, the Ministry have initiated vocational guidance, dissemination of career information and confidence building activities in various schools, colleges and other educational institutions located at different places including remote parts of the Country. The Committee are of the considered opinion that the momentum created towards rendering vocational guidance and career counseling be persisted with periodic assessment of the positive impact of the initiatives so as to channelise educated SC/ST job seekers registered with the Employment Exchanges in appropriate vocations as well as to increase their employability through coaching/training/guidance.

### Atmanirbhar Bharat Rojgar Yojana (ABRY)

9. The Committee note that out of the estimated target of 71.80 lakh beneficiaries by 31st March, 2022 under the ABRY Scheme, a total of 47.06 lakh employees have been benefited as on 6th February, 2022. As on the same date, 5.42 lakh employees who made exit from employment during 1<sup>st</sup> March, 2020 to 30th September, 2020 and joined in any EPF registered establishment between 1st October, 2020 to 31 March, 2022 have availed the benefits under the Scheme. Further as on 14th February, 2022, 1,29,672 establishments have availed benefits in respect of 48,95,597 employees after fulfilling requirements under ABRY. With a view to covering all the 71.80 targeted beneficiaries by 31 March, 2022, the Ministry are taking a number of steps which *inter-alia* include encouraging the

employers for registering themselves and their new employees; conducting Webinars, Workshops and Seminars for creating awareness etc. In this context, the Committee feel that the eligibility conditions specified for availing the benefits under the ABRY need to be revisited and streamlined as a number of Employers/Employees are deprived of the benefits due to lack of awareness as well as complexities involved. The Committee recommend that the Ministry should look into these issues with a sense of urgency and priority especially according a focussed approach towards strengthening the awareness programmes so that the very purpose of benefitting both employers and employees under ABRY is truly achieved.

#### **Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maan-Dhan (PM- SYM) Scheme**

10. The Committee note that the Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maan-Dhan (PM-SYM) Scheme which was launched in February, 2019 is a voluntary and contributory pension scheme for providing monthly minimum assured pension of Rs. 3000/- after attaining the age of 60 years to the workers of the unorganized sector. In this context, the Committee find that due to the outbreak of Covid-19 Pandemic and resultant lockdowns, the enrolment drive under the PM-SYM scheme was adversely affected which resulted in variations in budgetary allocations and utilization during the last two years. However, due to concerted efforts made by the Ministry through periodic review meetings with the States/UTs and Common Service Centres creating awareness among e-shram beneficiaries; launching extensive social media campaigns etc., the enrolments under the Scheme are depicting a consistently increasing trend viz. a meager 115 enrolments in September 2021 which gradually increased to 27,406 by January, 2022. In view of the fact that the Ministry's endeavours have resulted

in a steady increase in the enrolments under PM-SYM within a span of five months, the Committee impress upon the Ministry to further fortify the measures initiated so as to ensure more enrolments under the scheme which in turn would guarantee optimal utilization of the earmarked funds for the purpose.

11. The Committee note that for implementing the PM-SYM scheme, the role and responsibilities of Ministry of Labour & Employment and the implementing agencies *i.e.* Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) and the Common Service Centres (CSCs) have been clearly defined. Further, MoU signed among Ministry of Labour & Employment, LIC and CSC has the provisions of inspection and audit according to which LIC and CSC shall allow Ministry of Labour & Employment or its nominated agencies/auditors to inspect the systems/applications (if any) developed by CSC, LIC and its partners that are used or will be used to deliver the services as stipulated in the MoU and related proposals. As the provision intends to ensure adherence to the demarcated roles and responsibilities by the implementation agencies, the Committee exhort the Ministry to conduct periodic inspections/audits of the systems/applications developed by LIC and CSC so that the noble objective of providing pension to the workers in the unorganized sector is effectively accomplished.

#### **National Pension Scheme for Traders and Self-Employed Persons(NPS-Traders)**

12. The National Pension Scheme for Traders and Self-Employed Persons (NPS-Traders) which was launched in 2019 as a voluntary and contributory Pension Scheme envisages to enroll three crore small and marginal traders, shopkeepers and self-employed persons by the end of 2023-24 fiscal. But, the Committee are deeply concerned to find that as on 09.01.2022, only 47,956 beneficiaries have been enrolled under the scheme. The position of target and



achievement during 2021-22 is a matter of more concern as against a target of enrolment of 24 lakh beneficiaries during the year, only 4249 beneficiaries could be enrolled. Overall, low demand from the intended beneficiaries apart from consecutive outbreaks of the Covid-19 Pandemic have been cited as the primary reasons for such low enrolments under the scheme. The Ministry have agreed that long-term financial commitment on the part of the beneficiaries and awareness, persuasion and mobilization of the intended beneficiaries are required to enhance registration under the scheme. In view of the fact that only around 15 percent enrolment/registrations have been done since the inception of the scheme and the remaining 85 percent has to be covered by 2023-24, the Committee exhort the Ministry to organize effective awareness campaigns in tandem with the State/UT Governments and other stakeholders, to educate the traders, shopkeepers and self-employed persons about the long term benefits of the scheme so as to persuade and mobilize them to get themselves enrolled under the immensely gainful scheme.

#### **Labour Welfare Scheme-Revised Integrated Housing Scheme (RIHS)**

13. The Committee note that under the Revised Integrated Housing Scheme (RIHS), a subsidy of Rs. 1,50,000/- per beneficiary is provided in three installments to the Beedi/Iron Ore Mines, Manganese Ore and Chrome Ore Mines/Limestone Mines, Dolomite Mines/Mica Mines and Cine Workers for construction of own pakka houses. The Committee further note that against the 2021-22, RE provision of Rs. 119 crore, the Ministry have been able to utilize Rs. 34.29 crore only, as on 31.12.2021 because as per the direction of the Ministry of Finance, no expenditure was allowed to be incurred beyond 30.09.2021 before the scheme is approved for the 15<sup>th</sup> Finance Commission Cycle. Since the RIHS has

been converged with the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY) Scheme, continuation of Labour Welfare Scheme beyond 31.03.2021 is under process. The Ministry have contended that necessary orders for continuation of Labour Welfare Scheme is likely to be issued soon and the entire fund under RE 2021-22 would be utilized. Taking note of the fact that an amount of Rs. 120 crore has been allocated as BE 2022-23 under the scheme and a total number of 4147 workers have availed the benefits under PMAY since the convergence, the Committee call upon the Ministry to release all the eligible pending installments under RIHS once the continuation of the Labour Welfare Scheme is finalized so as to fully utilize the 2021-22 RE and 2022-23 BE allocations.

#### **Bima Yojana for Unorganised Workers**

14. The Committee note that the Aam Aadmi Bima Yojana which was under the administrative control of the Ministry of Labour & Employment has been converged with the Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana (PMJJBY) and Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana (PMSBY) and transferred to the Ministry of Finance (Department of Financial Services) w.e.f. 01.04.2020. The Committee find that the cumulative registrations under PMJJBY and PMSBY were 11.67 crore and 26.85 crore respectively as on 31.10.2021. As the welfare of the unorganized workers is primarily the responsibility of the Ministry of Labour & Employment and taking into account the efforts and achievements made by the Ministry in that direction, the Committee recommend that the Ministry should contemplate introducing more welfare schemes to provide insurance cover for the unorganized workforce and adequate awareness/publicity campaigns be launched in coordination with other Ministries involved to enlighten the unorganized workers about the distinct advantages of various insurance

schemes administered by different organs of the Government so as to encourage more registrations of such workers.

#### **Social Security for Plantation Workers in Assam**

15. The Committee note that the Assam Tea Employees Provident Fund Organization (ATEPFO) provides social security benefits to the tea garden workers of Assam. The Schemes implemented by ATEPFO for which financial assistance is provided by the Central Government include Deposit Linked Insurance Scheme and Family Pension-cum-Life Insurance Scheme. The Committee find that out of the 2021-22 RE allocation of Rs. 50 crore, only Rs. 30 crore could be utilized as on 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2021 due to less demand from the ATEPFO under SC/ST components. In order to iron out the bottlenecks, ATEPFO has now proposed to carry out inspections vigorously on the basis of the database provided by the Tea Board of India in order to register workers under the Scheme. The Committee feel that it is a measure in right direction and should be persisted with determinedly not only to cover more eligible plantation workers under the Scheme but also to accurately identify the number of SC/ST beneficiaries for optimal utilization of the earmarked Central assistance. The Committee also desire that the Ministry should continue to constantly pursue with the State Governments of West Bengal and Assam to conduct a detailed survey on the number of tea plantation workers in their respective States and furnish a status report thereon so that deficiencies in the implementation of the Scheme are requisitely ironed out.

16. The Committee note that as per the provision of the Section 2(29) of the Code on Social Security, 2020 plantation workers are covered under the definition of 'Establishment' which will make them eligible to be covered under ESIC. The

Ministry have assured that once the Code is implemented, the plantation workers will be covered by the ESI Corporation. The Committee trust that as soon as the Social Security Code, 2020 is implemented, urgent measures be initiated to bring the plantation workers under the ambit of ESIC so as to ensure facilitation of all social security measures in favour of such workers.

17. The Committee appreciate that EPFO has been directed to facilitate and coordinate with Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) to organize camps for Aadhar enrollment and corrections in Aadhar data of EPF members to facilitate Aadhar seeding in UAN and monitor the progress on weekly basis. As Aadhar seeding has been made mandatory for establishing the identity of the beneficiaries, the Committee are of the considered opinion that the initiative taken should be further strengthened so that the grievances faced by the plantation workers especially those living in remote hilly and forest areas, in linking their Aadhar with PF accounts are effectively redressed.

#### **Rehabilitation of Bonded Labour**

18. The Committee note that under the Central Sector Scheme for Rehabilitation of Bonded Labour – 2016, the Ministry have been able to utilize an amount of Rs. 2.96 crore as of February, 2022 against the allocation of Rs. 10 crore during 2021-22. Proposals amounting to Rs. 2.34 crore are under Ministry's examination for release of funds to the six State Governments of Bihar, Tamil Nadu, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Odisha and Uttar Pradesh. The Committee impress upon the Ministry to expedite the proposals of the State Governments with a sense of urgency so that Rs. 2.34 crore is released and utilized in the last month of 2021-22 fiscal for the rehabilitation of the bonded labour in the aforementioned States. As even after utilizing Rs. 2.34 crore, there would still be a

shortfall of Rs. 4.70 crore vis-à-vis the 2021-22 allocations, the Committee exhort the Ministry to take advance action in unison with the State Governments concerned so as to ensure optimal utilization of Rs. 10 crore as earmarked in BE 2022-23. Further, observing that no details regarding district-wise utilization of corpus fund is maintained centrally, notwithstanding the jurisdictional aspects, the Committee impress upon the Ministry to collate the information from respective State Governments and maintain a central database so as to take suitable corrective action as and when warranted.

19. The Committee note that the Central Sector Scheme for Rehabilitation of Bonded Labour – 2016 has been revamped and its term extended for further period of five years from the financial year 2021-22 to 2025-26. As per the extended scheme of 2021, immediate financial assistance has been increased from Rs. 20,000/- to Rs. 30,000/- and amount of assistance for each evaluatory study (maximum 5 evaluatory studies per year) conducted for eradication of bonded labour has also been enhanced from Rs. 1 lakh to Rs. 1.5 lakh. The Ministry have advised/approached State/UT Governments regularly to conduct more and more surveys, awareness generation and evaluatory studies to identify, release and rehabilitate the bonded labour. The Committee desire that the Ministry should continue this pro-active approach and strengthen their coordination mechanism with the State Governments concerned for total elimination of the social evil.

20. The Committee are deeply concerned to find that in 2020-21, 314 bonded labours were rescued from 4 states viz. Bihar, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and West Bengal, whereas in 2021-22, 1330 bonded labours have been rescued from 7

States viz. Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh with maximum incidence of 1014 (76%) reported from Tamil Nadu reaffirming that the scourge of bonded labour, unfortunately still persists especially in the Southern State. In this context, the Committee are of the considered opinion that fortifying the monitoring and coordination mechanism for prosecution of offenders of the Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1976 and setting up of Fast Track Courts by the respective State Governments in a time bound manner for speedy trial and imposition of penalty upon the violators would go a long way in the effective implementation of the Act to deter and eliminate incidence of bonded labour.

21. The Committee appreciate that pursuant to their earlier Recommendation to ensure timely sharing of information on rehabilitation and rescue figures in order to map the progress of the Scheme, the Ministry are proposing to launch a National Portal for Bonded Labour in line with Platform for Effective Enforcement for No Child Labour (PENCIL) for the management of the Scheme and other related matters. For the purpose, the Committee find that one technology Consultant has been engaged and a proposal to hire 3 developers to facilitate technology consultancy is under submission. While taking note of the efforts made by the Ministry to develop a National Portal for Bonded Labour, the Committee desire that the process be expedited for establishment of the Portal within a reasonable time frame so that the requisite information is made available on real time basis for facilitating appropriate and timely action.

**National Database of Unorganised Workers (NDUW) Project/Shramik Setu Portal**

22. The Committee note that during 2021-22, BE of Rs. 150 crore under the NDUW Project was revised upwards to Rs. 280 crore, however, the actual expenditure as on 14.02.2022 was Rs. 78.28 crore i.e. 27.96% of RE. The Ministry have assured that the remaining expenditure would be met by the end of the 2021-22 fiscal. The Committee trust that all prudent measures would be taken by the Ministry to utilize the remaining amount in the last one and half months of the Financial Year 2021-22 so that the objectives of such an important project are truly achieved. The Committee are pleased to note the launch of e-shram portal on 26.08.2021 for creating first ever National Database of Unorganised Workers (NDUW) which include migrant workers, domestic workers, construction workers, agriculture workers, street vendors, gig and platform workers etc. for optimum realization of their employability and to extend the benefits of social security schemes to them. The Committee find that as on 16.02.2022, out of the estimated 38 crore unorganized workers, more than 25 crore have been registered with the target to register the remaining 13 crore by March, 2023. The Committee note that while 65% of the intended beneficiaries have been covered in six months, the remaining 35% are proposed to be covered in one year. While appreciating the progress made so far, the Committee desire that all out efforts be made through robust measures to accelerate the pace of registration and complete the exercise well within the scheduled deadline so as to timely and effectively achieve the very purpose of extending the benefits of social security schemes to the intended beneficiaries besides ensuring portability of benefits especially to the migrant workers besides interoperability, standardization and convergence of various similar Schemes administered by other Ministries. The Committee also hope that

as assured by the Ministry, the All India Survey on Migrant Workers (MWS) will be completed by August 2022 and further impress upon the Ministry to make concerted efforts for completion of the ongoing exercise of All India Survey on Domestic Workers (DWS) in a time bound manner.

23. The Committee further notes that the process of interlinking of e-Shram, UDYAM, Aatamanirbhar Skilled Employee Employer Mapping (ASEEM) and National Career Service (NCS) portal is underway so that these portals work in an interoperable manner *i.e.* the ability to exchange information and make use of information without effecting the functionality of other systems. Moreover, interlinking intends to facilitate unorganized workers with employment opportunities, skilling, re-skilling, benefits of Government Guarantee Schemes etc. The Committee desire that coordinated efforts be made in consultation with all stakeholders so as to ensure smooth and seamless interlinking of portals in a time bound manner as well as to achieve the objective of formalizing the economy as announced in the Budget Speech 2022.

#### Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO)

24. The Committee note that in 2018, the Ministry constituted a High-Empowered Monitoring Committee for complete evaluation and review of the Employees Pension Scheme, 1995. That Committee in its report had inter-alia recommended that minimum monthly pension payable to the member/widow/widower pensioner may be raised to at least Rs. 2000/- per month provided annual budgetary provision for the same is made. However, the Ministry of Finance has not agreed to any such enhancement in minimum pension beyond Rs. 1000/- per month. In this context, the Committee find that the issue has been



discussed in detail by several committees which have come to the conclusion that unless and until the actuarial assessment of surplus/deficit of EPFO's pension schemes are made, revision of the monthly pension of the EPFO members cannot be done. Recently, another Committee has been formed to look into the issue and to ascertain more contribution by the members of the pension scheme. In view of the fact that Rs. 1000/- per month pension which was fixed eight years back appears to be grossly inadequate now, it becomes imperative on the part of the Ministry of Labour & Employment to pursue the matter with the Ministry of Finance for obtaining adequate budgetary support as recommended by the High-Empowered Monitoring Committee besides impressing upon the EPFO to make an actuarial assessment of all its pension schemes so that the monthly member pension is enhanced to a reasonable extent.

25. The Committee note that in the process of taking several measures for providing faster settlement of all types of PF claims, EPFO has started a drive to encourage members to file e-nomination as a part of celebration of 'Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav (AKAM)' to commemorate 75 years of India's Independence. To spread the awareness among the stakeholders, creative Youtube videos and GIF are being regularly posted on the social media by EPFO. However, the Committee are given to understand that difficulties are being faced by members for e-nomination especially by those who retired before 2015 as well as in the functioning of Online Transfer Claim Portal (OTCP). While taking note of the appreciable efforts made by EPFO to maximize use of Information & Technology tools in line with Digital India Initiative, the Committee desire that EPFO strives further to usher in systemic improvements so as to address the problems faced

in e-nomination thereby effectively redressing the grievances of all the stakeholders.

**Employees State Insurance Corporation (ESIC)**

26. The Committee are deeply concerned to note that huge amount of outstanding arrears of Rs. 4459.67 crore (Recoverable – Rs. 2296.17 crore & non-recoverable Rs. 2163.50 crore) during 2020-21. The Committee feel that the steps taken by ESIC for recovery of arrears which inter-alia include attaching bank account of defaulters, attachment of movable/immovable property, recourse to garnishee proceedings and arrest of defaulters have not yielded the desired results and appear to be inadequate to deter violations. The Committee, therefore, impress upon the Ministry to further strengthen the inspection and monitoring mechanism to effect recovery and also sensitize employers of the repercussions of committing such violations so as to deter the menacing trend. The Committee also desire the Ministry/ESIC to examine whether the terms used i.e. ‘recoverable dues’ and ‘non-recoverable dues’ are appropriate contextually.

27. The Committee note that ESI Corporation at its meeting held on 04.12.2021 has accorded approval for taking over the State run ESIS Hospital Tinsukia, Assam by ESIC and views of State Governments of Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh have been sought regarding handing over of State run ESI Hospitals of Nagpur, Aurangabad, Bhopal, Nagda and Kota to ESIC, however, their response is awaited. The Committee desire ESIC to vigorously pursue the matter with the State Governments at appropriate level and take the matter to its logical end. Further, since no proposal has been received by ESIC from any other State Governments to handover underperforming state run ESIS Hospitals to the ESIC, the Committee impress upon the ESIC to suo-motu examine the matter of

under performance of such Hospitals and coordinate with the State Governments concerned so as to take appropriate action as deemed fit.

28. The Committee appreciate that with a view to ensuring better management of hospital services, procurement of required equipment, recruitment of adequate manpower etc., the Ministry/ESIC are taking a number of measures which *inter-alia* include getting real time data through management dashboard structural audit of the dilapidated buildings, sanction of funds under Project Implement Plan (PIP) for State ESI Scheme etc. The Committee desire that the measures initiated be intensified to ensure efficient functioning of both ESI Corporation and State ESI Scheme.

New Delhi;  
14<sup>th</sup> March, 2022  
23 Phalguna, 1943 (Saka)

BHARTRUHARI MAHTAB  
CHAIRPERSON,  
STANDING COMMITTEE ON LABOUR,  
TEXTILES AND SKILL DEVELOPMENT

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON LABOUR, TEXTILES AND SKILL DEVELOPMENT**  
**(2021-22)**

**Minutes of the Fifth Sitting of the Committee**

The Committee sat on Wednesday, the 16<sup>th</sup> February, 2022 from 1100 hrs. to 1315 hrs. in Committee Room 'B', Parliament House Annexe, New Delhi.

**PRESENT**

**Shri Bhartruhari Mahtab – CHAIRPERSON**

**MEMBERS**

**LOK SABHA**

2. Shri Subhash Chandra Baheria
3. Dr. Umesh G. Jadhav
4. Adv. Dean Kuriakose
5. Shri Bhola Singh

**RAJYA SABHA**

6. Shri Naresh Bansal
7. Shri Neeraj Dangi
8. Shri Dushyant Gautam
9. Shri Elamaram Kareem
10. Ms. Dola Sen
11. Shri Vijay Pal Singh Tomar

**SECRETARIAT**

1. Shri T.G. Chandrasekhar - Joint Secretary
2. Shri D.R. Mohanty - Director
3. Shri Sanjay Sethi - Additional Director
4. Shri K.G. Sidhartha - Deputy Secretary

## Witnesses

### REPRESENTATIVES OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR & EMPLOYMENT

Sl. No.	Name	Designation
1.	Shri Sunil Barthwal	Secretary (L&E)
2.	Shri Mukhmeet S. Bhatia	Director General, ESIC
3.	Shri Ashish Upadhyaya	Additional Secretary & Financial Advisor
4.	Shri Shashank Goel	Additional Secretary (L&E)
5.	Ms. Neelam Shami Rao	Central PF Commissioner
6.	Shri R.K. Gupta	Joint Secretary
7.	Shri Ajay Tewari	Joint Secretary
8.	Ms. Vibha Bhalla	Joint Secretary
9.	Smt. Suman Bala	Chief Controller of Accounts
10.	Shri Amit Nirmal	Deputy Director General
11.	Shri S.D. Chiddarwar	Deputy Director General (DGMS)
12.	Shri I.S. Negi	Director General (Labour Bureau)
13.	Shri S.C. Joshi	Additional Chief Labour Commissioner
14.	Shri Jag Mohan	Additional Central P.F. Commissioner
15.	Shri K.L. Taneja	Additional Central P.F. Commissioner
16.	Shri M.K. Sharma	Insurance Commissioner

2. At the outset, the Chairperson welcomed the Members of the Committee and the representatives of the Ministry of Labour & Employment (MoLE) to the sitting of the Committee, convened for taking oral evidence of the Ministry on 'Demands for Grants (2022-23)'. Drawing the attention of the representatives to Direction 58 of the 'Directions by the Speaker' regarding confidentiality of the proceedings of the Committee, the Chairperson asked the Secretary, MoLE, to apprise the Committee of the budgetary allocations for the year 2022-23 *vis-à-vis* the proposal of the Ministry; actual expenditure incurred/ estimated during 2021-22 *vis-à-vis* the allocations; the major thrust areas during 2022-23 for various programmes/activities/schemes; the plan of action on the part of the Ministry for optimal utilization of the earmarked funds as well as maximum achievement of physical targets; constraints faced by the Ministry in the effective implementation of the Schemes due to COVID-19 induced restrictions etc.

3. The Secretary, Ministry of Labour & Employment briefed the Committee and thereafter AS&FA made a Power Point Presentation *inter-alia* highlighting the Budget

allocation (2022-23) & expenditure under major Schemes in 2021-22, progress of Atmanirbhar Bharat Rojgar Yojana (ABRY), National Database of Unorganised Workers (NDUW) Project, Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maan-Dhan Scheme (PM-SYM), National Pension Scheme for Traders and Self-employed Persons (NPS-Traders), performance of Employees Provident Fund Organization (EPFO) and Employee's State Insurance Corporation (ESIC) etc.

4. The Secretary and other representatives of the Ministry also responded to various queries raised by the Members which *inter-alia* included under utilization/non-utilization of funds and non-achievement of physical targets under various Schemes; delay in operationalisation of Model Career Centres (MCCs); observance of guidelines of Ministry of Finance regarding incurring of expenditure in last quarter/month of Financial year; progress in establishment of NDUW; interlinking of various portals; efforts made to eradicate bonded labour; introduction of New Social Security Schemes in 2022-23; status of enhancement of minimum pension under EPS, 1995 ; need to bring plantation workers under the ambit of ESIC; financial assistance to workers affected due to COVID-19 and taking over of ESIS hospitals by ESIC.

5. As some points required detailed and statistical reply, the Chairperson asked the Secretary, Ministry of Labour & Employment to furnish written replies thereon within four/five days. The Secretary assured to comply.

6. The Chairperson, then, thanked the Secretary and other representatives of the Ministry for furnishing valuable information on the subject and responding to the queries of the Members.

(The witnesses then withdrew)

[A copy of the verbatim record of proceedings was kept on record]

7. XX XX XX XX

**The Committee then adjourned.**

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XX Does not pertain to this Report.