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**STANDING COMMITTEE ON
LABOUR, TEXTILES AND SKILL DEVELOPMENT
(2024-25)**

(EIGHTEENTH LOK SABHA)

MINISTRY OF LABOUR & EMPLOYMENT

**DEMANDS FOR GRANTS
(2025-26)**

FOURTH REPORT



LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT

NEW DELHI

March, 2025/ Chaitra, 1947 (Saka)

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DEMANDS FOR GRANTS (2025-26)

Presented to Lok Sabha on 28.03.2025

Laid in Rajya Sabha on 28.03.2025



LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT

NEW DELHI

March, 2025/ Chaitra, 1947 (Saka)

CONTENTS

COMPOSITION OF THE COMMITTEE
INTRODUCTION

PAGE No.
(vi)
(vii)

REPORT

PART-I	NARRATIVES	
I.	INTRODUCTORY	
	(i) Implementation of four Labour Codes	1
	(ii) National Workshop on Labour Reforms	4
	(iii) Objectives of the Ministry	5
	(iv) Presentation Detailed Demands for Grants for the Financial Year 2025-26 to the Parliament	5
	(v) Budgetary Allocations 2025-26	5
II.	FINANCIAL AND PHYSICAL PERFORMANCE	
	(i) Proposals and Allocations for 2025-26	6
	(ii) Budgetary Allocation and Utilisation during 2022-23, 2023-24 and 2024-25	7
	(iii) Surrender of Rs. 11044.05 crore	8
	(iv) Reduction of Rs. 8808.59 crore by Ministry of Finance	9
	(v) Funds spent in each quarter as per Quarterly Expenditure Plan	9
	(vi) Reappropriation of Funds of Rs. 1118.25 crore	10
	(vii) Allocation for North Eastern Areas	11
III.	OVERALL ACHIEVEMENTS - PHYSICAL TARGETS	
	(i) Scheme for the Rehabilitation of Bonded Labour, 2016	12
	(ii) Labour Welfare Scheme	12
	(iii) National Career Service	13
	(iv) Welfare of SC/ST job seekers through Coaching, Guidance and Vocational Training	14
	(v) Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maan-Dhan (PM-SYM) Yojana	15
	(vi) National Pension Scheme for Traders, Shopkeepers and Self-Employed Persons	15
	(vii) National Database of Unorganised Workers	16
IV.	SCHEME-WISE ANALYSIS	
	(i) National Career Service	17
	a) Integration with 30 States for information exchange	17
	b) Third Party Evaluation of Scheme	18
	c) On-boarding of Managed Service Provider (MSP) for NCS 2.0	18
	d) Setting up of PM e2E (Pradhan Mantri Education to Employment) Career Lounges and preparation of uniform guidelines for employment portals of the States.	18
	e) Number of Job Seekers, vacancies posted on NCS, employers registered and job fares conducted	19
	(A) Job Fairs Organised	22

	(B) Feedback and placement details under NCS	22
	(C) Employment trends as per PLFS data	23
	(D) Funds allocation and utilization	25
	(ii) Welfare of SC/ST job seekers through Coaching and Guidance	25
	(a) Third Party Evaluation of the Scheme	26
	(b) Funds allocation and utilization	26
	(c) Physical Targets	27
	(iii) New Employment Generation Scheme (ELIS)	28
	(a) Funds allocation and utilization	29
V.	SOCIAL SECURITY SCHEMES FOR WORKERS	
	(i) Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maan-dhan (PM-SYM)	30
	(a) Funds allocation and utilization	30
	(b) Achievement of Physical Targets	31
	(c) Evaluation of the Scheme	31
	(d) Extension of Scheme	32
	(ii) National Pension Scheme for Traders and Self-Employed Persons	32
	(a) Physical and Financial Progress	32
	(b) Revamping of the Scheme	33
	(c) Extension of the Scheme	34
VI.	NATIONAL DATABASE FOR UNORGANISED WORKERS (NDUW)	
	(i) Gig and Platform Workers	34
	(ii) E-Shram – “One-Stop-Solution”	35
	(iii) Onboarding of 20 crore more unorganized workers on e-Shram Portal	36
	(iv) Criteria for verification of e-Shram registrants	38
	(v) Database of Workers in the Organized Sector as well as in the Unorganized Sector	39
	(vi) Ex-gratia Payment to the e-Shram Registrants	43
	(vii) Revamping of Shram Suvidha and Samadhan Portal	45
	(viii) Funds allocation and utilization	45
	(ix) Third-party evaluation and outcome review of the National Database of Unorganised Workers (NDUW) / eShram Scheme	46
	(x) Registration of Online Platform Workers on the e-Shram Portal	46
VII.	LABOUR WELFARE SCHEMES	51
	(i) Income ceiling for financial assistance for education to the wards of Beedi Workers	53
	(ii) Funds allocation and utilization	53
	(iii) Third-party Evaluation of the Scheme	54
VIII.	CENTRAL SECTOR SCHEME FOR REHABILITATION OF BONDED LABOURER-2021	54
IX.	LABOUR EDUCATION & RESEARCH	57
X.	LABOUR STATISTICS	

	(a) Base up-dation exercise of CPI (AL&RL)	60
	(b) Base Year revision of CPI (IW) and CPI (AL&RL)	61
	(c) All India Survey on Migrant Workers (MWS) and All India Survey on Domestic Workers (DWS)	61 61
	LABOUR & EMPLOYMENT STATISTICAL SYSTEM (LESS)	
	(i) Third Party Evaluation of the Scheme	62
	(ii) Funds allocation and utilization	62
XI.	EMPLOYEES' STATE INSURANCE CORPORATION (ESIC)	63
	(i) Setting up of 10 new Medical Colleges	65
	(ii) Changes in the norms effected to improve services of ESIC in the North-Eastern States	66
	(iii) Availability of ESI Hospital facilities to the Tea Plantation Workers	66
	(iv) Convergence of Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PM-JAY) with ESIC	67
	(v) New Hospitals and Dispensaries	68
XII.	EMPLOYEES' PROVIDENT FUND ORGANIZATION (EPFO)	72
	(i) Employees' Pension Scheme, 1995 (EPS, 1995)	75
	(ii) Revision of Minimum Pension	75
	(iii) Third Party Evaluation of EPS, 1995	76
	(iv) Funds allocation and utilization	76
XIII.	DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF MINES SAFETY (DGMS)	79
XIV.	INDIAN LABOUR CONFERENCE	82
XV.	G20 FEASIBILITY STUDY ON DEVELOPMENT OF INTERNATIONAL REFERENCE CLASSIFICATION	82
PART-II	OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS	83-118
APPENDICES		
*Appendix-I	Minutes of the Tenth Sitting of the Committee held on 28 th February, 2025	
*Appendix-II	Minutes of the Eleventh Sitting of the Committee held on 26 th February, 2025	

*Not appended with this cyclostyled copy.

**COMPOSITION OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LABOUR, TEXTILES AND SKILL DEVELOPMENT
(2024-25)**

Shri Basavaraj Bommai – Chairperson

MEMBERS

LOK SABHA

2	Shri Mani A.
3	Shri G. M. Harish Balayogi
4	Shri Aashtikar Patil Nagesh Bapurao
5	Shri Partha Bhowmick
6	Shri Yogender Chandolia
7	Shri Ram Prasad Chaudhary
8	Shri Chandra Prakash Choudhary
9	Shri G. Lakshminarayana
10	Shri Asit Kumar Mal
11	Shri Kali Charan Munda
12	Shri Rudra Narayan Pany
13	Shri Tanuj Punia
14	Shri Pradeep Purohit
15	Shri Mukesh Rajput
16	Shri Raja Ram Singh
17	Shri Adhikari Soumendu
18	Shri V. K. Sreekandan
19	Shri Manoj Tigga
20 [^]	Shri Chavan Ravindra Vasantryao
21	Vacant

RAJYA SABHA

22 [*]	Smt. Jaya Amitabh Bachchan
23	Shri Naresh Bansal
24	Shri Govindbhai Laljibhai Dholakia
25	Shri Rajendra Gehlot
26	Dr. Syed Naseer Hussain
27	Shri Maharaja Sanajaoba Leishemba
28	Shri M. Shanmugam
29	Shri Shibu Soren
30 ^{**}	Shri Ritabrata Banerjee
31	Vacant

SECRETARIAT

1	Shri Jadumani Baisakh	-	Joint Secretary
2	Shri Sanjay Sethi	-	Director
3	Ms. Mili Dinesh	-	Deputy Secretary

[^] Nominated w.e.f. 29.01.2025

^{*} Nominated w.e.f. 01.10.2024 vice Shri Saket Gokhale.

^{**} Nominated w.e.f. 24.12.2024.

INTRODUCTION

I, the Chairperson, Standing Committee on Labour, Textiles and Skill Development (2024-25) having been authorized by the Committee do present on their behalf this Fourth Report on 'Demands for Grants (2025-26)' of the Ministry of Labour and Employment.

2. The Committee considered the Demands for Grants (2025-26) of the Ministry of Labour and Employment which were laid on the Table of the House on 10th February 2025. After obtaining the Budget Documents, Explanatory Notes, etc., the Committee took evidence of the representatives of the Ministry of Labour and Employment on 28th February, 2025. The Committee considered and adopted the Report at their Sitting held on 26th March, 2025.

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;
26 March, 2025
05 Chaitra, 1947(Saka)**

**BASAVARAJ BOMMAI
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, promoting 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, 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.

(i) Implementation of four Labour Codes

3. The Government has notified 4 Labour Codes, namely, the Code on Wages, 2019 on 8th August, 2019 and the Industrial Relations Code, 2020, the Code on Social Security, 2020 & the Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code, 2020 on 29th September, 2020, by amalgamating 29 labour Laws.

4. Codification of the Labour Laws will, inter alia, reduce multiplicity of definitions & authorities, facilitate implementation & use of technology in enforcement of labour laws and bring transparency & accountability in enforcement which would promote setting up of more enterprises, thus catalysing the creation of employment opportunities in the country. Hence, it would promote setting up of industries by reducing rigidity of labour market and facilitate hassle-free compliance, paving the way for realizing the goal of Atmanirbhar Bharat. Simultaneously, it will harmonize needs of workers and industry and will prove an important milestone for welfare of the workers.

5. As a step towards implementation of the four Labour Codes, the Ministry has pre published the following draft Rules inviting comments of stakeholders (including general public) under the codes:

- the Code on Wages (Central) Rules, 2020;

- the Industrial Relation (Central) Rules, 2020;
- the Industrial Relations (Central) Recognition of Negotiating Union or Negotiating Council and Adjudication of Disputes of Trade Unions Rules, 2021;
- the Code on Social Security (Central) Rules, 2020;
- the Code on Social Security (Employee's Compensation) (Central) Rules, 2021;
- the Occupational Safety, Health & Working Conditions (Central) Rules, 2020; and
- draft Rules under section 16 (5) of the Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code, 2020.

6. "Labour" is in the Concurrent List of the Constitution and under the Labour Codes, rules are required to be framed by the Central Government as well as by the State Governments. The Central Government and majority of States/UTs have pre-published rules under 4 Labour Codes.

7. The details of States/UTs which have pre-published draft Rules under the four Labour Codes are as follows:

Status of Rules by States/UTs under 4 labour Codes (As on 31.12.2024)

Name of Code	Name of States/UTs which have pre-published the draft rules	Name of States/UTs which have not pre-published the draft rules
The Code on Wages, 2019	Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Goa, Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Odisha, Punjab, Rajasthan, Sikkim, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Tripura, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, UTs of Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu, Chandigarh, Jammu & Kashmir, Ladakh, NCT of Delhi and Puducherry (34)	West Bengal and Lakshadweep (2)
Industrial Relations Code, 2020	Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Goa, Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh,	Nagaland, West Bengal, Lakshadweep and NCT of Delhi (4)

	Maharashtra, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Odisha, Punjab, Rajasthan, Sikkim, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Tripura, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, UTs of Chandigarh, Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu, Jammu & Kashmir, Ladakh and Puducherry (32)	
Code on Social Security, 2020	Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Goa, Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Odisha, Punjab, Rajasthan, Sikkim, Telangana, Tripura, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, UTs of Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu, Chandigarh, Jammu & Kashmir, Ladakh and Puducherry(32)	Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Lakshadweep and NCT of Delhi (4)
Occupational Safety, Health & Working Conditions Code, 2020	Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Goa, Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Manipur, Meghalaya, Odisha, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Tripura, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, UTs of Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Chandigarh, Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu, Jammu& Kashmir, Ladakh and Puducherry(33)	West Bengal, Lakshadweep and NCT of Delhi (3)

8. With regard to implementation of Labour Codes, the representative of the Ministry during evidence disposed as under:

“You know that the Labour Code has been passed by the Parliament and it is a very important part of our labour reforms. Rules are being made on the basis of labour codes. Central rules have been pre-published. We have studied the rules of all the 36 states, union territories. We have also helped them to get their rules pre-published.

Last year, we have held regional meetings. Our Minister has also organized a national workshop in January this year. In that national workshop deliberations were held on labour reforms, labour codes and many other important issues, service delivery, ease of living for workers, their welfare, etc. and some decisions were taken.”

9. The Ministry were asked to clarify whether Labour Codes can be implemented even if some of the States/UTs have expressed their reservations and not yet pre-published the draft Rules. In response, the Ministry stated as under:

“It is informed that most of the States/UTs have pre-published their respective Rules under all the four Labour Codes. Remaining States/UTs are in the process of framing the Rules. As on date, 32 States/UTs have pre-published the Rules under all 4 Codes. State of Tamil Nadu has not yet pre-published Rules under SS Code. NCT of Delhi is in the process of pre-publishing Rules under IR Code, SS Code and OSH & WC Code. West Bengal and UT of Lakshadweep have prepared Rules under all four Codes and waiting for approval of competent authority for pre-publishing the same.

Thus all States/UTs have either pre-published Rules under all 4 Codes or in the process of pre-publishing the same.”

(ii) National Workshop on Labour Reforms

10. During the course of evidence, it was stated that the Minister of Labour and Employment held a National Workshop in January, 2025, wherein several Labour Reforms were discussed. When asked to state the details of Labour Reforms that were discussed therein, the Ministry stated as under:

“On 29-30th January, 2025, Hon’ble Minister of Labour and Employment held a National Workshop with all State/UT Labour Ministers and Secretaries on Labour Reforms. In that meeting States/UTs showcased their best practices and also reforms which were done by them under the existing Acts. Labour Reforms done by States/UTs through necessary amendment in the existing Acts after following due procedure was showcased. Details of such reforms undertaken by States/UTs are given below:-

S.No.	Reforms	No. of States/UTs
1.	Increasing of Threshold of the ID Act from 100 to 300	19
2.	Increasing of Threshold for applicability of Factories Act from 10 to 20(with power) 20 to 40(without power)	18
3.	Increasing of Threshold for applicability of Contract Labour Act from 20 to 50	19
4.	Fixed Term Employment	25
5.	Allowing women to work in night shift	30

6.	Compounding of offences	25
7.	Enhancing quarterly overtime hours limit (from 75 up to 125 hours)	10
8.	Compliance Notice	36

(iii) Objectives of the Ministry

11. The objectives of the Ministry are enhancing welfare and social security provisions for unorganised sector workers; providing social security to organised sector 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.

(iv) Presentation Detailed Demands for Grants for the Financial Year 2025-26 to the Parliament

12. The Ministry of Labour and Employment (MoLE) presented their Detailed Demands for Grants for the Financial Year 2025-26 to the Parliament on **10th February, 2025** under Demand No: 64 detailing fund requirement under the following Major heads of Accounts:-

- (i) 2251 Secretariat Social Services
- (ii) 2225 Welfare of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Other Backward Classes and Minorities.
- (iii) 2230 Labour Employment & Skill Development
- (iv) 2552 North Eastern Areas
- (v) 4225 Capital Outlay on Welfare of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Other Backward Classes and Minorities.
- (vi) 4250 Capital Outlay on other Social Services

(v) Budgetary Allocations 2025-26

13. Total Allocation for the Ministry for the year 2025-26 is as under:-

Budgetary Allocations 2025-26

			(Rs. In Crore)
Sl.No	Revenue	Capital	Total
1	32606.92	39.27	32646.19

14. As may be seen from the above, Budgetary allocation under Revenue & Capital is Rs. 32606.92 crore and Rs. 39.27crore, respectively. Employees' Pension Scheme, 1995, with a Budget allocation of Rs.11250.00 crore accounts

for 34.50% of Revenue budget allocation. New Employment Generation Scheme, with a Budget allocation of Rs. 20000.00 crore accounts for 61.34% of Revenue budget allocation.

15. The Ministry have been allocated Rs. 32646.19 crore for the year 2025-26. Major Schemes run by the Ministry include National Career Services-(NCS), Coaching and Guidance for SC, ST and Other Backward Classes, New Employment Generation Scheme, Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maandhan (PM-SYM), National Pension Scheme for Traders and Self-Employed Persons, National Database for Unorganised Workers (NDUW), Social Security for Plantation Workers in Assam, Scheme for Rehabilitation of Bonded Labour, Labour Welfare Scheme, Employees Pension Scheme 1995, etc.

II. FINANCIAL AND PHYSICAL PERFORMANCE

(i) Proposals and Allocations for 2025-26

16. As regards the details of the proposed amount scheme-wise and actual allocation as approved by the Ministry of Finance for the year 2025-26, the Ministry submitted the following:-

Scheme-wise details of Budget Estimate Proposed & Received 2025-26			
			(Rs. in Crore)
Sl. No.	Schemes / Programmes	BE (2025-26) Proposed	BE (2025-26) Received
The Budget Allocations, net of recoveries, are given below:-			
A. CENTRE'S EXPENDITURE			
Establishment Expenditure of the Centre			
1	Secretariat Services	122.11	106.54
2	Labour Bureau	30.34	27.67
3	Other Items related Chief Labour Commissioner, Central Government Industrial Tribunal, Research and Information Technology	131.68	122.70
4	Directorate General of Factory Advice Services (DGFASLI)	45.98	39.01
5	Directorate General of Mines Safety (DGMS)	137.52	126.53
6	International Cooperation	42.50	41.99
7	Directorate General of Employment	79.48	73.03
8	DG Labour Welfare Scheme (Estb..)	173.77	161.42
Total-Establishment Expenditure of the Centre		763.38	698.89
B. Central Sector Schemes/Projects			
9	Labour and Employment Statistical System (LESS)	72.72	72.72
10	Labour Welfare Scheme	50.68	50.68
11	National Database for Unorganised Workers	27.80	27.80
12	Employees Pension Scheme, 1995	11250.00	11250.00
13	Social Security for Plantation Workers in Assam	66.87	66.87
14	Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maan-Dhan Yojana	244.02	244.02

15	National Pension Scheme for Traders and Self-Employed Persons erstwhile Pradhan Mantri Karam Yogi Maan-Dhan Yojana	5.10	5.10
16	Atmanirbhar Bharat Rojgar Yojana	0.00	0.00
17	Scheme for Rehabilitation of Bonded Labourer	6.00	6.00
18	Coaching and Guidance for SC, ST and Other Backward Classes	20.61	20.61
19	National Career Services	82.29	77.00
20	New Employment Generation Scheme	28649.00	20000.00
Total-Central Sector Schemes/Projects		40475.09	31820.80
C. Other Central Sector Expenditure			
Autonomous Bodies			
21	Dattopant Thengadi National Board for Workers Education and Development	200.65	110.85
22	National Labour Institute	15.65	15.65
Total-Autonomous Bodies		216.30	126.50
Total-Other Central Sector Expenditure		216.30	126.50
Grand Total (A+B+C)		41454.77	32646.19

(ii) Budgetary Allocation and Utilisation during 2022-23, 2023-24 and 2024-25

17. The BE, RE and AE figures for the Ministry during the last three fiscal and BE for 2025-26 are as follows:

(Rs. in Crores)

S. No.	Year	BE	RE	AE	Shortfall/Excess Expenditure w.r.t. RE
1	2022-23	16893.68	16117.65	14800.61	1317.04(-)
2	2023-24	13221.73	12521.06	11385.62	1135.44(-)
3	2024-25	22531.47	18307.22	9527.66 (upto 15.02.2025)	8779.56(-)
4	2025-26	32646.19	-	-	-

18. The BE of Rs. 22531.47 crore for the year 2024-25 was reduced to Rs. 18307.22 crore at RE stage while the Ministry was able to spend only Rs. 9527.66 crore viz. 52% (as on 15.02.2025). When asked about the reasons for the considerably less utilization of funds and how do the Ministry propose to utilize the remaining amount of Rs. 8779.56 crore viz. 48% in the remaining period of the current fiscal, the Ministry stated as under:

“The Ministry utilized Rs. 9527.66 Crore as on 15.02.2025, which is 52% of the RE 2024-25. The major remaining portion (77%) of the Revised Estimates (RE) for 2024-25, amounting to ₹8779.56 crore, is pending primarily under ELI Scheme (NEGS) which is yet to be approved by the cabinet. The expenditure under the ELI scheme will depend on the final

approval from the Cabinet and the timing of such approval. It is expected that the allocation in RE 2024-25 under the other schemes will be utilized. The Ministry does not anticipate any significant unspent funds by the end of 31st March, 2025, except for the ELI scheme. The Ministry is making all out efforts to obtain the final approval from the Cabinet at the earliest.”

19. In this context, the representative of the Ministry during evidence deposited as under:

“We are confident that we will be able to achieve RE except ELI. It depends on when do we get approval for ELI, if we get approval in one day, then we will be able to spend some of the funds dedicated for ELI or else we will decide in the first week of March how much money we keep and surrender the rest.”

(iii) Surrender of Rs. 11044.05 crore

20. It was pointed out that based on the reduced RE 2024-25, the Ministry have proposed to tentatively surrender Rs. 4201.08 crore (Revenue = Rs. 4189.78 crore & Capital = Rs. 11.30 crore). On being asked as to what reasons do the Ministry attribute for the same and how surrender of such a huge amount will affect budget allocations of the Ministry in future, the Ministry replied as under:

“The Ministry has tentatively surrendered under the schemes namely ELI, ABRY, EPS’95, NDUW & LESS on the basis of reduction in RE 2024-25. The ELI Scheme was announced in the Budget 2024-25 in July 2024, with the Ministry of Finance allocating ₹10,000 crore in the Detailed Demand for Grants. However, given the limited time available in the current financial year, along with considerations regarding eligibility conditions and the sustainability of the targeted additional employment, the expenditure was not likely to reach the allocated amount. As a result, ₹3,200.57 crore has been surrendered under ELI scheme in the RE 2024-25. The ABRY scheme is closed with effect from 31.03.2022 and only payments to existing beneficiaries were being made. Funds of Rs 150 cr were provided in BE 2024-25 for spill over payments, if any, for beneficiaries registered in March 2022. However, no demand has been received so far and Budget requirement has been revised as NIL in RE for the FY 2024-25. As far as EPS’95 is concerned, it is demand driven scheme. GoI contributions are made based on actual requirements. The demand re-assessed at RE stage was lesser than BE. Under NDUW Scheme, the funds are surrendered due to low demand of claims for the ex-gratia payment from the States and also less than anticipated demand

from NIC for maintenance and other activities of the portal. Under LESS Scheme, funds allocated under SC & ST and North East components, cannot be utilised as Scheme relates to Pan India surveys is not beneficiary oriented and the new projects (CPI Base year revision, QES, etc.) are still at processing/approval stage. Therefore, surrenders of funds are for prudential reasons and are not likely to affect allocations of the Ministry in future.”

The Ministry, subsequently, informed that out of Rs. 11044.05 crore surrendered during 2024-25, Rs. 9999.50 crore pertain to ELI Scheme.

(iv) Reduction of Rs. 8808.59 crore by Ministry of Finance

21. It was also pointed out that the funds sought for 2025-26 was Rs. 41454.77 crore, while the amount allocated by the Ministry of Finance is Rs. 32646.19 crore i.e. there is reduction of Rs. 8808.58 crore. Out of which Rs. 8649 crore pertains to New Employment Generation Scheme. When asked about the specific reasons quoted by the Ministry of Finance for the decrease in the funds sought and the manner in which the Ministry would work towards successfully implementing the various Schemes even after the reduction in the BE for 2025-26, the Ministry responded as under:

“The main reduction of funds in BE 25-26 is under ELI scheme due to non-finalization of the scheme at the time of RE/BE meeting. The MoF had assured during the meeting that if more funds are required in FY 25-26, the same may be demanded at RE stage.”

(v) Funds spent in each quarter as per Quarterly Expenditure Plan

22. When asked to specify the quantum of funds spent in each quarter during the financial year 2024-25 upto 31.01.2025 as well as the shortfall as per the Quarterly Expenditure Plan against the allocated budget along with the steps taken to enhance the utilization of the remaining amount, the Ministry furnished the following details:

“Quarter wise Expenditure plan and Expenditure are given below:

(Fig. in Crore)

QEP Ist	Exp Ist Quarter	QEP IInd	Exp IInd Quarter	QEP IIIrd	Exp IIIrd Quarter	QEP IVrd	Exp up 15.02.25
3103.8226	2947.1570	3235.3182	2755.6208	3127.2073	2061.6080	13065.1219 *	9527.66

* On account of anticipated expenditure under ELI.

Reasons for the shortfall:- During the current FY 24-25, the major shortfall in expenditure is under ELI, ABRY, NDUW, LESS and Rehabilitation of Bonded Labour Schemes. The ABRY scheme is closed with effect from 31.03.2022 and only payments to existing beneficiaries were being made. Funds of Rs 150 cr were provided in BE 2024-25 for spill over payments, if any, for beneficiaries registered in March 2022. However, no demand has been received so far and Budget requirement has been revised as NIL in RE for the FY 2024-25. As far as ELI is concerned, the scheme is yet to be approved and the expenditure under the ELI scheme will depend on the final approval from the Cabinet and the timing of such approval. NDUW and Rehabilitation of Bonded Labour are demand driven schemes and the expenditure under these schemes are directly linked to the demand received. Under LESS scheme, the shortfall in expenditure was due to some projects (CPI Base year revision, QES, etc.) being still at processing/approval stage.

Steps taken by the Ministry: - The Ministry is making all out efforts to obtain the approval of the Cabinet for the ELI Scheme. Projects under LESS are being expedited. Bureau Heads have been advised to ensure full expenditure during the year vis-a-vis targets. The pace of expenditure is also being reviewed on weekly basis by JS&FA and Secretary, MoLE.”

(vi) Reappropriation of Funds of Rs. 1118.25 crore

23. It was noted that re-appropriation of funds of Rs. 26.98 crores from one head to another has been proposed to be made during 2024-25. The major heads enlisted are DGMS, DGFASLI, NDUW, PMSYM, DGE, Labour Bureau and CLC(C) and RLCs and the reasons for savings *inter-alia* include inability of CPWD to utilize the fund, fewer claims of *ex-gratia* payments, non-filling of vacant posts, pending liability of previous financial year, etc. In addition, Rs 1091.27 crore is also proposed for re-appropriation from non-functional (North Eastern Region) Major Head 2552 to functional head to clear the pending liabilities during 2024-25. Thus, the total re-appropriation comes to Rs. 1118.25 crore. When asked to state whether provisions contained in GFRs for re-appropriation of funds were scrupulously followed as well as the measures envisaged for optimal utilization of funds in future, the Ministry stated as under:

“Reappropriations are done only on functional requirement and strictly following the provisions contained in GFRs for re-appropriation of funds. All re-appropriation are being done using re-appropriation module in MoF’s UBIS portal. For optimal utilization of funds in future, instructions have been issued to the concerned administrative divisions of the

Ministry of Labour & Employment to ensure responsible budgeting and full utilization of funds. They have also been advised to make provisions for only such schemes which are likely to get implemented in the ensuing year.”

(vii) Allocation for North Eastern Areas

24. It was noticed that the BE of Rs. 2191.07 crore for North Eastern Areas has been reduced to Rs.1758.97 crore at RE stage during 2024-25. The BE for 2025-26 is Rs. 3208.67 crore. When asked about the reasons for reduction of funds at RE stage and how much amount has been utilized, the Ministry stated as under:

“The North Eastern Region (NER) is provided with gross budgetary support amounting to at least 10 % of the allocation of schemes. If the revised estimates for the scheme are reduced for any reason, the NER components will be automatically reduced. For example, due to non-approval of ELI scheme (NEGS), ₹3,200.57 crore was surrendered in the RE 2024-25, leading to a reduction of ₹342.90 crore in the NER component. As on 15.02.2025, the Ministry’s NER expenditure is ₹ 909.51 Crore. Compared to the Ministry’s total expenditure up to 15.02.2025, ₹ 9527.66 Crore, it is almost 10%.

For BE 2025-26, the increase in fund allocation for the North Eastern Areas is mainly due to a 100% increase in the allocation under the ELI Scheme from Rs. 10000 Cr to Rs. 20000 Cr. The Ministry is making all out efforts to obtain the final approval from the Cabinet for ELI scheme at the earliest so that the increased funds can be fully utilized during FY 2025-26.”

25. The Ministry further clarified as under:

“As per Government of India decision vide DoE’s OM 02(01)/2024-E.II(A) dated 03.06.2024 lump sum funds are earmarked to various Ministries/Departments, for northeast areas under non-functional heads, i.e., Major Heads 2552, 4552, and 6552. These non-functional heads are merely control heads from which no actual expenditure can be made during the normal course (except by Ministry of Development of NER). For incurring expenditure, these funds are mandatorily routed from the non-functional heads to the functional heads in the respective schemes through re-appropriations. In view of above provision, re-appropriation of lump sum fund kept in Major Head 2552 to respective functional head for incurring expenditure on activities being run in North-Eastern region is mandatory.”

III. OVERALL ACHIEVEMENTS - PHYSICAL TARGETS

26. Scheme-wise physical targets and achievements along with reasons for shortfall in achievements of the targets during 2022-23, 2023-24 and 2024-25 and anticipated target for 2025-26 for the major Schemes have been stated to be as under:-

(i) Scheme for the Rehabilitation of Bonded Labour, 2016

Sl. No.	Name of the Scheme/ Project/ Programme	Division	2022-23			2023-24			2024-25			% of Achievement for the last three years	2025-26 Target
			Target	Achievement	Shortfall if any indicating reasons in brief	Target	Achievement	Shortfall if any indicating reasons in brief	Target	Achievement (up to 16.01.25)	Shortfall if any indicating reasons in brief		
1	Central Sector Scheme for Rehabilitation of Bonded Labour	M/ Labour & Employment	No target can be fixed as it is a demand driven scheme	673 bonded labour has been released and rehabilitated.	NA	No target can be fixed as it is a demand driven scheme	468 bonded labour has been released and rehabilitated.	NA	No target can be fixed as it is a demand driven scheme	246 bonded labour has been released and rehabilitated.	NA	NA	No target can be fixed

(ii) Labour Welfare Scheme

Sl No	Name of the Scheme/ Project/ Programme	Division	2022-23			2023-24			2024-25			% of achievements for the last three years	2025-26 Target
			Target	Achievement	Shortfall if any indicating reasons in brief	Target	Achievement	Shortfall if any indicating reasons in brief	Target	Achievement (up to 16.01.25)	Shortfall if any indicating reasons in brief		
1	Health*	DGLW	-	1880034	-	-	1802000	-	-	1048876	-	-	-

2	Education	DGLW	100000	105277	-5277	100000	96051	3949	100000	29563	-	76.97%	100000
3	Housing**	DGLW	-	7462	-	-	8406	-	-	-	-	-	-

*Health Scheme is demand driven scheme, hence no target is fixed.

** The Scheme has attained sunset. The Scheme has been converged with Pradhan Mantri Aawas Yojana.

(iii) National Career Service

Sl. No.	Name of the Scheme/ Project Programme	2022-23				2023-24			2024-25			% of achievement for the last three years	2025-26 Target
		Division	Target	Achievement	Short-fall/ if any, indicating reasons in brief	Target	Achievement	Short-fall/ if any, indicating reasons in brief	Target	Achievement (up to 16.01.25)	Short-fall/ if any, indicating reasons in brief		
1.	NATIONAL CAREER SERVICE	NCS, DGE, MoLE	59 (MCC to be operationalized) 50 (New MCC to be established and operationalized) 997 Emp. EX to be interlink with NCS portal Organisation of Job Fair at district level Trg to Emp. Officers on NCS	59 MCCs operationalized 177 New MCCs established	N/A	75 MCCs to be established Two States/UTs to be integrated with NCS portal	Achieved nine States integrated with NCS portal	N/A	Setting of 2 Career lounges in Model Career Centres with Industry partnership Uniform guidelines for Employment portals of the States. Migration of NCS portal from DC&DR to Azure public cloud. 2 States/UTs to be integrated with NCS portal	Under process Under process On cost benefit analysis of migration of NCS portal, it was found that in light of current AMC arrangement & NCS2.0 the expenditure may not be required in the current financial year. Achieved	N/A		Onboarding of MSP for NCS 2.0 and its development.

(iv) Welfare of SC/ST job seekers through Coaching, Guidance and Vocational Training

Sl. No.	Name of the Scheme/ project / programme	Division	2022-23			2023-24			2024-25			% of achievements for the last three years	2025-26 Target
			Target	Achievements	Shortfall Indicating reasons in brief	Target	Achievements	Shortfall Indicating reasons in brief	Target	Achievements (up to 16.01.25)	Shortfall Indicating reasons in brief		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1	Welfare of SC/ST job seekers through Coaching, Guidance and Vocational Training and introduction of new courses in existing NCSCs & establishment of new NCSCs in the States not covered so far.	(Directorate General of Employment) DGE	To provide vocational guidance, career counselling, typing and shorthand facilities to 2400 SC/ST job seekers and also prepare them for competitive examination/selection tests for Group 'C' posts. To provide Computer Training to 6879 educated SC/ST job seekers	2400 SC/ST candidates imparted training under special coaching scheme. The targets fully achieved. Computer Training to 4829 educated SC/ST jobseekers provided. The computer Hardware Maintenance Training provided to 2050 SC/ST Jobseekers. The targets fully achieved.	No shortfall	To provide vocational career counselling, typing and shorthand facilities to 2160 SC/ST job seekers and also prepare them for competitive examination/selection tests for Group 'C' posts. To provide Computer Training to 2925 educated SC/ST job seekers	2160 SC/ST candidates imparted training under special coaching scheme. The target fully achieved. Computer Training to 2925 educated SC/ST job seekers	No shortfall	To provide vocational guidance, career counselling, typing and shorthand facilities to 2160 SC/ST job seekers and also prepare them for competitive examination/selection tests for Group 'C' posts. To provide Computer Training to 2925 educated SC/ST job seekers	2160 SC/ST candidates are undergoing training under special coaching scheme. The target will be fully achieved. Computer Training to 2925 educated SC/ST job seekers are being provided. The targets will be fully achieved	No shortfall	2022-23: 100% 2023-24: 100% 2024-25: 100%	To provide vocational guidance, career counselling, typing and shorthand facilities to 1,50,000 SC/ST jobseekers. To prepare 2160 SC/ST jobseekers for competitive examination/selection tests for Group 'C' posts. To provide Computer Training to 2925 educated SC/ST jobseekers.

(v) Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maan-Dhan (PM-SYM) Yojana

Sl. No.	Name of the Scheme/Project/Programme	2022-23			2023-24			2024-25			% of achievements for the last three years	2025-26 Target
		Targets	Achievements	Short fall, if any indicating reasons in brief*	Targets	Achievements	Short fall, if any indicating reasons in brief*	Targets	Achievement (up to 16.01.25)	Shortfall, if any indicating reasons in brief*		
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)
	Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maan-Dhan (PM-SYM) Yojana	Enrollment of 3 crore beneficiaries	2,72,494	*	NA as the scheme was approved for 2018-23. The scheme was extended without fixing any target.	65,775	*	Enrollment of 1 lakh beneficiaries	94,470	*	2022-23 = 0.90% 2023-24 = NA 2024-25 = 94.47	Enrollment of 1 lakh beneficiaries

* The reasons for not achieving the target or short fall of expenditure as: -

1. It is a contributory scheme, hence long-term financial commitment required by the beneficiaries.
2. Awareness, persuasion and mobilization of beneficiaries are required through State Government or CSC Machinery.
3. Unavailability of regular employment opportunities.
4. Lack of a Formal Employer-Employee Relationship.
5. Presence of other pension scheme covering unorganized workers from Central Government (Atal Pension Yojana, Old age pension for senior citizens under National social Assistance Program (NSAP). Most of the States have separate pension scheme for unorganized workers free of cost.

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

Sl. No.	Name of the Scheme/Project/Programme	2022-23			2023-24			2024-25			% of achievements for the last three years	2025-26 Target
		Targets	Achievements	Short fall, if any indicating reasons in brief	Targets	Achievements	Short fall, if any indicating reasons in brief	Targets	Achievement (up to 16.01.25)	Shortfall, if any indicating reasons in brief		
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)
	National Pension Scheme for Traders, Shopkeepers	Enrollment of 2 crore beneficiaries	2424	*	Enrollment of 2.5 crore beneficiaries	1591	*	Enrollment of 10,000 beneficiaries	4505	*	2022-23 = 0.01212% 2023-24 =	Enrollment of 10,000 beneficiaries

	pers and Self-Employed Persons:	es			ficiaries						0.0063 64% 2024- 25= 45.05 %	
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* The reasons for not achieving the target or short fall of expenditure as: -

- 1 It is a contributory scheme, hence long-term financial commitment required by the beneficiaries.
- 2 Awareness, persuasion and mobilization of beneficiaries are required through State Government or CSC Machinery.
- 3 Unavailability of regular employment opportunities.
- 4 Lack of a Formal Employer-Employee Relationship.
- 5 Presence of other pension scheme covering unorganized workers from Central Government (Atal Pension Yojana, Old age pension for senior citizens under National social Assistance Program (NSAP). Most of the States have separate pension scheme for unorganized workers free of cost.

(vii) National Database of Unorganised Workers

Sl. No.	Name of the Scheme /Project /Programme	2022-23			2023-24			2024-25			% of achievements for the last three years	2025-26 Target
		Targets	Achievements	Shortfall, if any indicating reasons in brief	Targets	Achievements	Shortfall, if any indicating reasons in brief	Targets	Achievement (up to 16.01.25)	Shortfall, if any indicating reasons in brief		
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)
	National Database of Unorganised Workers	To register 5 crore unorganised workers on e Portal	1.77 cr	--	To register 5 crore unorganised workers on e-Shram Portal	0.68 cr	*	To register 5 crore unorganised workers on e-Shram Portal	1.21 cr	*	2022-23 = 35.4% 2023-24 = 13.6% 2024-25 = 24.2 %	NA

*eShram received a significant response within the first year of its inception on 26.08.2021 and the number of unorganized workers registered on the portal exceeded the yearly target envisaged as per EFC note of NDUW. As on 04.03.2025, over 30.69 crore unorganized sector workers have registered on eShram Portal, on self-declaration basis.

IV. SCHEME-WISE ANALYSIS

EMPLOYMENT SCHEME

(i) National Career Services

27. The main objectives of National Career Service (NCS) project are as follows:

1. Enhancing career and employment opportunities
2. Counselling and guidance for career development
3. Enhancing quality of workforce
4. Focusing on inclusive growth initiatives.
5. Empowering youth through digital skills.

28. The main features of NCS portal are as under:

1. Around 1162 approved counsellors providing career guidance.
2. 3960+ job roles with a knowledge repository of career content on these job roles.
3. Toll-Free Call Centre (Helpdesk No. 1514) in 7 different languages.
4. Integration with 30 States for information exchange.
5. Strategic MoU partnerships with portals/private organizations like Monster, Freshers world, HireMee, TCS-iON, Microsoft, CSC, TMI-e2e, Amazon etc.
6. Linkage with EPFO, ESIC, MSDE (Skill India portal), Digi Locker.
7. Linkage with Govt. recruitment bodies – UPSC, SSC, Railway Recruitment Boards etc.

29. With regard to MOUs signed and linking of overseas jobs, the representative of the Ministry during evidence deposed as under:

“Sir, many MoUs have been signed in continuation to this. For example, MoUs have been signed with AIIMS, Amazon signors etc. The jobs they have are now coming to NCS. We are matching them with job seekers.In this, overseas jobs are also being linked so that people can get all kinds of jobs on the same portal”.

(a) Integration with 30 States for information exchange

30. It was informed that 30 States/UTs have been integrated for information exchange. The Committee were also apprised that 23 States/UTs have been integrated and 07 are directly using NCS. The Ministry also stated that the integration of remaining 6 States/UTs is under process. In response to a specific query as to when do the Ministry propose to integrate the remaining 06

States/UTs and whether any timeline has been fixed to complete the exercise, the Ministry stated as under:

“The integration of remaining 6 States is under process and likely to be completed by July, 2025.”

(b) Third Party Evaluation of Scheme

31. The Committee were also apprised that the Scheme has been approved for continuation during 15th Finance Commission Cycle, i.e., 2021-26 and third party evaluation of the Scheme has been entrusted to M/s Quality Council of India. When asked whether any time limit has been prescribed to complete the exercise, the Ministry responded as under:

“Yes, the work order has been issued to M/s Quality Council of India on 11th December, 2024 and 3 months from award of work has been prescribed to complete the exercise. Field work is under process and likely to be completed by 07th March, 2025.”

(c) On-boarding of Managed Service Provider (MSP) for NCS 2.0

32. It was mentioned that NCS 2.0 portal will be launched to facilitate activities duly integrating various new features like AI enabled smart job matching, job recommendation engine, integrated data system for better employment service to both job seekers and employers. The On-boarding of Managed Service Provider (MSP) for NCS 2.0 and its development is proposed to be undertaken during 2025-26. When asked to state by when the exercise is proposed to be undertaken and completed, the Ministry stated as under:

“The exercise for the selection of the Managed Service Provider (MSP) for NCS 2.0 has been initiated and is now at the stage of finalization.”

(d) Setting up of PM e2E (Pradhan Mantri Education to Employment) Career Lounges and preparation of uniform guidelines for employment portals of the States.

33. It was also mentioned that the work relating to setting up of 02 Career Lounges in Model Career Centre with Industry Partnership and preparation of uniform guidelines for employment portals of the States is under process. When asked to state by when the targets are proposed to be achieved, the number of Model Career Centres in existence and out of them how many have Career Lounges, the Ministry replied as under:

“The Government has targeted to open 400 MCCs which has already been achieved. Till date the Government has approved 407 (7 Non-funded) Model Career Centres (MCCs) to provide all career related

services including jobs from private and government sectors, information on online & offline job fairs, job search & matching, career counselling, vocational guidance, information on skill development courses, skill/training programmes etc. through a digital platform.

In order to further enhance the reach, it is proposed to be setting up PM e2E (Pradhan Mantri Education to Employment) Career Lounges in collaboration with industry in various universities. One PM e2E (Pradhan Mantri Education to Employment) Career Lounge under the NCS project of the Ministry of Labour and Employment is set to be operational by March, 2025 and the second Career Lounge set up is under process.

The study of employment portals of 5 States/UTs has been completed for preparation of uniform guidelines and remaining states likely to be completed till May, 2025.”

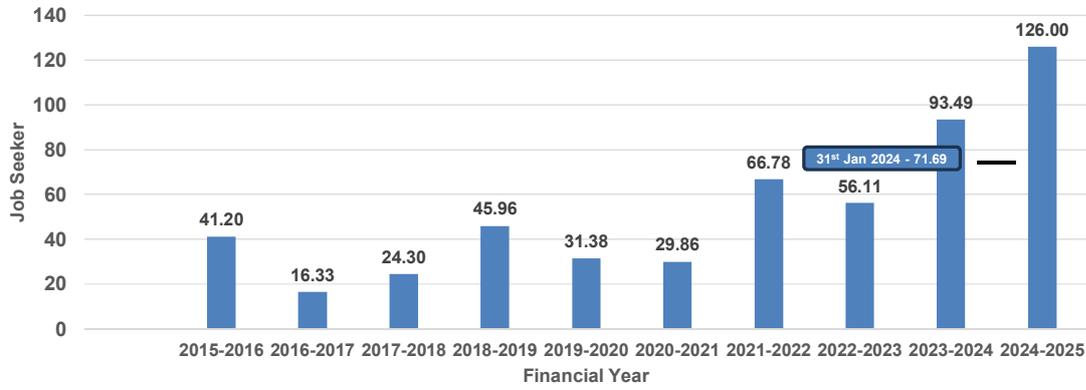
34. When asked to clarify whether any timeline has been fixed to make operational the second Career Lounge, the Ministry stated that both PM E2E (Pradhan Mantri Education to Employment) Career Lounge are set to be launched and make operational by March 2025.

(e) Number of Job Seekers, vacancies posted on NCS, employers registered and job fares conducted

35. With regard to the number of Job Seekers, vacancies posted on NCS, employers registered and job fares conducted since 2016-17, the Ministry furnished following details:

NCS – Notable growth of 35% in Job seeker registration from 2023-24 to 2024-25

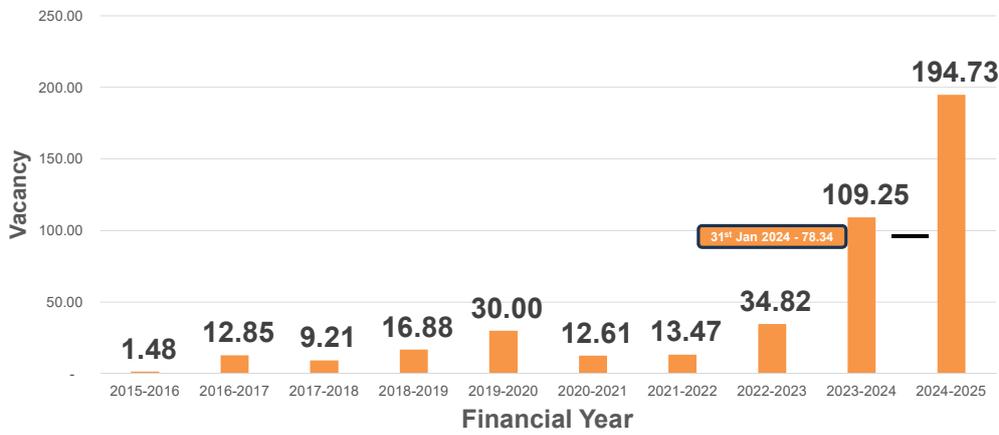
Jobseeker Count (Lakhs)



Data as on 31st January 2025

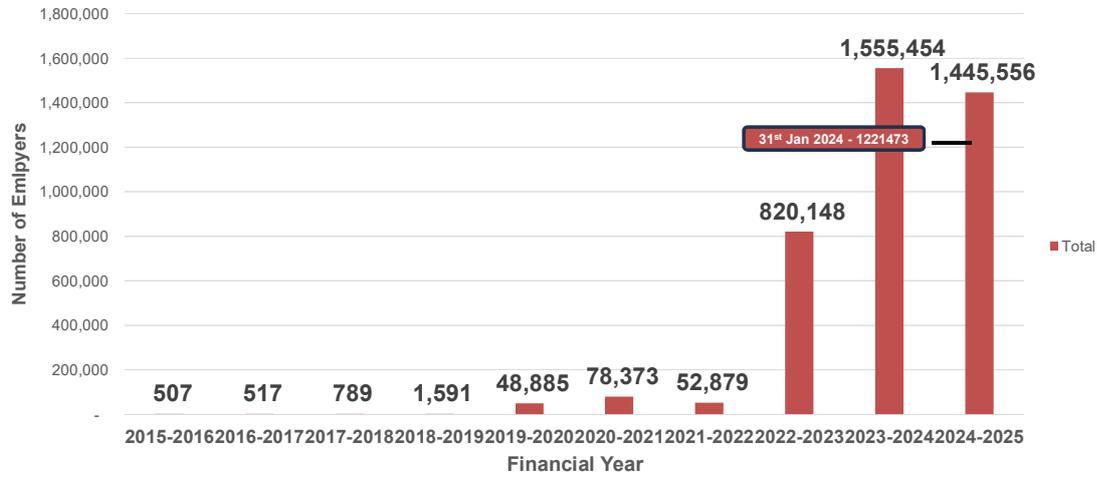
NCS – 78% Surge in number of Vacancies posted on NCS in 2024-25 vis a vis 2023-24

Vacancies Posted (Lakhs)



Data as on 31st January 2025

NCS – Employer registration continues to grow on NCS in 2024-25



Data as on 31st January 2024 = 1221473

Data as on 31st January 2025

NCS – Data of Job Fairs conducted by MCC since 2016-17



Data as on 31st January 2025

(A) Job Fairs Organised

36. It was mentioned that during 2024-25 (as on 31.01.2025) 7,337 job fairs were organized through the NCS Portal, engaging 37,138 employers, which resulted in final selection of over 1 lakh job seekers. When asked about the number of job seekers participated in these job fairs, the Ministry stated that a total of 5,68,019 job seekers participated in the Job Fair during the 2024-25 (as on 31.01.2025).

(B) Feedback and placement details under NCS

37. During 2024-25 (as on 31.01.2025), 1.94 crore vacancies were posted by Employers and there were 1.26 crore registered jobseekers. When asked about the number of job seekers who got selected, the Ministry stated as under:

“Notifying final hiring figures is not a mandatory requirement of NCS portal. However, the number of provisionally selected candidates is 35,25,361 during the 2024-25 (as on 31.01.2025) through portal and job fair.”

38. With regard to the feedback and placement details under NCS, the representative of the Ministry during evidence deposed as under:

“Sir, when they get jobs, we don't get feedback from the NCS. But, when we do job fairs, we come to know.”

39. The representative of the Ministry further supplemented as under:

“On this portal, we do job matching, it is not necessary that if someone gets a job, then he has to inform us or employers inform us. People keep their applications on portal, it may happen that someone gets a better job tomorrow than what he got today. Most people don't tell us that we have already got the job. We can show only those who are finally selected. We can tell about the number of people who have been selected during the job fairs, we will not be able to tell how many people were actually plus.”

40. Under NCS, it was informed that there are 1.10 crore active job seekers, more than 40 lakh employers and 4 crore vacancies were mobilized. When asked to provide the number of persons, who were selected/got employment, the Ministry stated as under:

“Notifying final hiring figures is not a mandatory requirement of NCS portal. However, as on 31.01.2025, the number of provisionally shortlisted candidates is more than 2.22 crore since inception including 35.25 lakh during the 2024-25 through portal and job fair.”

41. As per the data provided to the Committee, during 2024-25, 1.26 crore job seekers are registered against 1.94 crore vacancies i.e. the number of vacancies is more than the number of job seekers. When asked about the number of job seekers, who got employment/placement as per their qualifications, and whether one of the reasons for having more vacancies vis-à-vis job seekers is that the job seekers do not get employment opportunities as per their qualifications, the Ministry responded as under:

“Notifying final hiring figures is not a mandatory requirement of NCS portal. However, the number of provisionally selected candidates is 35.25 lakh during the 2024-25 (as on 31.01.2025) through portal and job fair. The jobseekers are not mandated to report back on NCS after getting employed. The difference in the number of vacancies and job seekers is mainly due to various reasons like skill gaps, lack of requisite experience, location limitations, industry-specific requirements, employer preferences etc.”

(C) Employment trends as per PLFS data

42. With regard to the employment trends as per PLFS data, the representative of the Ministry during evidence disposed as under:

“If we look at the data now, we depend on PLFS data and in the broad employment trends that we get from PLFS data, we see that there is an improving trend from 2017-18. We look at these indicators, we see the labour force participation rate, the worker participation rate, the unemployment rate, then we find increase in labour force participation rate and the worker participation ratio. In the year 2017-18, the Labour Force Participation Rate was nearly 50, which is now above 60. Similarly, we see a cut in the unemployment rate, which has gone from 6 per cent to approximately 3 per cent. Apart from this, the data of RBI shows that our total workforce, which is in economic activities, is about 643 million. More than 64 crore people are in economic activities. In this, we see a very significant trend of the rise of female workforce.”

43. When asked to state whether there has been increase in female contractual workers in Organized and Unorganized Sectors and the data of female workers engaged in the age group of 18 to 35 years in the Organized and Unorganized Sector separately during the last three years, the Ministry responded as under:

“The data on Employment and Unemployment is collected through Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) which is conducted by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) since 2017-18. The survey period is July to June every year.

As per the data available in latest Annual PLFS Reports, the estimated Worker Population Ratio (WPR) indicating employment on usual status for females of age 15 years and above (including contractual workers in Organized and Unorganized Sectors) has increased to 40.3% in 2023-24 from 31.7% in 2021-22.”

44. When asked to furnish category wise (youth, rural area, urban area, women, etc) and year-wise PLFS data regarding the persons who got employment since 2019-20, the Ministry furnished the following data:

“The data on Employment and Unemployment is collected through Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) which is conducted by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) since 2017-18. The survey period is July to June every year.

As per the data available in latest Annual PLFS Reports, the estimated Worker Population Ratio (WPR) indicating employment on usual status for different categories during the year 2019-20 to 2023-24 is as follows:

1. WPR for youth aged 15-29 years on usual status

Survey Period	WPR (in %)
2019-20	34.7
2020-21	36.1
2021-22	36.8
2022-23	40.1
2023-24	41.7

Source: PLFS, MoSPI

2. WPR for Persons of age 15 years & above on Usual Status in Rural and Urban area

Survey Period	Rural WPR (in %)	Urban WPR (in %)
2019-20	53.3	45.8
2020-21	55.5	45.8
2021-22	55.6	46.6
2022-23	59.4	47.7
2023-24	62.1	49.4

Source: PLFS, MoSPI

3. WPR for Females of age 15 years & above on Usual Status

Survey Period	Female WPR (in %)
2019-20	28.7
2020-21	31.4
2021-22	31.7
2022-23	35.9
2023-24	40.3

Source: PLFS, MoSPI

(D) Funds allocation and utilization

45. The details of fund allocation and utilization in National Career Services during 2022-23 to 2024-25 and BE for 2025-26 are as follows:

(Rs. in Crores)

S. No.	Year	BE	RE	AE	Shortfall/Excess Expenditure
1	2022-23	52.00	42.00	43.99	1.99(+)
2	2023-24	52.00	52.00	46.90	5.10(-)
3	2024-25	58.00	58.00	37.37 (upto 15.02.2025)	20.63(-)
4	2025-26	77.00	-	-	-

The BE and RE for 2024-25 was Rs. 58.00 crore out of which an amount of Rs. 37.37 crore (64.43%) only has been utilized as on 15.02.2025 which leaves Rs. 20.63 crore (35.57%) as unspent balance. During the examination of DFG (2024-25), the Committee were informed that the entire amount of Rs. 58.00 crore would be used for payment of committed liabilities of Consultancy agency, System Integrator, Social Media agency, etc. during the FY 2024-25. In this regard, when asked to state whether the Ministry would be able to meet their commitment and utilise the left out funds during the current fiscal while keeping within the FRBM limits, the Ministry stated as under:

“The BE and RE for FY 2024-25 is Rs. 58.00 crore out of which an amount of Rs. 38.46 crore (66.31%) have been utilized as on 19.02.2025 and rest of the amount would be utilized for payment of committed liabilities of Consultancy agency, System Integrator, Social Media agency, etc. during FY 2024-25.”

(ii) Welfare of SC/ST job seekers through Coaching and Guidance

46. A scheme for “Welfare of SC/ST jobseekers” through the network of 25 NCSC for SC/STs across the country. The objective of the scheme is to enhance the employability of SC/ST jobseekers through vocational guidance, career counselling, computer training, pre-recruitment training etc. These Centres conduct outreach programmes like job fairs, career talk and group guidance activities in various educational institutes for channelizing the job seekers in appropriate vocations. Market driven O-level software, Computer Hardware Maintenance, Office Automation Accounting and Publishing Assistant, Computer Application Business Accounting Associate and Cyber Secured Web Development Associate training are imparted to jobseekers through NIELIT with a view to prepare them to meet the demands of the labour market. A coaching programme is also run through local training institutions to prepare SC/ST jobseekers for the competitive examinations. In order to build confidence among SC/STs jobseekers confidence building programmes and pre-recruitment trainings are organized for facilitating SC/ST job seekers entry into the world of work. The scheme has been approved for continuation during 15th Finance Cycle i.e., from 2020-21 to 2025-26.

(a) Third Party Evaluation of the Scheme

47. The Committee were apprised that the third party evaluation of the scheme has been entrusted to M/s Quality Council of India. When asked whether any timeline has been prescribed to complete the exercise and the criteria for selection of third party for evaluation of the Schemes, the Ministry stated as under:

“Yes, the work order has been issued to M/s Quality Council of India (QCI) on 11th Dec, 2024 and 3 months from award of work has been prescribed to complete the exercise. Field work has already been completed by 17.02.2025. The third party for evaluation of the scheme has been selected through GeM.”

(b) Funds allocation and utilization

48. The details of funds allocated during 2022-23 to 2024-25 and BE for 2025-26 are as under:-

(Rs. in Crores)

S. No.	Year	BE	RE	AE	Shortfall/Excess Expenditure
1	2022-23	23.00	23.00	22.06	0.94(-)
2	2023-24	25.00	25.00	23.88	1.12(-)
3	2024-25	20.60	20.60	15.82	4.78(-)
				(upto	

				15.02.2025)	
4	2025-26	20.61		-	-

49. It was noticed that the BE and RE for 2024-25 was Rs. 20.60 crores out of which an amount of Rs. 15.82 crore (76.80%) has been utilized till 15.02.2025 leaving 23.20% of the funds yet to be spent. When asked to state whether the Ministry would be able to utilise the left out funds during the current fiscal while keeping within the FRBM limits, the Ministry stated as under:

“The BE and RE for FY 2024-25 is Rs. 20.60 crore out of which an amount of Rs. 15.97 crore (77.52%) has been utilized as on 19.02.2025 and rest of the amount would be utilized for payment of committed liabilities of Stipend, Academic fee etc. during FY 2024-25.”

(c) Physical Targets

50. It was pointed out that during 2022-23, 2023-24 and 2024-25, the target to provide training to prepare 2400, 2160 and 2160 SC/ST job seekers respectively for competitive examination/selection tests for Group ‘C’ posts was fully achieved. When asked to share the category-wise details of SC/ST candidates who got employment on the basis of training provided under the Scheme, the Ministry responded as under:

“The category-wise details of SC/ST candidates who got the employment on the basis of the training provided under the Scheme are as follows:

S. No.	Year	SC	ST	Total
1	2022-23	543	278	821
2	2023-24	427	179	606
3	2024-25*	25	5	30
Total		995	462	1,457
Note: * The session of 2024-25 will complete in June, 2025				

51. When asked about the preparedness of the Ministry to provide vocational guidance, career counselling, typing and shorthand facilities to 1,50,000 SC/ST job seekers during 2025-26, the Ministry replied as under:

“Ministry is providing Vocational Guidance, Career Counselling, Typing and Shorthand facilities to SC/ST candidates through 25 SC/ST Centres. The Ministry is wholly prepared to meet the target during 2025-26. As on January, 2025 (during the C.F.Y. 2024-25) 2,09,550 SC/ST jobseekers has already been provided Vocational Guidance and Career

Counselling facilities and 11,993 SC/ST jobseekers has been provided Typing and Shorthand Facilities.”

(iii) New Employment Generation Scheme (ELIS)

52. With regard to New Employment Generation Scheme, the Ministry furnished the following details:

“In the FY 2024-25 Budget speech, the Hon'ble Finance Minister announced the launch of three schemes aimed at boosting employment and hiring in the formal sector, collectively known as ‘Employment Linked Incentive’ schemes, to be implemented through the Employees Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO). These schemes provide benefits to both employers and first-time employees enrolled in the EPFO. The 3 employment linked incentive schemes are as follows:

Scheme A: First Timers: This scheme will provide one-month wage to all persons newly entering the workforce in all formal sectors. The direct benefit transfer of one-month salary in 3 instalments to first-time employees, as registered in the EPFO, will be up to Rs. 15,000. The eligibility limit will be a salary of Rs. 1 lakh per month. The scheme is expected to benefit 210 lakh youth.

Scheme B: Job Creation in manufacturing: - This scheme will incentivize additional employment in the manufacturing sector, linked to the employment of first-time employees. An incentive will be provided at specified scale directly both to the employee and the employer with respect to their EPFO contribution in the first 4 years of employment. The scheme is expected to benefit 30 lakh youth entering employment, and their employers.

Scheme C: Support to employers: This employer-focussed scheme will cover additional employment in all sectors. All additional employment within a salary of Rs. 1 lakh per month will be counted. The government will reimburse to employers up to Rs 3,000 per month for 2 years towards their EPFO contribution for each additional employee. The scheme is expected to incentivize additional employment of 50 lakh persons.

Expenditure Finance Committee meeting held on 14.01.2025 under the chairpersonship of Secretary, Department of Expenditure to consider the modifications proposed in the “New Employment Generation Scheme”, a Central Sector Scheme, to be implemented by Ministry of Labour & Employment through EPFO. The process for obtaining Cabinet approval of the said scheme is currently underway.”

(a) Funds allocation and utilization

53. Under the Scheme, during 2024-25, the BE of Rs. 10,000 crore was reduced to Rs. 6799.43 crore at RE stage. Out of which an amount of Rs.6799.37 crore has not been utilized as on 15.02.2025 i.e. there is 100% non-utilization. Despite non-utilization, Rs. 20,000 crore has been earmarked during 2025-26. When asked to state reasons for non-utilization and how do the Ministry propose to utilize the funds during 2024-25 and 2025-26 in each Part of the Scheme, *viz.* Part-A, Part-B and Part-C, the Ministry stated as under:

“The provisions of Rs 6799.43 crore were made at RE stage for the FY 2024-25 considering that the scheme would be implemented during FY 2024-25. However, as the scheme intends to cover above 2.5 crore employees spread over all sectors including manufacturing sector, therefore, a detailed scheme design is required with comprehensive data management and payment methods, prior to implementation thereof. The scheme has been appraised by the EFC and is at the Draft Cabinet Note stage. Pending Cabinet approval, DoE has allowed only Rs 20 Cr to be used for pre-launch activities. Due to the above reasons, the funds earmarked for FY 2024-25 remain unutilized. However, this will not impact the overall financial implications of the scheme as spending can commence only after approval.

So far as provisions and utilisation of Rs 20,000 crore during the financial year 2025-26 is concerned, the same has been earmarked against the estimated expenditure of Rs 28693.78 crores. More allocation can be sought as necessary, at RE stage.”

54. When asked about the present status of New Employment Generation Scheme (ELIS), the Ministry stated as under:

“It is stated that after the final EFC meeting held on 14.01.2025, Draft Cabinet Note is under formulation in consultation with other stakeholder including PMO & Cabinet Secretariat.”

55. The representative of the Ministry during evidence further disposed as under:

“When the Budget was declared in July last year, ten thousand crore rupees were increased, a new ELI scheme was announced. The ELI scheme is at the last stage of approval, it is yet to get cabinet approval. Since we have not yet got cabinet approval, so it has not been spent. Except ELI the budget allocation has reached 90 per cent as of today, as soon as the approval of ELI is received, we will be able to start spending on it.”

V. SOCIAL SECURITY SCHEMES FOR WORKERS

(i) Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maan-dhan (PM-SYM)

56. PM-SYM was launched in February, 2019 in order to provide old age protection to the workers of unorganized sector. This is a voluntary and co-contributory pension scheme. Under the scheme, a monthly minimum assured pension of Rs. 3000/- is provided to the unorganized workers after attaining the age of 60 years. 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. The contribution amount ranges from Rs. 55/- to Rs. 200/ depending upon the entry age of the beneficiary. 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. In addition eligible persons can also self-enroll through visiting the portal www.maandhan.in. As on 31.12.2024, over 45.56 lakhs beneficiaries have been enrolled under the PM-SYM scheme, excluding bulk enrollment 5.06 lakhs beneficiaries for the period of 2019-20.

(a) Funds allocation and utilization

57. The BE, RE and AE figures for PM-SYM during 2022-23 to 2024-25 and BE for 2025-26 are as under:

(Rs. in Crores)

S. No.	Year	BE	RE	AE	Shortfall/Excess Expenditure w.r.t. RE
1	2022-23	350	350	269.91	80.09(-)
2	2023-24	350	205.21	162.51	42.70(-)
3	2024-25	177.24	242.73	134.76 (upto 15.02.2025)	107.97(-)
4	2025-26	244.02			

58. It was noticed that during 2024-25, the BE of Rs.177.24 crore was hiked to Rs. 242.73 crore at RE stage out of which only Rs. 134.76 crore has been utilized as on 15.02.2025 and Rs. 107.97 crore are yet to be utilised. When asked to explain the rationale for hiking the funds for the scheme at RE stage and whether the Ministry would be able to utilise the whole amount by the end of the fiscal 2024-25 and how the Ministry propose to utilize Rs. 244.02 crore allocated for the year 2025-26 considering the fact that there has been persistent under-utilisation since 2022-23, the Ministry stated as under:

“BE 2024-25 of Rs.177.24 crore was increased to Rs. 242.73 crore at RE 2024-25 stage on account of GoI’s liability for contribution. So far, Rs 168.74 crore have been released. The registration for the year 2024-25 as on 19.02.2025 is 1,17,066 compared to 65,775 for the entire financial year 2023-24. Therefore, more registration will require matching contribution to be paid by the Central Government to LIC. Hence, it is expected that close to the allocation in RE 2024-25 will be utilized.”

(b) Achievement of Physical Targets

59. It was noted that during 2022-23, the physical target was to enroll 3 crore beneficiaries, however only 2,72,494 beneficiaries could be enrolled. During 2023-24, no target was fixed as the Scheme was extended without fixing any target but 65,775 beneficiaries were enrolled. The target during 2024-25 & 2025-26 is to enroll 1 lakh beneficiaries each year. When asked to state the reasons for considerable decrease in physical target during 2024-25 & 2025-26 vis-à-vis 2022-23, the Ministry stated as under:

“The reasons for decline in registration include lack of formal employer-employee relationship, irregular employment affecting income, long-term financial commitment.

....., the number of registrations during 2024-25 is 1,17,066 compared to 65,775 in 2023-24. It may be seen that in recent years the registration in PM-SYM has started picking up.”

(c) Evaluation of the Scheme

60. It was pointed out that the Indian Institute of Public Administration (IIPA) had in March, 2023 inter alia recommended merger of two pension Schemes viz. Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maandhan (PM-SYM) and National Pension Scheme for Traders (NPS-Traders) of the Ministry of Labour & Employment with the similar flagship old age pension scheme like Atal Pension Yojana (APY) and thereafter, a Committee was formed under the Chairmanship of DGLW to re-design the PM-SYM. The said Committee recommended that merger of PM-SYM scheme with APY is not feasible due to the operational challenges related to migration and Gap Funding requirement; re-designing of PM-SYM Scheme without merging with APY has to be explored and detailed evaluation of the Scheme needs to be undertaken before taking the proposal to Cabinet for approval. When asked about the present status and what timeline has been prescribed to complete the exercise and by when the matter is likely to be placed before the Cabinet, the Ministry responded as under:

“The detailed evaluation of the PM-SYM scheme requires actuarial evaluation. An actuarial firm has been on-boarded and work has

commenced. On the basis of the report of the actuarial evaluation, scheme parameters will be comprehensively reviewed and a draft cabinet note for a revised scheme will be prepared, by mid FY 2025-26.”

(d) Extension of Scheme

61. The Ministry further stated that the Department of Expenditure, M/o Finance has extended the PM-SYM scheme in present form till 31.03.2026.

(ii) National Pension Scheme for Traders and Self-Employed Persons

62. NPS Traders has been launched on 12.09.2019. It is a voluntary and contributory pension scheme for providing a monthly minimum assured pension of Rs. 3000/- after attaining the age of 60 years to the traders, shopkeepers and self-employed person. The traders, shopkeepers and self-employed person in the age group of 18-40 years with an annual turnover, not exceeding Rs. 1.5 crore and are not member of EPFO/ESIC/NPS (govt funded)/PM-SYM or an income tax payer, can join the scheme. The contribution amount ranges from Rs. 55/- to Rs. 200/ depending upon the entry age of the beneficiary. Enrolment to the scheme is done through the Common Service Centres, with its network of about 4.0 Lakhs Centres across the country. In addition eligible persons can also self-enroll through visiting the portal www.maandhan.in. Under the scheme, 50% monthly contribution is payable by the beneficiary and equal matching contribution is paid by the Central Government. Over 58 thousand beneficiaries have been enrolled under this scheme as on 31.12.2024.

(a) Physical and Financial Progress

63. It was pointed out that the scheme has allocation of Rs.1 lakh only during 2024-25 and the utilization upto 15.02.2025 was Rs. 6000 only. The physical target for 2024-25 was to enroll 10,000 beneficiaries, however, only 4505 beneficiaries could be enrolled. The Scheme has, however, been allocated Rs.5.10 crore as BE for 2025-26 with the physical target to enroll 10,000 beneficiaries which is same as that of 2024-25 but the allocation has been increased by Rs. 5.09 crores. When asked how do the Ministry justify the increased allocation to achieve physical and financial targets during 2025-26, the Ministry stated as under:

“Up to FY 2024-25, the expenditure was being funded from the balance of funds released to LIC in 2021-22. In compliance with GoI’s policy of just in time release the funds not likely to be used in FY 24-25 was returned with interest to CFI by LIC. From FY 25-26 funding of the

scheme has to be from fresh releases of budgeted amount. Therefore, BE 2025-26 has been fixed as Rs. 5.10 crore considering the estimated Rs 27 lakh per month as matching government contribution for around 21 thousand active beneficiaries. Payment for operating expense is also to be paid to LIC from this amount.”

64. When asked to state the amount released to LIC in 2021-22 as well as the funds released to CFI by LIC as well as interest thereon in 2022-23, 2023-24 and 2024-25, the Ministry stated as under:

“The National Pension Scheme for Traders was launched in September, 2019. The Ministry released Rs. 150 cr. from budgetary provision to LIC in 2019 for matching contribution of the Government. Thereafter, funds have not been released to LIC.

In November, 2022 LIC remitted back an amount of Rs. 138.78 cr. in the Central Nodal Agency (CNA) account for the scheme maintained by EPFO (Central Nodal Agency). In 2022-23, 2023-24 and 2024-25, Rs. 1.88 cr, Rs. 3.39 cr and Rs. 2.15 cr respectively were released from the CNA account to LIC.

EPFO deposited interest amounting to Rs. 3.26 cr in 2023-24 and Rs. 2.36 cr in 2024-25 in CFI; and the principal amount of Rs. 130.29 cr was returned to the CFI in January, 2024.”

(b) Revamping of the Scheme

65. The Committee in their First Report on Demands for Grants (2024-25) of the Ministry had inter alia recommended that the Scheme needed to be re-designed to make it more attractive and thereby cover more intended beneficiaries. On being asked about the status of the recommendations made by the Committee, the Ministry stated as under:

“Major features of NPS-Traders are akin to that of PM-SYM. As mentioned, work on actuarial evaluation of PM-SYM has commenced. The report of the actuarial evaluation is likely to be received by April end. Once it is reviewed by the Ministry and various options are evaluated, revision of the scheme/future plan will be firmed up.”

66. In this context, the representative of the Ministry during evidence deposited as under:

“We are revamping this scheme to make it more popular. We have onboarded its actuarial firm. We are currently studying what permutation-combinations can be done to make this scheme more and more beneficial.”

(c) Extension of the Scheme

67. The Ministry further stated that the Department of Expenditure, Ministry of Finance has extended NPS-Traders Scheme in present form till 31.03.2026

VI. NATIONAL DATABASE FOR UNORGANISED WORKERS (NDUW)

68. The term unorganised worker as defined in the Unorganised Workers' Social Security Act, 2008, means a home-based worker, self-employed worker or a wage worker in the unorganised sector and includes a worker in the organised sector who is not covered by the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947 or Chapters III to VII of the Code i.e. Employees Provident Fund, Employees' State Insurance Corporation, Gratuity, Maternity Benefit, Employee's Compensation. The Act has been subsumed in the Code on Social Security, 2020.

69. The unorganised workers are subject to seasonality of employment, lack of a formal employer-employee relationship, absence of adequate social security protection and other welfare schemes such as sickness and unemployment allowances.

(i) Gig and Platform Workers

70. The Indian workforce is undergoing a profound transformation, with the rise of the gig economy as a pivotal force. Fueled by the rapid expansion of online platforms and the increasing prevalence of flexible work arrangements, this burgeoning sector is creating a new class of workers who operate outside the traditional employer-employee paradigm.

71. NITI Aayog vide its report titled "India's Booming Gig and Platform Economy" published in June 2022, estimates that 7.7 million individuals were engaged in gig work in 2020-21, a number projected to skyrocket to 23.5 million by 2029-30 and much more in the coming years.

72. To address the unique needs of this growing segment, the Code on Social Security 2020 has been enacted by the Parliament and for the first time has provided the definition of 'gig workers' and 'platform workers' and provisions related to the same paving the way for a more inclusive and equitable social security system. The Code also provides for framing of suitable social security measures for gig workers and platform workers on matters relating to life and disability cover, accident insurance, health and maternity benefits, old age

protection, etc. and setting up of a Social Security Fund for funding the welfare schemes for gig & platform workers.

73. Ministry of Labour & Employment has launched eShram portal on 26.08.2021 with an objective to create National Database of Unorganised Workers (NDUW). eShram portal is meant to register and support the unorganised workers by providing them a Universal Account Number (UAN). As on 04.03.2025, over 30.69 crore unorganized sector workers have registered on eShram Portal, on self-declaration basis.

(ii) E-Shram – “One-Stop-Solution”

74. The Ministry of Labour and Employment has also launched the eShram– “One-Stop-Solution” on 21st October 2024. eShram– “One-Stop-Solution” entails integration of different Social Security/ Welfare schemes at single portal i.e., eShram. This enables unorganised workers registered on eShram to access social security schemes and see benefits availed by them, through eShram. So far, twelve (12) Social Security/ Welfare Schemes have been integrated/ mapped with eShram which includes: - Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, National Social Assistance Programme (Indira Gandhi National Disability Pension Scheme, Indira Gandhi National Widow Pension Scheme, National Family Benefit Scheme) Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana – Gramin (PMAY-G), etc.

75. It was noted that 12 Social Security/Welfare Schemes have been Integrated/mapped with e-Shram. When enquired whether the Ministry intend to add more such Schemes in near future, the Ministry responded as under:

“The ‘eShram One-Stop Solution’ module has been launched on 21.10.2024 which will provide a single platform to unorganized workers to have easy access to a variety of Government welfare schemes programs. Data of Twelve Central Schemes has been mapped on eShram. Recently one more scheme namely “Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi scheme” has been mapped with eShram. Mapping or Integration with Central and State Government welfare and social security schemes is a continuous and ongoing process.”

76. The representative of the Ministry during evidence deposited as under

“I would like to mention about e-shram. In the unorganised sector, About 82 to 85 per cent of the workers do not have EPFO or ESIC coverage. More than 30 crore workers have been onboarded for e-shram. The most important thing is that twelve social security schemes have been linked to e-Shram so that they can access those schemes. Last year's Budget

said, "We have to develop e-labour as a one-stop solution for unorganised workers."

77. The representative of the Ministry further supplemented as under:

"If we look at e-shram, we understand that not all unorganized workers have onboarded, because only about 30 crore workers have been onboarded so far. We think it is an underestimate and there should be at least 200 million workers onboard, which we do outreach."

(iii) Onboarding of 20 crore more unorganized workers on e-Shram Portal

78. The Committee were apprised that as on 12.02.2025, 30.63 crore unorganized workers have been registered on e-Shram Portal and approximately at least 20 crore more unorganized workers need to be registered. The Committee, however, noted that no physical target has been fixed for 2025-26. When asked about the plan of action to cover the remaining 20 crore unorganized workers and the timeline by which the target is proposed to be achieved, the Ministry replied as under:

"The Ministry of Labour and Employment launched the eShram portal on 26th August 2021, aiming to register all unorganised workers. As on 4th March 2025, over 30.69 crore unorganised workers have registered on the eShram Portal on self-declaration basis. However, this registration is a completely voluntary process and on analysis of eShram registration data, it was found that during Financial Year 2024-25, daily registration varied from 954 on a particular date 15.08.2024 to 97,839 on a particular date 09.10.2024. However, the average daily registration for FY 2024-25 is 34,630.

Also, as per the approval of the Expenditure Finance Committee (EFC), National Database for Unorganised Workers (eShram) envisaged registration of 25 crore unorganised workers till 31st March, 2025. However, on a proposal of Ministry of Labour and Employment for continuation of Central Sector scheme 'National Database for Unorganised Worker' (eShram) beyond Financial Year 2024-25 for one year i.e., 1st April 2025 to 31st March 2026, Ministry of Finance, Department of Expenditure accorded approval to the proposal within the limit of the originally approved outlay of the scheme on 18th November 2024 but no target for registration was given.

The registration of unorganised workers on NDUW/eShram has been slowly but steadily inching towards saturation. In such a situation due to wide variation in registration numbers, it has become difficult for

Ministry to anticipate and fix a physical target for registration of unorganised workers for the Financial Year 2025-26 and beyond.

To onboard the remaining unorganised workers, the Ministry is making every effort to complete the registration in the shortest time possible. Steps taken by the Ministry to address challenges in the registration process and increase awareness among unorganised workers include:

- i. Holding periodic review meeting with States/Union Territories.
- ii. Regular meeting with Common Services Centres (CSC).
- iii. To provide employment and skilling opportunities, eShram is integrated with National Career Service (NCS) and Skill India Digital Portal.
- iv. To facilitate enrolment under pension scheme, eShram is integrated with Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maandan (PMSYM).
- v. To offer one-stop search and discovery of the Government schemes, eShram is integrated with myScheme portal.
- vi. SMS campaign to create awareness.
- vii. Social media platforms are also being used to spread awareness among workers to register on eShram. State Seva Kendras (SSKs) and services of Common Service Centres were onboarded to facilitate assisted mode registrations of unorganised workers.
- viii. To enhance the accessibility of the eShram portal, the Ministry of Labour and Employment launched multilingual functionality on the eShram portal on 7th January 2025, using the Bhashini platform. This enhancement now allows workers to interact with eShram portal in 22 Indian languages, improving accessibility and promoting inclusivity for all.
- ix. To make eShram and associated services, readily available to unorganized workers, the Ministry of Labour & Employment launched the eShram mobile application on 24th February 2025. This application provides real-time access to welfare schemes integrated with eShram, significantly improving accessibility and convenience.

Following the budget announcement for 2025-26, the Ministry of Labour & Employment (MoLE) has initiated a comprehensive drive to onboard all platform-based gig workers onto the eShram portal. This initiative aims to ensure that gig workers, who often lack formal employment benefits, are included in the social security net. Subsequent to the budget announcement, MoLE plans to extend PMJAY benefits to all platform-based gig workers registered on eShram. MoLE will conduct targeted outreach campaigns to inform gig workers about the benefits of

registering on the eShram portal. These campaigns will utilise various media channels, including social media, to reach a wide audience. This is also expected to aid in increasing registration under eShram. The Ministry is also working to make the registration process more user-friendly, with simplified steps and reduced requirements to facilitate easy registration.

The Ministry has also initiated the collaboration with major gig platforms like Ola, Uber, Swiggy, and Zomato to facilitate the registration of their workers. These platforms will assist in spreading awareness and encouraging their workers to register. Additionally, MoLE is identifying various modes to enhance registration on eShram. As the process of registration is an on going one therefore the Ministry will take every effort to enhance registration so that these left out registrants can be enrolled in the portal at the earliest.”

(iv) Criteria for verification of e-Shram registrants

79. As on 12 February, 2025, over 30.63 crore unorganised workers have been registered on e-Shram. The Ministry intends to find out left-out unorganised workers and to verify e-Shram registrants. When asked to state tentatively how many unorganized workers have been left out and what is the criteria for verification of e-Shram registrants, the Ministry responded as under:

“At present there is no official estimation available to assess number of unorganised workers in the country. eShram was launched in August 2021 with the aim to create a database for unorganised workers with target to register 25 crore unorganised workers by 31st March 2025, as approved by the Expenditure Finance Committee (EFC). As on 2nd March 2025, over 30.68 crore unorganised workers have already been registered on eShram portal. It may also be noted that registration on the eShram portal is voluntary and on a self-declaration basis.

The verification of eShram registrants involves several key criteria to ensure the accuracy and authenticity of the data. eShram involves Aadhaar eKYC verification, for registration of unorganised workers, thus authenticated information including name, age (DoB), gender, address and photograph of workers is retrieved from UIDAI itself. Further, it has been mandated to use biometric mode of authentication if any worker is getting registered in assisted mode through Common Service Centre (CSC). Other details of workers are captured on a self-declaration basis. Subsequently, eShram data is being shared with all States/ Union Territories. While sharing data, it is advised that, status of all the

eShram registrants belonging to their respective States/ Union Territories must be verified before extending any social security/ welfare scheme to them.”

(v) Database of Workers in the Organized Sector as well as in the Unorganized Sector

80. On being asked whether the Ministry has any database of workers in the Organized Sector as well as in the Unorganized Sector, the Ministry stated as under:

“Ministry has one database for unorganised sector workers- eShram and two databases for organised workers under EPFO &ESIC.

Unorganized Sector: States/UTs wise number of unorganised workers registered on eShram, as on 3rd March, 2025 is as under:

S.No.	State	Total Registrations
1	Andaman And Nicobar Islands	32,984
2	Andhra Pradesh	82,78,582
3	Arunachal Pradesh	2,04,159
4	Assam	76,25,041
5	Bihar	2,97,84,018
6	Chandigarh	1,86,256
7	Chhattisgarh	85,51,016
8	Delhi	35,20,346
9	Goa	77,670
10	Gujarat	1,19,51,388
11	Haryana	53,73,158
12	Himachal Pradesh	19,88,766
13	Jammu And Kashmir	35,75,377
14	Jharkhand	96,37,220
15	Karnataka	1,06,87,903
16	Kerala	60,23,160

17	Ladakh	33,896
18	Lakshadweep	2,818
19	Madhya Pradesh	1,86,69,796
20	Maharashtra	1,75,61,195
21	Manipur	4,55,685
22	Meghalaya	3,30,557
23	Mizoram	65,107
24	Nagaland	2,34,120
25	Odisha	1,35,67,509
26	Puducherry	1,90,711
27	Punjab	57,99,009
28	Rajasthan	1,45,78,594
29	Sikkim	42,833
30	Tamil Nadu	90,69,411
31	Telangana	44,82,351
32	The Dadra And Nagar Haveli And Daman And Diu	74,771
33	Tripura	8,89,395
34	Uttar Pradesh	8,38,24,946
35	Uttarakhand	30,65,635
36	West Bengal	2,64,38,711
	Total	30,68,74,094

Source : eshram Portal

Organized Sector:

ESIC:

The total number of employees enrolled under the Employees' state Insurance (ESI) scheme as on 31.03.2024, States/UTs wise are as under:

S.No.	State	Employees as on 31.03.2024
1	ANDHRA PRADESH	1206770
2	ASSAM	292640
3	ARUNACHAL PRADESH	1700
4	MEGHALAYA	14360
5	NAGALAND	4500
6	TRIPURA	18380
7	MANIPUR	4300
8	MIZORAM	2550
9	BIHAR	418110
10	CHANDIGARH(UT)	124700
11	CHATTISGARH	525460
12	DELHI	1183600
13	GOA	174170
14	GUJARAT	1626330
15	HARYANA	2245050
16	H.P.	345100
17	J & K	126580
18	JHARKHAND	487560
19	KARNATAKA	2885480
20	KERALA	905640
21	M. P.	1081050
22	MAHARASHTRA	3985710
23	ODISHA	912020
24	PUDUCHERRY	101180
25	PUNJAB	1172520
26	RAJASTHAN	1388430
27	SIKKIM	25970
28	TAMIL NADU	3656190
29	TELANGANA	1553610
30	UTTAR PRADESH	2513390
31	UTTRAKHAND	583850
32	WEST BENGAL	1920220
	ALL INDIA	31487120

Source: ESIC's Annual Report 2023-24.

EPFO:

The State/UT – wise total numbers of members registered under EPFO (since inception) as on 31.03.2024 are as under:

Members – State Wise (As on 31.03.2024)	
State/UT	Members
Andaman And Nicobar Islands	64840
Andhra Pradesh	6601126
Arunachal Pradesh	47969
Assam	1324460
Bihar	2939114
Chandigarh	3514386
Chattisgarh	2872690
Delhi	24852899
Goa	1939750
Gujarat	25256526
Haryana	24245473
Himachal Pradesh	2347888
Jammu and Kashmir	629005
Jharkhand	3268941
Karnataka	38120563
Kerala	4488792
Ladakh	6189
Madhya Pradesh	7337811
Maharashtra	66729879
Manipur	46651
Meghalaya	148570
Mizoram	11571
Nagaland	26250
Orissa	4710999
Punjab	5297688
Rajasthan	8954533
Sikkim	117931
Tamil Nadu	37924515
Telangana	18222978
Tripura	127293
Uttar Pradesh	15704303
Uttarakhand	4781076
West Bengal	12939357
All India	325602016

Source: EPFO's Annual report 2023-24

(vi) Ex-gratia Payment to the e-Shram Registrants

81. On being asked about the number of *ex-gratia* claims received and approved under one time ex-gratia payment to the e-Shram registrants who met with accidental deaths or disability during 26.08.2021 to 31.03.2022, 2022-23, 2023-24 and 2024-25, and the reasons for non-approval as well as the amount due and disbursed year-wise and State/UT wise, the Ministry responded as under:

“The Ministry of Labour & Employment launched the eShram portal on 26th August 2021, to create a comprehensive "National Database of Unorganised Workers" linked with Aadhaar. The Ministry aimed to provide accidental risk cover to all unorganised workers registered on the eShram portal through the Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana (PMSBY) until 31st March 2022. However, due to technical and operational issues PMSBY could not be operationalised.

Since PMSBY benefits could not be applied retrospectively, it was decided to offer the same benefits as ex-gratia payment to eligible claimants registered on eShram. All unorganised workers registered on the eShram portal by 31st March 2022, are eligible to initiate claim. Incidents occurred after registration and on or before 31st March 2022, are considered for ex-gratia payment. Ex-gratia module was launched in August 2023. On ex-gratia module, decision of approval or rejection is under the purview of State/ UT Government, as per ex-gratia guidelines issued by Ministry of Labour & Employment.

As per the guidelines, for eShram ex gratia the Claimant/ legal heir will go to the officer authorised by the State/ UT Government to accept the claims under eShram along with copies of the required supporting documents. After approval from the DM office, the claim is submitted online through a dedicated module on eShram. After verifying this data with EPFO (as per the guidelines), the Ministry of Labour & Employment, processes the claims.

Year wise details of claims (Position as on 18.02.2025) processed by State/ UTs on eShram ex-gratia module are as under:

S. No.	Particulars	FY 2023-24	FY 2024-25	Total
1	Complete claims submitted to District Magistrate by officer authorised to accept claims	537	335	872
2	Total Claims approved by District Magistrate/ District Collector	474	228	702
3	Payment Initiated by Ministry of	346	246	592

S. No.	Particulars	FY 2023-24	FY 2024-25	Total
	Labour & Employment			
4	Total Payment Successful	330	171	501
5	Total Payment under Process	Not applicable	55	55
6	Total Payment Failed in PFMS	16	20	36
7	Pending claims for processing by MoLE	19	83	102#
8	Payment could not be processed	2	6	8
9	Claims pending for approval with States	28	42	70
10	Claims Rejected by States/ UTs	23	77	100

Note:

Financial year as mentioned in the above table, at S. No. 3, 4, 5 and 6 is based on date of issue of sanction order.

102 records are waiting to be processed after status on 55 cases (payment under process) is updated.

State wise number of claims and amount disbursed is as under:

S. No	State/ UT	Death Claims	Disability Claims	Death Claims Amount (in Rs.)	Disability Claims Amount (in Rs.)	Total Claims	Total Amount (in Rs.)
1	Andhra Pradesh	132	10	2,64,00,000	11,00,000	142	2,75,00,000
2	Bihar	6		12,00,000		6	12,00,000
3	Chhattisgarh	18	1	36,00,000	2,00,000	19	38,00,000
4	Gujarat	69	1	1,38,00,000	1,00,000	70	1,39,00,000
5	Haryana	14	1	28,00,000	1,00,000	15	29,00,000
6	Himachal Pradesh	2		4,00,000		2	4,00,000
7	Jharkhand	84		1,68,00,000		84	1,68,00,000
8	Karnataka	31		62,00,000		31	62,00,000
9	Kerala	14	1	28,00,000	1,00,000	15	29,00,000
10	Madhya Pradesh	10		20,00,000		10	20,00,000
11	Maharashtra	2		4,00,000		2	4,00,000
12	Rajasthan	14		28,00,000		14	28,00,000
13	Tamil Nadu	13		26,00,000		13	26,00,000
14	Telangana	22		44,00,000		22	44,00,000
15	Tripura	3	1	6,00,000	1,00,000	4	7,00,000

16	Uttar Pradesh	132	7	2,64,00,000	10,00,000	139	2,74,00,000
17	Uttarakhand	4		8,00,000		4	8,00,000
Grand Total		570	22	11,40,00,000	27,00,000	592	11,67,00,000

Note:

- The figures are subject to change due to possibility of failure in the last tranche of 55 beneficiaries.
- 36 incidents of failure of DBT are also included.”

(vii) Revamping of Shram Suvidha and Samadhan Portal

82. The representative of the Ministry during evidence deposed as under

“For the convenience of all employers and employees, the Shram Suvidha and Samadhan portal are being revamped one for employees and the other one for the employers. We will complete its revamping by next August.”

(viii) Funds allocation and utilization

83. The details of fund allocation and utilization under NDUW during 2022-23 to 2024-25 and BE for 2025-26 are as follows:

(Rs. in Crores)

S. No.	Year	BE	RE	AE	Shortfall/Excess Expenditure
1	2022-23	500.00	400.00	123.98	276.02(-)
2	2023-24	300.00	102.96	28.96	74.00(-)
3	2024-25	176.84	26.93	13.91 (as on 15.02.2025)	13.02(-)
4	2025-26	27.80	-	-	-

84. On being asked to indicate the reasons for reduction of BE of Rs. 176.84 crore to RE of Rs. 26.93 crore and utilization of only 7.86% of BE as on 15.02.2025 during 2024-25 and steps taken/proposed to fully utilize the remaining amount of Rs. 13.02 crore upto 31.03.2025 and also for utilization of Rs. 27.80 crore during 2025-26 despite the fact that no target has been fixed for 2025-26, the Ministry stated as under:

“The B.E. of Rs. 176.84 crore was revised to R.E. of Rs 26.93 crore owing to the lesser number of ex-gratia claims approved by the approving District Authorities under one time ex-gratia payment to the eShram registrants who met with accidental death or disability during 26.08.2021 to 31.03.2022. Ministry had received around 3,250 numbers of enquiries, related to accidental

claim benefits, through eShram GMS portal. Further, it was envisaged that similar number of incidents, may also be forthcoming once the module is launched. In view of this Rs. 140 crore was earmarked for this purpose. However, till now only around Rs. 10 crore has been disbursed on this count and therefore, the fund requirement was revised downwards.

The remaining amount of Rs. 13.02 crore will be utilized to clear the committed liabilities upto 31.03.2025.

The B.E. of Rs. 27.80 crore for FY 2025-26 will be utilized for expenditure in respect of design, development, maintenance of eShram portal and its enhancement as 'eShram One-Stop Solution' in accordance with the Para 101 of Budget announcement 2024-25."

(ix) Third-party evaluation and outcome review of the National Database of Unorganised Workers (NDUW) / eShram Scheme

85. The Ministry further clarified as under:

"The Department of Expenditure has agreed to the continuation of National Database of Unorganised Workers (NDUW) / eShram scheme for the FY 2025-26 within the limit of originally approved outlay of the scheme i.e. Rs. 704.01 Crore which will also make NDUW/eShram scheme co-terminus with remaining 15th Finance Commission period ending 31st March, 2026.

Moreover, in terms of DoE's O.M. dated 23.02.2017 aligning the schemes with financial resources cycle of Central and State Governments, it is desirable to align the scheme with the Finance Commission cycle. The Ministry has already initiated the process of third-party evaluation and outcome review of the National Database of Unorganised Workers (NDUW) / eShram scheme which may take some time. Further, depending upon the outcome review, the scheme can continue in its present form or be amended with necessary modifications for the 16th Finance Commission cycle, for which approval of Department of Expenditure will be obtained in due course."

(x) Registration of Online Platform Workers on the e-Shram Portal

86. In 2025-26 Budget Speech, the Finance Minister had announced registration of online Platform Workers on the e-Shram portal. When asked about the preparedness of the Ministry to undertake this exercise and when it is proposed to be initiated and completed, the Ministry responded as under:

"The Code on Social Security 2020 enacted by the Parliament for the first time defined gig & platform workers and made provisions related to the same."

Budget announcement 2025-26:

“51. Gig workers of online platforms provide great dynamism to the new age services economy. Recognising their contribution, our government will arrange for their identity cards and registration on the e-Shram portal. They will be provided healthcare under PM Jan Arogya Yojana. This measure is likely to assist nearly 1 crore gig-workers.”

In line with the budget announcement, the Ministry is onboarding Platform Aggregators onto the eShram portal. A dedicated module for aggregator registration was launched on December 12, 2024. After successful onboarding, aggregators can submit details of platform workers associated with them.

This initiative facilitates the registration & verification of platform workers and aims to provide social security measures for gig workers and platform. As on 19.02.2025, the State/UT wise details of platform workers registered on eShram portal is given below.

Sl. No.	State / UT	Registration Count
1	Andaman And Nicobar Islands	16
2	Andhra Pradesh	732
3	Arunachal Pradesh	41
4	Assam	9,816
5	Bihar	2,236
6	Chandigarh	85
7	Chhattisgarh	404
8	Delhi	2,080
9	Goa	51
10	Gujarat	2,758
11	Haryana	971
12	Himachal Pradesh	122
13	Jammu And Kashmir	233
14	Jharkhand	887
15	Karnataka	2,803
16	Kerala	359
17	Ladakh	9
18	Lakshadweep	1
19	Madhya Pradesh	2,337
20	Maharashtra	6,995
21	Manipur	25
22	Meghalaya	50
23	Mizoram	34
24	Nagaland	12

25	Odisha	696
26	Puducherry	34
27	Punjab	607
28	Rajasthan	2,417
29	Sikkim	23
30	Tamil Nadu	1,613
31	Telangana	2,453
32	The Dadra And Nagar Haveli And Daman And Diu	15
33	Tripura	111
34	Uttar Pradesh	4,222
35	Uttarakhand	259
36	West Bengal	24,799
	Total	70,306

87. As per data provided by the Ministry, 70,306 Platform Workers are registered on e-Shram Portal as on 19.02.2025. The Ministry propose to cover 35 lakh eligible beneficiaries during 01.04.2025 to 31.03.2026. As per budget announcement 2025-26, approx 1 crore gig workers are likely to be benefitted. When asked, how do the Ministry propose to achieve the physical target in a short span of one year, the Ministry stated as under:

“According to NITI Aayog, the number of gig workers, including those working on online platforms was 77 lakh in 2020-21 and is projected to rise to over 1 crore by 2024-25, reaching 2.35 crore by 2029-30. Considering that some of these workers are already covered under AB-PMJAY and factoring the proposed scheme’s eligibility criteria (90 days and 120 days of engagement in single or multiple platforms respectively in an FY), it is estimated that approximately 35 lakh platform workers will be eligible for the scheme in FY 2025-26, with the number expected to expand to over 1 crore by 2029-30. The Government has launched e-Shram portal on 26.08.2021 for registration and creation of a comprehensive National Database of Unorganized Workers including gig workers and platform workers. It allows a person to register himself or herself on the portal on a self-declaration basis using Aadhaar (Unique ID). The platform workers are registered on e-Shram portal on self-declaration basis. Subsequently, the Ministry has also developed a separate module on e-Shram to facilitate registration of Aggregators and Platform workers. It is expected that through this module updated data of platform workers will be available.”

88. The representative of the Ministry during evidence deposited as under:

“Sir, the new scheme announced in this year's budget is Social Security for Platform Workers. Linking it with Ayushman Bharat, as I said about it, we have sent the SFC document. Before creating the SFC, we have taken a wide spread consultative approach, in which the ministries of the Government of India have been consulted. Apart from this, a two-day conference has been held with Ministers and Secretaries of States and UTs. In this, a committee of state labour secretaries, which comprises of secretaries of five states, sit together and prepare the outline of this scheme. They also chalk out what other social security schemes should be given to them.”

89. It was informed that a Committee has been constituted to recommend a framework for providing social security to platform- based gig workers as envisaged under the Code on Social Security 2020. When asked about the composition, terms of reference of the Committee and by when the Committee is expected to present its Report, the Ministry stated as under:

“The composition of the Committee constituted to recommend a framework for providing social security to platform- based gig workers is as under :-

Sl.No.	Composition	Designation
1.	Shri Ramesh Krishnamurthy, CPFC, EPFO, MoLE	Chairman
2.	Shri Ajoy Sharma, Joint Secretary, MoLE	Member
3.	Representative from Zomato	Member
4.	Representative from Indian Federation of App Based Transport Workers (IFAT)	Member
5.	Representative from India Tech.Org	Member
6.	Representative from Confederation of Indian Industry (CII)	Member

The Terms of Reference of the Committee include providing recommendations/inputs on the following: -

- (i) Any changes or additions in the provisions of Code on Social Security,2020 or Draft Rules on Code on Social Security,2020 including various definitions such as “aggregator”, “turnover” etc.
- (ii) Potential extent of contributions Central Government social security Fund and its related facets.
- (iii) Analysis of various Central Government social security schemes and their modalities as well as the social security

benefits being provided by the aggregators.

(iv) Possible social security schemes for platform workers to be provided by the Central Government or customizing existing social security schemes, if any, to suit the platform economy.

(v) Operational mechanism to extend social security schemes.

(vi) Possibilities of integration with states for data sharing, reduction of compliance burden etc.

(vii) Any other matter related to the extension of social security benefits to the platform workers, which the Committee deems fit.

The Committee has finally deliberated on the *ibid* issues and is likely to submit its final report to the Ministry very soon.

90. It has been mentioned that as on 18.02.2025, 7 platforms namely-Zomato, Blinkit, Uncle Delivery, Urban Company, Swiggy, Uber and Rapido have been onboarded. When asked about the number of Aggregators in existence and by when the Ministry propose to onboard the remaining Aggregators on e-Shram, the Ministry stated as under:

“The Ministry has developed a separate module for Aggregators on e-Shram for their registration as well as registration of platform workers engaged by them. There are no official database /estimate on how many aggregators are in existence. As on date 10 major platforms namely-Zomato, Blinkit, Uncle Delivery, Urban Company, Swiggy, Uber, Rapido, Ola, Zepto&Ecom Express have been onboarded on e-Shram portal. The onboarding of platform workers through aggregators is an ongoing process as this is a growing sector. Onboarding of platforms is expected to pick up with the launch of the scheme for providing social security to Platform workers through PMJAY.”

91. When asked to as how do the Ministry intend to coordinate with National Health Authority (NHA) for extending benefits to Platform Workers under Ayushman Bharat Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY), the Ministry stated as under:

“The provision of healthcare to Platform Workers under Ayushman Bharat PM Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY) is proposed to be implemented by expanding the base of the existing AB-PMJAY scheme to include the Platform Workers. Since NHA already possesses established infrastructure and systems along with coordination mechanism with States/UTs for delivering healthcare benefits to various groups of beneficiaries, these existing mechanisms of NHA are intended to be

leveraged to provide benefits to the eligible Platform Workers.”

VII. LABOUR WELFARE SCHEMES

92. In the context of Labour Welfare Schemes, the representative of the Ministry during evidence deposited as under:

“We have a labour welfare scheme. It used to have three sub-sections. Now, the housing sub-scheme is over. What is going on is the Financial Assistance for Education of Wards and hospitals are there for beedi and cine workers. For that, we have 10 hospitals and 279 dispensaries across the country. There is also a cost on that. A new thing has happened in this that we are implementing a programme in which bidi, cine and non-coal mine workers above 70 years of age are beneficiaries under this scheme. To connect them with Ayushman Bharat, their identification and registration is being done. 12,681 workers have been identified and they are being linked to the Ayushman Bharat Scheme”

93. The physical performance of the Labour Welfare Scheme since 2022-23 is as under:

Performance of Labour Welfare Scheme			
Year	Number of Beneficiaries		
	Health	Housing	Education
2022-23	18,80,034	7,462	1,05,277
2023-24	18,02,000	8,406	96,051
2024-25 (Up to 31.01.2025)	10,48,876	Nil (Scheme achieved its sunset)	29,563

94. As regards physical progress, it was pointed out that while the target under Education Scheme was to cover 1 lakh beneficiaries, only 29,563 beneficiaries were covered upto 16.01.2025 resulting in shortfall of 70,437 intended beneficiaries viz. approx. 70% of the target. When asked how will the

Ministry achieve the physical target in approx two months, the Ministry stated as under:

“Under LWS(Education), the payment to 29,563 beneficiaries have been already made as on 19 Feb 2025, the payment for additional 78,118 applications for AY 2024-25 is under process which is likely to be completed by 31st March 2025. Therefore, the total number of beneficiaries benefitted will be 1,07,681 by 31st March 2025 which is well above the target hence there will be no short fall.”

95. It was noticed that during 2024-25 (upto 16.01.2025) 40778 applications were received but after verification only 29,563 applications were found eligible for payment. When asked about the major grounds for rejection of applications and the mechanism available for awareness of the Scheme, the Ministry responded as under:

“The major reasons for rejection of applications by respective State Nodal Officers (SNO) i.e. Welfare Commissioner in respect of LWS (Education) on National Scholarship Portal (NSP) are described below:

- **Incomplete Documentation:** A significant number of applications were rejected due to missing required documents, such as identity cards for Beedi/Cine/Non-Coal mine workers and income certificates.
- **Ineligibility of Applicants:**
 - Some applicants did not meet the income criteria of the scheme, such as the Rs. 1.2 lakh per annum ceiling set for Beedi workers.
 - Some applicants did not meet the occupational criteria, as LWS (Education) is intended only for the wards of Beedi/Cine/Non-Coal mine workers.

Mechanism available for awareness of the Scheme: To promote awareness among beneficiaries, a total of 4,358 Awareness Camps have been organized for Beedi/Cine/Non-Coal mine workers (as of 31st December 2024) in and around their areas of residence. The following activities are being carried out to inform the beneficiaries in these camps:

- a. Scheme information booklets and leaflets are being distributed in local languages.
- b. The scheme application and disbursement processes are being explained in local languages.

c. Information has been disseminated through labour unions, SHGs, local authorities, and through announcements & public gatherings in residential areas, etc.”

(i) Income ceiling for financial assistance for education to the wards of Beedi Workers

96. It was noticed that one of the grounds for rejection of applications under LWS (Education) is that some applicants did not meet the income criteria of the Scheme, such as Rs. 1.2 lakh per annum ceiling set for Beedi workers. Specifically asked as to when was the ceiling fixed and whether any proposal is under consideration to revise the ceiling, the Ministry responded as under:

“The eligible income ceiling for financial assistance for education to the wards of Beedi workers was raised from Rs. 3,500 per month to Rs. 10,000 per month i.e Rs. 1.2 lakh per annum in April 2003. At present, there is no proposal under consideration by the Government to revise the income ceiling limit in this regard.”

(ii) Funds allocation and utilization

97. During 2023-24, BE of Rs. 75 crore was increased to Rs. 102 crore at RE stage and an amount of Rs. 81.31 crore was utilised for the scheme. However, during 2024-25, the allocation for the scheme was brought down to Rs. 50.68 crore. Out of which, only Rs. 14.99 crore has been utilised as on 15.02.2025 *viz.* almost 70% of the funds allocated for the scheme remains unutilized. Further for 2025-26, the same quantum of funds as allocated during 2024-25 *viz.* Rs. 50.68 crore has been allocated for the scheme.

The Ministry were asked to explain why there has been such low utilisation of funds under the Scheme during 2024-25, what would be the realistic expectation of utilisation of funds under the scheme during the remaining period of current fiscal. Further, keeping in view the low percentage of utilisation of funds during 2024-25, what is the specific plan of action to utilise the whole of BE for 2025-26 considering the fact that while Health Care Scheme is demand driven, Housing Scheme has attained sunset and only Education Scheme is in operation, the Ministry stated as under:

“Expenditure of Rs. 14.44 Cr. has already been incurred as on 19 Feb 2025. Proposals amounting to Rs. 30.60 Cr under LWS (Education) and Health are under process. The total expected expenditure upto 31st March 2025 is Rs. 45 Cr.

The bills of LWS (Education and Health) are in process and payments will be disbursed on or before 31st March 2025.

The Ministry will take the following steps to ensure optimal utilisation of funds in 2025-26:

- Strengthening the Education Scheme: Awareness Camps will be organised for Beedi/Cine/Non-Coal mine Workers in and around the vicinity of their habitation and in the schools/colleges and universities.
 - Parallel verification process of applications received on National Scholarship Portal (NSP) from initiation of Academic Year 2025-26 have been planned.
 - Further, process improvements are being put in place so that payment can be made to maintain a faster pace of expenditure.
- LWS Health Scheme Utilisation: Since this scheme is demand-driven, scheme related awareness initiatives near the habitation of Beedi/Cine/Non-Coal mine workers will be launched to increase beneficiary footfalls. Monthly payments will be ensured for on time delivery of health services and relief to beneficiaries and their dependents.”

98. In this context the representative of the Ministry during evidence deposed as under:

“We will be able to achieve the expenditure, the RE we have for this year under this scheme. In education, along with the existing number 78,118 fresh applications have been approved. It has been sent to the National Scholarship Portal. This will also be completed in the next one week.”

(iii) Third-party Evaluation of the Scheme

99. With regard to Labour Welfare Scheme (LWS), the Ministry stated as under:

“The third-party evaluation of the schemes is underway, and the draft report has been submitted for analysis. The Ministry is reviewing the findings and recommendations to assess the continuation of LWS beyond 2026-27 in alignment with the 16th Finance Commission.

To ensure better implementation, stakeholder consultations, financial planning, and digital enhancements are being considered. The appraisal process is expected to be completed before the commencement of the 16th Finance Commission discussions, and necessary modifications will be proposed based on the evaluation outcome.”

VIII. CENTRAL SECTOR SCHEME FOR REHABILITATION OF BONDED LABOURER-2021

100. The gist of Central Sector Scheme for Rehabilitation of Bonded Labourer-2021 BE, RE and actual expenditure as on 15.02.2025 is as under:

Central Sector Scheme for Rehabilitation of Bonded Labour-2021

- ❖ The Ministry of Labour and Employment is implementing a Central Sector scheme for Rehabilitation of Bonded Labourer, 2021 for identification and release of bonded labourers.
- ❖ This scheme is demand driven in nature where funds are provided to the States/UTs on receipt of financial demand from them.
- ❖ The BE for current financial year is Rs. **6.00** crore. As of date, only Rs. 0.34 cr has been spent under the said scheme.
- ❖ The Budget details and bonded labour freed/rescued/rehabilitated during the last three years i.e FY 2022-23 to FY 24-25 are as follows:

Sl. No.	Year	Budget Estimates (Rs. in Cr)	Revised Estimates (Rs. in Cr)	Exp (Rs. in Cr)	No. of bonded labourer rehabilitated
1.	2022-23	10.00	10.00	5.15	673
2.	2023-24	10.00	6.98	1.34	468
3.	2024-25(Up to 31.01.2025)	6.00	6.00	0.34	246

- **Total rescued since 1978:** 2,97,038
- **Total funds disbursed since 1978:** Rs. 10,625.10 lakhs

101. When asked to provide State/UT-wise details of 246 Bonded Labourers released and rehabilitated during 2024-25 and the financial assistance provided to them indicating the category of Financial assistance, viz. (i) Adult male; (ii) Special category such as children; and (iii) bonded or forced labour involving extreme cases of deprivation, the Ministry stated as under:

“Under the Scheme, rehabilitation assistance to the tune of Rs. 1.00 lakh, Rs. 2.00 lakh and Rs. 3.00 lakh are provided to each rescued bonded labourer based on their category and level of exploitation. Besides, there is a provision to provide immediate financial assistance upto Rs. 30,000/- to each rescued bonded labour. Any such advance amount is deducted from the Final rehabilitation assistance amount.

At the time of seeking reimbursement of immediate cash assistance from the Ministry of Labour and Employment for payment to the beneficiaries, the State/UT Governments are required to submit only the duly filled Release Certificates, as per the form prescribed under the scheme. The details regarding gender and age of bonded labourers are mentioned in the Release Certificates. However, the details of degree of deprivation of the beneficiaries, to whom the final rehabilitation amount are to be paid, can only be obtained from the concerned States/ UTs, as per the prescribed format, at the time of the availing of the reimbursement of

final rehabilitation/financial assistance requests submitted by them after the conclusion of the summary trial/conviction proceedings.

As in FY 24-25, the proposals from the States/ UTs in respect of the 246 bonded labourers were related to the payment of immediate cash assistance only. The details of the number of 246 bonded labourers (Male/ Female/ Children) to whom immediate financial assistance were provided during 2024-25 are as follows:

Year	Male	Female	Child	Total
2024-25	119	51	76	246

The details of the number of bonded labourers released/rehabilitated during financial year 2024-25 vis-a-vis the financial assistance provided to them, State/UT wise are given below:

Sl.No.	Year	Name of State/UT	Name of District	No. of bonded labourers	Amount (Rs. in lakh)
1.	2024-25	Rajasthan	Dausa	50	10.00
		Tamil Nadu	Ariyalur	2	0.60
			Thiruvannamalai	1	0.30
			Krishnagiri	10	3.00
			Sivagangai	18	5.40
			Chengalpattu	15	4.50
			Thiruvallur	12	2.40
			Karur	6	1.80
			Thanjavur	3	0.90
			Namakkal	17	5.10
			Trichy	7	1.90
Chennai	105	31.50			
Total				246	67.40

102. When asked about the status of summary trial/trial conviction proceedings in respect of 246 bonded labourers released during 2024-25, the Ministry responded as under:

“Section 21 of the Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1976 states that 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. An offence under this Act may be tried summarily by a Magistrate.

As the summary trial/trial conviction proceedings comes under the purview of the State/UT Governments, the status relating to the summary trial/ conviction proceedings, as the case may be, are made available to the Ministry by the States/ UTs only at the time of the submissions of their proposal for availing final rehabilitation assistance. As the proposals submitted by the concerned State Governments in respect of the 246 bonded labourers pertains to reimbursement of immediate financial assistance only, the status of summary trial/trial conviction proceedings is yet to be received from the states of Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu.”

IX. LABOUR EDUCATION & RESEARCH

Dattopant Thengadi National Board For Workers Education and Development

103. The Dattopant Thengadi National Board for Workers Education & Development (erstwhile Central Board for Workers Education) came into existence on 16th September, 1958 as a response to the Indian Labour Conference for implementing Workers Education programme in India under the aegis of the Ministry of Labour of Employment, Govt. of India.

104. Looking at the vast magnitude of the 92% workforce of the country of unorganized and rural sectors, the Board's thrust is on educating them for creating awareness about government flagship schemes of Social Security, livelihood and Skill development activities.

Workers Education Scheme consists of the following projects/ programmes:

- (1) Workers Education programmes in Organised Sector
- (2) Workers Education Programmes in Unorganised/ Rural Sectors
- (3) Strengthening (capital Asset) of Offices of DTNBWED (erstwhile CBWE) including e-governance for effective implementation of the Workers Education Programme.
- (4) Workers Participation in Management.

The Budget allocations made during the last three years are as under:

Year	Scheme	Amount (Rs in lakh)
2022-23	Grant-in-Aid	10315
2023-24	Grant-in-Aid	11310
2024-25	Grant-in-Aid	11700

105. On being asked as to what extent Dattopant Thengadi National Board for Workers Education and Development (DTNBWED) has succeeded in one of the thrust areas of 'Workers Participation in Management' and how such participation has led to Industrial Development in general and improvement in quality of life of workers in particular, the Ministry stated as under:

“Dattopant Thengandi National Board for workers Education and Development (DTNBWED) has conducted a good number of programmes on “Workers participation in Management” (WPM). In such programmes major topics that were discussed including concept and philosophy of Workers Participation in Management Forums of Workers Participation in Management, Workers Participation in Management in other Country, Productivity Improvement, Quality Improvement, Moral Motivation, Leadership development, Time Management, Communication Skills, Industrial Safety and Problem Solving Skills etc.

These programmes generated immense support from the Trade Unions, Workers Organizations and general workers as well. A number of participative forums were organized at different level of Industries/organizations. These programmes also focused on participation of workers in decision making in modern management structure including Safety Management, Personal Development, TQM, Various ISO standards etc. This forum has also been proved successful in voicing shop floor level issues resulting in improvement of quality of work life and decent work. A number of organizations have also expressed their satisfaction for this training programme.”

106. The number of programmes conducted and the number of participants trained since 2022-23 are as under:

Dattopant Thengadi National Board for Workers Education and Development

- A registered society under Societies Registration Act 1860
- Imparts training to workers on trade unionism and in bringing about consciousness about their rights, duties and responsibilities.
- Undertakes programme for rural workers education and functional adult education.

Performance:

Items	No. of Programmes Conducted			No. of Participants trained		
	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25 (Up to 31.01.2025)	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25 (Up to 31.01.2025)
Unorganised Sector	5436	9591	8516	373312	739695	547594
Organised Sector	2872	1670	563	65196	38548	11931
Total	8308	11261	9079	438508	778243	559525

107. It was pointed out that the number of programmes conducted by Dattopant Thengadi National Board for Workers Education and Development in the Organized Sector decreased from 2872 in 2022-23 to 1670 in 2023-24 to 563 in 2024-25 (upto 31.01.2025) with corresponding decrease in the number of participants trained viz. 65196 in 2022-23 to 38548 in 2023-24 to 11931 in 2024-25 (upto 31.01.2025). When asked to state the reasons for persistent decrease in the number of programmes conducted and participants trained in the Organized Sector during the last three years, the Ministry stated as under:

“This is to intimate that over the years Dattopant Thengadi National Board for Workers Education and Development (DTNBWED) has bestowed more focus on the unorganised sector workers in tune with the priorities of the Government and the Administrative Ministry, considering the greater need of training of these workers. Of late, from the financial year 2024-25, DTNBWED has initiated skill based short duration programmes for the unorganised sector with the aspiration to enhance **Employability and Job Role based Efficiency** as EPEP programme, especially for the Construction, Agriculture and Health Care Workers. The following year wise elaboration would throw more light on the issue;

Financial Year	No. of Trg Progs in Organised Sector	No. Of Workers Trained in the Organised Sector	No. of Trg Progs in Unorganised Sector	No. of Workers Trained in the Unorganised Sector	Total No. of Trg Progs conducted	Total No. of Workers Trained
2022-23	2872	65196	5436	373312	8308	438508
2023-24	1670	38548	9591	739695	11261	778243
2024-25	563	11931	8516	547593	9079	559524

During the year 2024-2025 the Board has also conducted programmes on Occupational Safety and Health. The Board has also focused on registration of workers in different welfare schemes of the Government in 3 days ACRCs and Shramik Choupals in unorganised sector.

Further during the financial year 2024-25 to enrich the Unorganised sector Training programmes with the introduction of 'Awareness cum Registration programmes' (ACRC), with increased duration of three days instead of one day and the workers were provided on site assistance for enrolment/ registration to different social security/welfare schemes for which they are eligible.

To improve upon the reach in the organised sector workers training programmes, the budget of all 2, 4 and 6 module Grant in Aid programmes for the Trade Unions is increased to ₹ 13,500/-, ₹ 20,000/- and ₹ 22,500/- respectively.”

X. LABOUR STATISTICS

108. In the context of activities of the Labour Bureau, the Ministry furnished the following details:

Labour Bureau	
➤ Consumer Price Index for Industrial Workers (CPI-IW)	Index released each month periodically
➤ Consumer Price Index for Rural and Agricultural Labourers (CPI-AL/RL)	Index released each month periodically
➤ Revision of base year of CPI-IW (2016=100) and CPI-AL/RL (1986-87=100)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Expert Group constituted to guide the base year revision exercise. ● First meeting of Expert Group held on 09.01.2025.
➤ All India Survey on Migrant workers (MWS)	Field work of the survey has been completed.
➤ All India Survey on Domestic workers (DWS)	Field work of the survey has been completed.
➤ Quarterly Employment Survey (QES)	The 5th and 6th quarterly reports have been released

(a) Base up-dation exercise of CPI (AL&RL)

109. When asked to state by when the CPI-AL/RL will be released, the Ministry stated that the Base up-dation exercise of CPI (AL&RL) with base

2019=100 has been completed and the new index with base 2019=100 will be released soon after due approvals.

(b) Base Year revision of CPI (IW) and CPI (AL&RL)

110. With regard to base year revision of Consumer Price Index Numbers for Industrial Workers (CPI-IW) & Consumer Price Index Numbers for Agricultural and Rural Labourers (CPI-AL/RL), the Ministry stated that an Expert Group for base year revision of Consumer Price Index Numbers for Industrial Workers (CPI-IW) & Consumer Price Index Numbers for Agricultural / Rural Labourers (CPI-AL/RL) has been constituted under the Chairmanship of Shri A.K.Sadhu, Former Director General (NSS), MoSPI and the process for updation of both the indices with latest base year has been initiated.

111. When asked to state the tentative date for completion of the exercise, the Ministry responded as under:

“An Expert Group has been constituted for Base Year revision of CPI (IW) and CPI (AL& RL) under the chairmanship of Shri AK Sadhu, former Director General (NSS), MOSPI The term of the expert group is initially for two years.”

(c) All India Survey on Migrant Workers (MWS) and All India Survey on Domestic Workers (DWS)

112. With regard to the status of All India Survey on Migrant Workers (MWS) and All India Survey on Domestic Workers (DWS), the representative of the Ministry during evidence deposed as under:

“The results of all India Survey on Migrant Workers and Domestic have gone to a task force for its analysis.”

113. During the course of evidence, the Committee were apprised that the outcome of the All India Survey on Migrant Workers and Domestic Workers has been handed over to a task force for analysis. When asked to state the composition and terms of reference of such task force and whether any time frame has been fixed for the analysis of the survey so conducted. If so, the details thereof.

“The Ministry has constituted a task force comprising senior professors of the National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER) and senior officers of the Ministry of Labour and Employment and Labour Bureau to review the Migrant Workers and Domestic Workers Survey reports. The terms of reference of the Task Force, inter-alia, vetting of the methodology and conclusion, as well as giving a proper perspective. The task force is expected to submit its report by end of March 2025.”

Labour & Employment Statistical System (LESS)

(i) Third Party Evaluation of the Scheme

114. In the context of Labour & Employment Statistical System (LESS), the Ministry stated as under:

“Third Party Evaluation of Labour & Employment Statistical System (LESS) scheme of Labour Bureau was undertaken by the National Productivity Council in 2021. The key recommendations of NPC were duly implemented.

Further, the Third Party Evaluation of LESS scheme is undertaken on regular basis. In order to continue the Scheme in next finance commission cycle and critically evaluate the activities of Labour Bureau, Third Party Evaluation of Labour and Employment Statistical System (LESS) Scheme has been entrusted to Arun Jaitley National Institute of Financial Management (AJNIFM), a Center of Excellence under Department of Expenditure, Ministry of Finance in October, 2024. The AJNIFM study team visited Labour Bureau, Chandigarh for finalizing the modalities and other details of Third Party Evaluation. The team also visited Regional office at Chennai and held discussions with State DES (Directorate of Economics and Statistics) officers and officers from State Labour Commissionerate.”

115. When asked about the status of Third Party Evaluation of the Scheme being conducted by Arun Jaitley National Institute of Financial Management (AJNIFM) since October 2024 and when the exercise is likely to be completed, the Ministry responded as under:

“The team from AJNIFM undertaking third party evaluation visited Labour Bureau, Chandigarh and Regional Office, Chennai. Stakeholder discussions were also held by AJNIFM with field functionaries, academicians and State government departments. The exercise is likely to be completed tentatively by end of March, 2025.”

(ii) Funds allocation and utilization

116. In the context of Labour and Employment Statistical System (LESS) it was noticed that while the actual expenditure under Labour and Employment Statistical System (LESS) was Rs. 33.76 crore during 2023-24, an allotment of Rs. 50.00 crore was made as BE for 2024-25. However, funds were reduced drastically at the RE stage to Rs. 26.58 crore. Even against this considerably reduced RE, only Rs. 8.55 crore has been utilised till 15.02.2025 leaving a shortfall of Rs. 18.03 crore viz. 67.83% of RE. It was noted that the BE for

2025-26 for LESS has been substantially upscaled to Rs. 72.72 crore. When asked to furnish the reasons for gross reduction of funds at RE stage, actual expenditure, and how the Ministry plans to effectively utilise the increased BE for the year 2025-26, the Ministry responded as under:

“The expenditure incurred till 20.02.2025 in the FY 2024-25 under the LESS Scheme is Rs 8.80 Cr. A major portion (35%) of the total funds allocated under the LESS scheme are for the SC & ST and North East components, which cannot be utilised as scheme is not beneficiary oriented. Activities planned in 2024-25 such as automation of Labour Bureau and revamping of the Quarterly Employment Survey (QES) are still at approval stage and will be taken up during 2025-26.”

XI EMPLOYEES' STATE INSURANCE CORPORATION (ESIC)

117. The Employees' State Insurance Act, 1948 applies to all non-seasonal factories employing 10 or more persons. The provisions of the Act are being brought into force in district area-wise in stages. The employees of registered factories and establishments drawing wages up to Rs. 21000/- per month (Rs.25,000/- for Persons with Disability) are covered under the Act. The Scheme provides medical benefit in the event of sickness (Primary, Secondary and Tertiary) to its beneficiaries and also Cash benefits in the event of abstention from work due to sickness (Sickness Benefit), Temporary Disablement (until the disablement lasts), Permanent Disablement (for life on the basis of loss of earning capacity due to injury resulting in permanent disablement), Dependent Benefit (for life to dependents, in case of death due to employment injury), Funeral Expenses, Unemployment Allowance (for two years), Maternity Benefit (up to 26 weeks) etc. It is a comprehensive social security for the covered employees and their family/dependents.

118. The Employees' State Insurance Scheme is financed by Contributions received from the employers' and employees' covered under ESI Act, 1948. The rate of employers' share of contribution is 3.25% of the wages of the employees while the employees' share of contribution is 0.75% of their wages. Employees earning wages up to Rs.176/- per day are exempted from payment of their share of contribution. The expenditure on medical care is shared between the Employees' State Insurance Corporation and the State Governments in the ratio 7:1. The Corporation does not receive any grant-in-aid/budgetary allocation from the Central Government.

119. The information regarding the number of IPs, Hospitals, Dispensaries, Medical Educational Institutionals, etc. of ESIC is tabulated below:

Employees' State Insurance Corporation

S.No	Item	Number	Details
1	No. of IPs (as on 31.03.2024)	3.72 Cr.	Total No. of Beneficiaries are 14.42 Cr.
2	Hospitals	165	59 run by ESIC and 106 by States
3	Dispensaries	1590	36 ESIC Dispensary and 1554 ESIS Dispensary run by States
4	Medical Educational Institutions	15	PGIMSR - 2, Medical Colleges -8 Dental Colleges - 2, Nursing Colleges-2, Paramedical College-1
5	Super Speciality services present**	25	Out of the hospitals listed at Sl. No.2

➤ 406 AYUSH units (183 Ayurveda, 73 Yoga, 11 Unani, 51 Siddha and 88 Homeopathy) functioning in ESI Hospitals and dispensaries across the country.

** Additionally tie ups in place for 2836 Private empanelled hospitals for providing super speciality treatment for IPs.

120. The gist of various initiatives undertaken by ESIC is as under:

Employees' State Insurance Corporation [ESIC] – initiatives (1/2)

- ✓ ESIC serves over **3.72 crore** insured persons and total **14.42** crore beneficiaries. Health care services in ESIC have been integrated with PMJAY in **157** districts.
- ✓ ESIC has approved **104** new hospitals with **11,040** new beds and **166** new dispensaries to improve its health services infrastructure.
- ✓ **Hon'ble Prime Minister** virtually inaugurated ESIC Hospital in Indore, Madhya Pradesh, and laid the foundation for **06** additional ESI hospitals across the country on **29.10.2024**. Collectively, these projects are worth **Rs. 1,641 crore** and will enhance healthcare access for approximately 55 lakh ESI beneficiaries and their families.
- ✓ Chemotherapy units in **42** hospitals, Home Drug delivery in **28** hospitals and Home Sample Collection in 11 hospitals have been started.

Employees' State Insurance Corporation [ESIC] – initiatives (2/2)

- ✓ New ICT initiatives-AAA+ Mobile app for appointments, 5G ambulances, online claim for cash benefits, revamped **Dhanwantri** mobile app etc. have been launched.
- ✓ Facilities of Aadhar seeding and Ayushman Bharat Health Account (ABHA) have also been started for beneficiaries.
- ✓ In house super speciality services are being strengthened by adding new services like **Cath lab, Renal transplant**, etc.
- ✓ ESIC has undertaken recruitment of doctors and faculty for hospitals and medical institutions offering appointments to **1221** doctors/ faculty/ specialist, comprising **860** General Duty Medical Officers, **330** Assistant Professors and **31** Specialists.
- ✓ ESIC has initiated a dedicated **Preventive health check-up program** from 15th August 2024. **3,29,778** beneficiaries have been checked up under this special campaign from 15th August 2024 to 2nd October 2024.

121. In this context, the representative of the Ministry during evidence deposited as under:

“Apart from this, ESIC took a new decision regarding medical colleges and ten new medical colleges were also announced. In order to improve services in the North-Eastern region, ESIC also changed its norms for augmentation of services. Apart from this, we have taken a major policy decision on the conversion of PMJAY under the guidance of the Hon'ble Minister. Conversion of Ayushman Bharat facility with ESIC, which will give our labour workforce access to about 30,000 new hospitals, which are ESIC workers.”

(i) **Setting up of 10 new Medical Colleges**

122. When asked to provide the State/UT – wise details where 10 new Medical Colleges are proposed to be established by ESIC and the road map to complete the exercise in a time bound manner, the Ministry stated as under:

“The establishment of 10 new Medical Colleges has been approved in the 194th ESI Corporation Meeting held on 08.10.2024 at ESIC Hqrs. Office. The details of proposed ESIC Medical Colleges are as below:

1. ESIC Medical College Andheri, Maharashtra.
2. ESIC Medical College Basaidarapur, New Delhi.
3. ESIC Medical College, Beltola, Guwahati, Assam.
4. ESIC Medical College, Indore, Madhya Pradesh.
5. ESIC Medical College, Jaipur, Rajasthan.
6. ESIC Medical College, Ludhiana, Punjab.

7. ESIC Medical College, Naroda-Bapunagar, Gujarat.

8. ESIC Medical College, Noida, Uttar Pradesh.

9. ESIC Medical College, Ranchi, Jharkhand.

10. ESIC Medical College, Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh.

Essentiality certificate and Consent of Affiliation have been received for all the locations. Application has been submitted to National Medical Commission (NMC) for Letter of Permission”.

123. In response to a specific query whether there is any proposal for setting up of a Medical College in West Bengal, the Ministry stated as under:

“Presently there is a Medical college at Joka, Kolkata. There is no new proposal for setting up of a Medical College in West Bengal”

(ii) Changes in the norms effected to improve services of ESIC in the North-Eastern States

124. When asked to elaborate on the changes in the norms effected to improve services of ESIC in the North-Eastern States, the Ministry responded as under:

“The following changes have been made (as approved in the 193rd Corporation meeting of ESIC) regarding expansion of ESI Medical Services in North-East Region:

1. All one-doctor dispensaries to be upgraded to two-doctor dispensary with a minimum criterion of 1,000 Insured Persons, in the Northeast Region including Sikkim.

2. The ESI health facilities are established and upgraded based on the number of Insured Persons in the defined catchment area for the type of facility. The catchment area for establishment and upgradation of health facilities have been increased or kept fluid in order to enable clubbing of 2-3 or more districts in one catchment area, wherever the time taken for commuting to the Dispensary (HUB) from the adjoining district (SPOKE) is up to 3 hours/up to 100 kms. This will facilitate in enhancing medical facilities in NER.”

(iii) Availability of ESI Hospital facilities to the Tea Plantation Workers

125. On being asked whether ESI Hospital facilities are available to the Tea Plantation Workers, and whether there is any proposal to include such Tea Plantation Workers under this facility, and the alternate arrangements of medical facilities put in place/proposed to be implemented for them, the Ministry stated as under:

“ESI Act is applicable to all factories & establishments other than seasonal factories (including factories belonging to the Govt.), in the organised sector in the areas notified for coverage under the provisions of section 1(5) & 2(12), employing 10 or more persons. Employees working in these factories and establishments drawing wages up to Rs 21,000/- P.M. (Rs. 25,000/- for PWD) are available for ESI coverage.

The ESI Act is not applicable to plantation workers as the plantation workers are covered under a separate legislation namely ‘The Plantations Labour (PL) Act, 1951’ which regulates the conditions of work in plantations and provides for the welfare of plantation labour. The Plantations Labour Act requires the employers to provide the workers with housing, medical facilities, sickness and maternity benefits and other forms of social security measures.

However, as per First Schedule of Code on Social Security, 2020, an employer of a plantation, may opt for application of chapter IV (ESIC) in respect of the plantation by giving willingness to the Corporation, where the benefits available to the employees under that chapter are better than what the employer is providing to them. The code on Social Security is yet to be implemented.”

(iv) Convergence of Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PM-JAY) with ESIC

126. It was informed that a decision has been taken to converge Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PM-JAY) with ESIC whereby the ESIC beneficiaries will have access to approx. 30,000 new hospitals and any person can avail facilities in ESIC Hospitals. When asked about the present status and steps taken to implement the decision, the Ministry responded as under:

“1. The agenda of “Provision of Medical care to ESIC Beneficiaries under convergence program of ESIC with Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojna (AB-PMJAY) on a Pan- India basis.” was placed before the 194th meeting of the ESI Corporation in the meeting held on 08/10/2024 and approved.

2. Draft SOPs on modalities of Convergence are ready.

3. The Implementation of the convergence will be through the digital platform of the NHA and requires technical convergence between the HIS/ERP application of ESIC and NHA.

4. The MoU for convergence is under examination and the convergence program shall be launched shortly.”

127. When asked to provide a brief note on hospital set up for the Beedi Workers at Tarapur, West Bengal *inter alia* indicating the sanctioned and actual strength of doctors & paramedical staff, its infrastructural development and the status of facilities available /proposed in the Hospital, the Ministry stated as under:

“The 65 bedded Central Hospital at Tarapur, Dhuliyani, along with residential quarters for Doctors and staffs spread across 22 acres, was taken over from CPWD and inaugurated in the year 2000.

The sanctioned strength and in position of the Hospital is as follows:

Sl. No.	Name of Post	Sanctioned Post	In position	Vacant
1	Medical Officer	06	03	03
2	Specialists	06	-	06
2	Sister-in-Charge	1	-	1
3	Staff Nurse	12	05	07
4	Cashier	01	01	00
5	LDC	01	00	01
6	Pharmacist	02	02	00
7	Lab. Technician	01	00	01
8	X-Ray Technician	01	01	00
9	OT Asst.	01	-	01
10	Driver	03	01	02
11	MTS	19	15	04

Medical & paramedical personnel are taken on contractual basis against the vacant posts of doctors, paramedical/supporting staffs till the appointment on regular basis are made.

The hospital has recently undergone electrical maintenance work. Additionally, the Ministry has taken up the matter with the Central Public Works Department (CPWD) for civil repair and maintenance work of the hospital as well as the residential quarters. The hospital is equipped with modern medical facilities, including an X-ray machine, ECG machine, USG machine, basic laboratory facilities, and an Operation Theatre.”

(v) New Hospitals and Dispensaries

128. The Committee were apprised that ESIC has approved 104 new Hospitals with 11,040 new Beds & 166 new dispensaries to improve its health services infrastructure. When asked about the status and the plan of action to ensure that the hospitals are set up and become operational in a time bound manner, the Ministry submitted as under:

“To improve the health services infrastructure ESIC has approved the establishment /construction of a total of 104 new hospital projects and

currently 16 new hospitals are as under construction across the country.
The details of all the 104 hospital projects are as under:

Status of newly approved hospitals

Sl. No.	State	District	Location	No. of beds
On-going projects				
1	Andhra Pradesh	Vizianagaram	Vizianagaram	100
2	Andhra Pradesh	Visakhapatnam	Visakhapatnam	400
3	Gujarat	Ahmedabad	Sanand	350
4	Haryana	Jhajjar	Bahadurgarh	100
5	Haryana	Rewari	Bawal	100
6	Himachal Pradesh	Sirmaur	Kala Amb	30
7	J & K	Badgam	Ompura, Srinagar	100
8	Karnataka	Bangalore Rural	Doddabalapur	100
9	Karnataka	Shimoga	Shivamoga	100
10	Maharashtra	Nagpur	Butibori, Nagpur	200
11	Tamil Nadu	Kanchipuram	Sriperumbudur	100
12	Tamil Nadu	Thothukudi	Tuticorin	100
13	Uttar Pradesh	Shahjahanpur	Shahjahanpur	30
14	Uttarakhand	Haridwar	SIDCUL area Haridwar	300
15	West Bengal	Darjeeling	Siliguri	100
16	West Bengal	Purba Medinapore	Haldia	100
Work assigned to agency (Tendering stage at the level of CPWD)				
17	Delhi	North Delhi	Narela	80
18	Karnataka	Bangalore Rural	Bommsandra	200
19	Karnataka	Kolar	Narsapura	100
20	Karnataka	Ramanagar	Haroholli	100
21	Odisha	Jajpur	Duburi	100
22	Madhya Pradesh	Dhar	Pithampur	100
23	Uttar Pradesh	Meerut	Meerut	100
24	Andhra Pradesh	Visakhapatnam	Atchyutapuram	30
Work assigned to agency (Estimation stage/Concept Plan stage)				
25	Odisha	Khurdha	Bhubaneswar	150
26	Rajasthan	Chittorgarh	Chittorgarh	30
27	West Bengal	North 24 Pargana	Garshyamnagar	100
28	Karnataka	Bellary	Bellary	100
Construction Work is being assigned to agency (PSU)				
29	Goa	North Goa	Mulgaon Goa	150
30	Haryana	Gurgaon	Manesar	500
31	Haryana	Rohtak	Rohtak	100
32	Karnataka	Udupi	Udupi	100
33	Kerala	Idukki	Idukki	100
34	Leh (UT)	Leh	Leh	30
35	Odisha	Jharsuguda	Jharsuguda	100
36	Punjab	Malerkotla	Malerkotla	150
37	Punjab	Patiala	Rajpura	30
38	Sikkim	East Sikkim	Rangpo	100
39	Telangana	Peddapalli	Ramagundam	100
40	Tripura	West Tripura	Shyamlibazaar, Agartala	100
Assessment of suitability of land with State Govt. is under consideration.				

41	Andhra Pradesh	Guntur	Guntur	100
42	Andhra Pradesh	Sri Potti Sriramulu (Nellore)	Sri City, Nellore	100
43	Andhra Pradesh	Sri Potti Sriramulu (Nellore)	Nellore (ESIC)	100
44	Andhra Pradesh	Kurnool	Kurnool	30
45	Bihar	Begusarai	Begusarai	30
46	Bihar	Muzaffarpur	Muzzafarpur	100
47	Bihar	Bhagalpur	Bhagalpur	30
48	Chhattisgarh	Bilaspur	Bilaspur	100
49	Gujarat	Panchmahal	Halol	100
50	Gujarat	Vadodara	Savli	100
51	Haryana	Hissar	Hissar	100
52	Haryana	Sonipat	Sonepat	150
53	Haryana	Ambala	Ambala	100
54	Haryana	Karnal	Karnal	30
55	Jharkhand	Bokaro	Bokaro	100
56	Madhya Pradesh	Jabalpur	Jabalpur	100
57	Maharashtra	Palghar	Palghar	150
58	Maharashtra	Raigad	Pen	200
59	Maharashtra	Jalgaon	Jalgaon	100
60	Maharashtra	Pune	Chakan	350
61	Maharashtra	Amravati	Amrawati	100
62	Maharashtra	Aurangabad	Shendra	30
63	Maharashtra	Aurangabad	Waluj	200
64	Maharashtra	Wardha	Wardha	30
65	Maharashtra	Pune	Baramati	100
66	Maharashtra	Nashik	Sinnar	100
67	Maharashtra	Chandrapur	Ballarpur	30
68	Maharashtra	Ahmednagar	Ahmednagar	100
69	Maharashtra	Satara	Satara	100
70	Odisha	Jagatsinghpur	Paradeep	100
71	Odisha	Ganjam	Berhampur	100
72	Rajasthan	Kotputli-Behror/Rath	Neemrana	150
73	Rajasthan	Ajmer	Kishangarh	100
74	Tamil Nadu	Erode	Erode	100
75	Tamil Nadu	Chengalpattu	Chengalpattu	100
76	Tamil Nadu	Dindigul	Dindigul	100
77	Tamil Nadu	Kanyakumari	Kanyakumari	100
78	Telangana	Ranga Reddy	Shamshabad	100
79	Uttar Pradesh	Gorakhpur	Gorakhpur	100
80	Uttar Pradesh	Gautambudhnagar	Greater Noida	350
81	Uttar Pradesh	Moradabad	Moradabad	100
82	Uttarakhand	Udham Singh Nagar	Kashipur	30
Suitable Land not offered by State Govt.				
83	Andhra Pradesh	Ananthpur	Penukonda	100
84	Andhra Pradesh	Srikakulam	Srikakulam(ESIC)	30
85	Himachal Pradesh	Una	Una	30
86	Jharkhand	Deoghar	Deoghar	100
87	Karnataka	Tumkur	Tumkur	100
88	Kerala	Ernakulam	Perambavoor	100
89	Madhya Pradesh	Satna	Satna	30
90	Maharashtra	Raigad	Panvel	100
91	Maharashtra	Sangli	Sangli	100

92	Maharashtra	Ratnagiri	Ratnagiri	30
93	Maharashtra	Raigad	Karjat	30
94	Maharashtra	Raigad	Khopoli	30
95	Odisha	Balasore	Balasore	100
96	Punjab	SAS Nagar (Mohali)	SAS Nagar, Lalru	100
97	Tamil Nadu	Tirupattur	Vaniyamvadi	100
98	Telangana	Mehabubnagar	Mehabubnagar	30
99	Uttar Pradesh	Firozabad	Firozabad	30
100	Uttar Pradesh	Bulandshahar	Bulandshahar	30
101	Uttar Pradesh	Ayodhya	Ayodhya	30
102	Uttar Pradesh	Amroha	Gajraula (ESIC)	30
103	Uttarakhand	Dehradun	Dehradun	100
104	West Bengal	Paschim Midnapore	Kharagpur	100

Further, 7 new dispensaries are under construction and 2 dispensaries are in pre-construction stage. The details are as under:

Dispensary projects that are in different stages of construction across the country :

Dispensaries : On-going			
S. No.	Project Name	Category	Expected date of completion
1	Bhawani Mandi, Rajasthan.	03 DD	Completed
2	Nunhai, Agra (U.P.)	02 DD	Completed
3	Mayur Vihar, Phase - I (Delhi)	DD	31-Mar-25
4	Chakkorathukulam, Kozhikode	05 DD	31-Mar-25
5	Kundaim, Goa.	05 DD	14-Nov-25
6	Rai, Haryana	03 DD	30-June-25
7	Barhi, Haryana	03 DD	30-Dec-25
Dispensaries: Tendering stage (CPWD)			
S. No.	Project Name	Category	Remarks
1	Manesar, Gurugram, Haryana.	05 DD	Tendering process in advanced stage by CPWD.
2	Enathu, Kerala	02 DD	Tendering process in advanced stage by CPWD.

Frequent review of on-going projects are done at the regional level in close coordination with construction agencies. Project Monitoring Unit (PMU) has been operationalized at regional level to monitor all the construction projects and ensure their timely completion.

At the ESIC Headquarters level regular interaction and review meeting with the construction agencies are conducted under the chairmanship of DG ESIC.

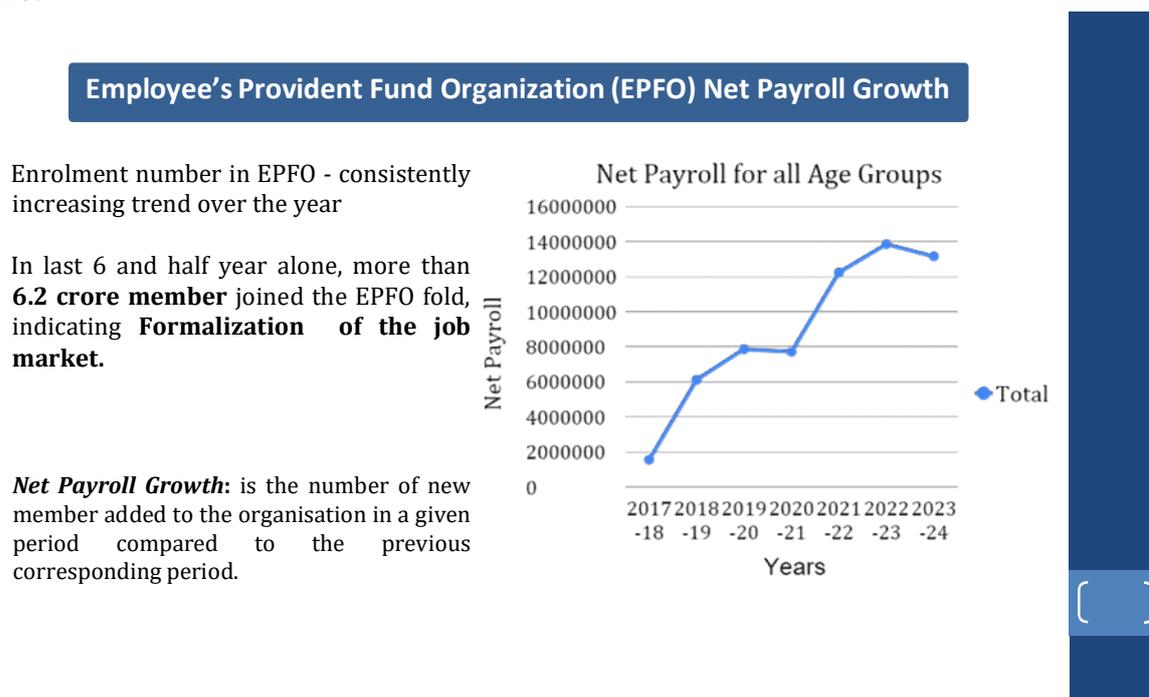
Furthermore, Construction Sub-Committee meeting is regularly conducted to supervise and monitor construction activities.”

129. In response to a specific query as to whether any request has been received from State Government of West Bengal to hand over two ESI hospitals in Siliguri and Haldia, the Ministry replied in negative.

XII. EMPLOYEES’ PROVIDENT FUND ORGANIZATION (EPFO)

130. 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.

131. With regard to Net Payroll Growth, number of pensioners under EPF, 1995 and the initiative taken by EPFO, the Ministry furnished the following details:



Pension under EPS, 1995

Total Number of pensioners under EPS 1995 as on 17.02.2025	81,03,172
Pension amount disbursed (from 01.04.2024 to 31.12.2024)	Rs. 13,259.89 Cr.
Minimum pension of Rs. 1000 p.m.	
Total number of pensioners getting minimum pension of Rs. 1000/- p.m.	20,28,968 (till 31.12.2024)
Total Grant-in-aid for providing minimum pension of Rs. 1000/- p.m. (from 01.04.2024 to 31.12.2024)	Rs. 740.71 Cr

No. of Pensioners under Employees' Pension Scheme, 1995

Item	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25 (Up to 31.12.2024) (as per DBT report)
No. of EPS members obtaining contribution @ 1.16% under EPS-1995 by Govt (as per DBT report)	6,73,09,949	6,95,58,206	5,29,09,114
Beneficiaries getting minimum Pension of Rs. 1000/- p.m. under EPS-1995	20,55,878	20,64,693	20,28,968

Employees Provident Fund Organisation [EPFO]-Initiatives (1/2)

1. **MIS 3.0** - The revamped version of MIS i.e. MIS 3.0 has been launched:
 - ❖ For providing efficient and relevant dashboards
 - ❖ Enhanced User Interface
 - **03** new IT facilities were introduced:
 - I. Online return **filing facility for EDLI exempted establishments.**
 - II. Facility to **send 7Q and 14 B intimations** & online response by employers
 - III. **Online Joint Declaration facility** for member profile corrections-Start of Pre-deployment stakeholders consultation and User Acceptance Testing (UAT)
2. To correct profile of the member and thereby reduce rejection of the claim form, a user friendly facility has been provided to members on 25th February 2024 in their member portal login.
3. **Nidhi Aapke Nikat 2.0:** 16,485 Districts camps have been held since Jan' 2023 wherein 5,52,776 visitors participated - **85%** of grievances were resolved on the spot.
4. Auto claim settlement limit increased from Rs. 50,000/- to Rs.1,00,000/-.
5. Automated claim settlement introduced for education, marriage & housing on 30.04.2024.

Employees Provident Fund Organisation [EPFO]-Initiatives (2/2)

6. Various measures to enhance ease of living :

- ❖ Removal of mandatory uploading of the image of cheque leaf/attested bank passbook
- ❖ Rationalisation of reasons of rejections
- ❖ Validation of entering DOE increased to 03 months from 02 months for generation of Auto Transfer Claims.
- ❖ Two validations for auto claim settlement dispensed off.

7. Centralized Pension Payments System (CPPS) :

- ❖ Full scale rollout of the new CPPS under Employees' Pension Scheme 1995 from December 2024.
- ❖ More than **Rs. 1710 Crore** pension was disbursed to more than **69 Lakh** pensioners pertaining to all **122** pension disbursing Regional offices of EPFO for January, 2025.
- ❖ A circular regarding all India implementation of CPPS has also been issued on **17.01.2025**.
- ❖ The payment is being disbursed centrally through NPCI (IFSC and Bank account). Once this system stabilizes, transition to ABPS will be made in a phased manner.
- ❖ The issues related to DLC services is being discussed with IPPB to enter into agreement for Doorstep DLC services to EPS Pensioners for DLC.

132. In this context, the representative of the Ministry during evidence deposed as under:

“In EPFO..... We are doing a lot of reforms so that we can simplify and increase the ease of living. In December 2024, a very important thing was the centralized pension payment system, earlier the 78 lakh pensioners were able to get pension from only a few branches, but now we have centralized it, can take from any bank branch, it is seeing a 99.9% success rate.”

133. The representative of the Ministry further supplemented as under:

“Sir, EPFO has taken several steps for the convenience of members. A lot of new initiatives have been launched under Madam's leadership. You will see more benefits in a few months. Many difficulties are being removed to improve the members' access to their own funds. An online return filing facility has been created. Apart from this, there are 7Q and 14B intimation, they have also been facilitated. Most people had to face the problem that if someone's name or details were changed or the number of the bank account changed, then they had to give a joint declaration with the employer to update it in EPFO .A very good job has been done on that. An online joint declaration facility has been made so that people do not face any problem and their work can be done easily. Apart from this, 'Nidhi Near You' is the EPFO initiative. It is done every month in many districts. A utility for profile correction has also been released recently, using which members will be able to change their profile very conveniently. Apart from this, the amount of auto claim

settlement has been increased from 50 thousand to 1 lakh. The type of claims that could go into auto claims have also been increased. In this, the mandatory uploading of the copy of the cheque leaf and bank passbook has been removed. Many more benefits have been added to it and many validations have been removed. Madam had told about pension that earlier there was a linkage with three or four banks of the regional office and you could take pension from them. Now all that limitation has been removed. You can take a pension from any bank anywhere in the country. It is a very big thing that has happened. Sir, apart from this, pensioners have to give digital life certificate every year. Doorstep DLC is being introduced, which is a huge facility. This service will be done by the post office. It will be very convenient. By next August, the pension will be taken on Aadhaar-based payment, so that after that the pension will be transferred to any bank account linked to Aadhaar.”

(i) Employees’ Pension Scheme, 1995 (EPS, 1995)

134. The Employees’ Pension Scheme, 1995 (EPS, 1995) is framed under EPF & MP Act, 1952 and came into effect from 16th November, 1995. This scheme has two components:

(a) The Central Government contributes @ 1.16% of wages with wage ceiling of Rs 15000/- per month as Govt’s Share of pension contribution under Employees’ Pension Scheme, 1995.

(b) A Grant-in-Aid is provided by the Central Government under Minimum Pension Scheme towards re-imburement of difference of amount between minimum pension of Rs. 1000/- (announced by the Govt. of India) and actual member pension under EPS-1995 (if it is less than Rs. 1000/-) w.e.f. 01.09.2014.

(ii) Revision of Minimum Pension

135. In the context of increasing minimum pension, the representative of the Ministry during evidence deposited as under:

“Sir, we are trying to increase it. We have also sent proposals to the Finance Ministry several times. We are also pursuing that. We are waiting for orders from the Finance Ministry.”

136. The Committee were apprised that the Ministry has taken up the matter regarding revision of minimum pension of EPS, 1995 Pensioners on a number of occasions with the Ministry of Finance and their reply is awaited. When asked to intimate the date on which the matter was last taken up with the Ministry of Finance, the status of representations, if any, received from various stakeholders in this regard and the action taken by the Ministry thereon, the Ministry stated as under:

“The proposal for increasing the minimum pension under EPS, 1995 from Rs. 1000 to Rs. 2000 per month by providing additional budgetary support, was sent to Ministry of Finance vide letter dated 12.03.2020. However, Ministry of Finance has not approved and same was informed to EPFO by MoL&E vide letter in May, 2023. Further this was part of MoLE’s pre-budget proposal in FY 2024-25.”

(iii) Third Party Evaluation of EPS, 1995

137. The Committee were also apprised that the Third Party Evaluation of EPS, 1995 will be conducted. When asked to state when the Ministry propose to initiate the exercise and whether in the past also, the Third Party Evaluation of the Scheme was undertaken, the Ministry responded as under:

“Ministry has awarded the contract for conducting third Party Evaluation of the EPS 95 Scheme through RFP Route. The exercise is currently underway. In so far as conducting such evaluation in the past, is concerned, as per available information, no such evaluation was conducted earlier.”

(iv) Funds allocation and utilization

138. As regard financial allocation, it was noticed that during 2022-23, the BE & RE was Rs. 8485 crore whereas the actual expenditure was Rs. 8785 crore (Rs. 300 crore excess). During 2023-24, the BE of Rs. 9167 crore was increased to Rs. 9760 crore but the actual expenditure was Rs. 9127 crore (less than BE). The Ministry were asked to state the reasons for variation in 2022-23 and 2023-24. Further, during 2024-25, the BE of Rs.10,950 crore was reduced to Rs. 10,235 crore at RE stage. However, it is seen that till 15.02.2025, the utilisation stands at Rs. 8570.75 crore. When asked about the reasons for reduction at RE stage and whether the scheme would witness full utilisation of the RE funds during remaining part of current fiscal, the Ministry stated as under:

“2022-23

The Budget Estimate (BE) for 2022-23 and the Revised Estimate (RE) for 2022-23 were both ₹8,485 crore. However, to clear arrears of contribution, ₹300 crore was re-appropriated at the fag end of the FY 2022-23, resulting in an actual expenditure of ₹8,785 crore in the financial year 2022-23.

2023-24

The BE 2023-24 and RE 2023-24 was Rs. 9167 Cr and Rs. 9760 Cr respectively. The RE 2023-24 was projected at Rs. 9760 Cr on the basis

of trends of expenditure growth observed during the years 2020-21 to 2022-23 and the expenditure during the first five months of 2023-24. However, the final release to EPFO had to be reduced by Rs. 633 due to sudden revision of demand by EPFO at the end Feb 2024 on the basis of actual expenditure under the scheme till January 2024. This revision was not anticipated at RE stage when on the basis of the past year's trends EPFO had demanded approx. Rs 633 cr additionally.

2024-25

The BE 2024-25 and RE 2024-25 is Rs. 10950 Cr and Rs. 10235 Cr respectively. The RE have been reduced basis on the actual expenditure observed from April 2024 to August 2024.

It is expected that in respect of 'Govt contribution @ 1.16% of pay', the utilisation could be around Rs. 9220 Cr against RE 2024-25 of Rs. 9250 Cr. Further, based on the trends of actuals, it is expected that in respect of 'Govt support towards minimum pension', full utilisation of the RE 2024-25 of Rs. 985 Cr may be witnessed."

139. The bifurcation of Central Government Share and Grant-in-Aid provided during the last three years viz. during 2022-23, 2023-24, 2024-25 (as on 31.01.2025), as provided by the Ministry is as under:

(Rs. In crore)

Govt. share of Cont. @ 1.16% of Pay				
FY	BE	RE	FE	Actual Expenditure
2022-23	7485	7485	7785	7785
2023-24	8167	8770	8760.86	8167
2024-25	9890	9250	*	7744.92 (upto 31.01.2025)

* Likely expenditure in FY 2024-25- Rs. 9220 Cr

(Rs. In crore)

Minimum Pension GIA				
FY	BE	RE	FE	Actual Expenditure

2022-23	1000	1000	1000	1000
2023-24	1000	990	999.14	960
2024-25	1060	985	**	825.83 (upto 31.01.2025)

** Likely expenditure in FY 2024-25- Rs.985 Cr

140. It was noticed that BE for 2025-26 was enhanced to Rs.11250 crore. When asked to state the purpose for which the allocation has been enhanced and the measures taken/proposed to be taken to effectively utilise the earmarked funds in 2025-26, the Ministry replied as under:

“The BE 2025-26 of ‘Govt contribution @ 1.16% of pay’ and ‘Govt support towards minimum pension’ is Rs. 10250 Cr and Rs. 1000 Cr respectively, totalling Rs. 11250 Cr.

The major portion of enhanced allocation pertains to ‘Govt contribution @ 1.16%’ where it has been increased from RE 2024-25 of Rs. 9250 Cr to BE 2025-26 of Rs. 10250 Cr. Whereas in respect of ‘Govt support towards minimum pension’, the allocation has been increased from RE 2024-25 of Rs. 985 Cr to BE 2025-26 of Rs. 1000 Cr. The significant increase in allocation in respect of ‘Govt contribution @ 1.16%’ has been made in view of the following:

1. Normal growth in EPS membership
2. Increase in ‘pay’ of existing EPS members resulting in increased govt share of contributions
3. Additional anticipated increase in EPS membership on account of launch of ‘New Employment Generation Scheme’.”

141. When asked to provide details of number of PF defaulters as well as the amount of default at Jalpaiguri PF Regional Office and the action taken against the defaulters in the last three years and whether any FIR has also been registered in this regard, the Ministry stated as under:

“The number of establishments which have defaulted in payment of statutory dues is 100. Inquires under section 7A of EPF&MP Act,1952 have been initiated against such establishments for determination of dues. The total dues determined during the last three years is Rs. 68.67 crores. Further, 15 FIRs have been filed in the last three years.”

142. When asked whether instances of non-deposit of contribution of Tea Plantation Workers of West Bengal by their employers have been brought to the notice of the Ministry and what action has been taken against such Employers and how the grievances of workers in this regard have been redressed, the Ministry responded as under:

“Inquiries under section 7A have been initiated against tea plantations for determination of dues. Further, EPFO conducts Nidhi Aapke Nikat 2.0 program every month to redress the grievances of workers.”

143. The Ministry were asked to clarify whether instances of involvement of middle men/agents for settlement of claims/retirement benefits of Tea Plantation Workers at Regional Office, Jalpiguri have been brought to their notice and what action has been taken and remedial measures taken to avoid recurrence of such instances in future. The Ministry replied as under:

“The concerns raised in the Parliamentary Committee has been duly noted. Further, a committee has been constituted at the Zonal Office level with representatives from Vigilance and Audit of EPFO to review the claims disposal and rejection at RO Jalpaiguri and to examine the concerns raised by the Standing Committee of Parliament.”

XIII. DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF MINES SAFETY (DGMS)

144. The Committee note that DGMS enforces provisions of The Mines Act, 1952 and the Rules and Regulations framed thereunder relating to health and safety of Mine workers. Further, the provisions of Electricity Act 2003 as applicable to mines and oil fields are also enforced. It also administers the provisions pertaining to occupational safety, health and welfare of persons employed in mines (Coal, Metalliferous and oil-mines).

145. The representative of the Ministry apprised the Committee during course of evidence that Directorate General of Mines Safety basically looks into Occupational safety. In this context, the Ministry were asked to state the number of surprise inspections conducted at sites to gather first hand information regarding basic safety facilities available to the Mine workers during the last three years, the findings thereof, and whether stringent punitive action was initiated in cases where such safety precautions were not in place. In response, the Ministry stated as under:

“Inspection of mines are generated online through randomized, risk-based inspection system on Shram Suvidha portal. The modalities of “Risk-based inspection System” are based various pre defined

parameters like category of mine, risks involved etc. to ensure transparency as well as accountability.

The portal also facilitates online intimation to the mine management regarding the scheduled inspection of the mine.

Besides, Inspections are also undertaken in case of complaints, accidents, dangerous occurrences or any other activity.

During inspection, the officials of the Directorate General of Mines Safety (DGMS) oversee the status of the compliance of the provisions of the Mines Act 1952, the rules and regulations made thereunder, including basic safety facility viz. supply/use of Personal Protective Equipments (PPEs), viz. Helmet, Dust respirator, Protective footwear etc., workplace safety, medical examination including training to the persons employed in mines, etc.

Based on the observations, mine managements are advised for resolution of deficiencies and compliances are followed up accordingly. For repetitive and serious violations, managements are issued improvement notices to comply with the provisions within the stipulated timeline. For urgent and immediate danger, prohibitory orders are issued. Punitive actions are also initiated where there were serious contraventions or major violations under provisions of the Mines Act 1952, thereby leading to prosecutions as applicable in the law.”

The details of inspections/enquiries and actions taken by DGMS during last 3 years are detailed below:

Year	No. of Inspections	No. of Enquiries	No. of Improvement Notices Issued	No. of Prohibitory orders issued	No. of prosecution launched
2022	8310	1400	127	216	24
2023	9008	1284	233	330	36
2024	8385	1557	256	348	34

146. During evidence, it was brought to the notice of the representatives of the Ministry that Bauxite Mining is carried out at Lohardaga District in Jharkhand where the workers have not been provided with even the barest safety facilities like cap, shoes, helmet, etc and they are being exploited. When asked to state

the steps taken/proposed to assess this situation and undertake remedial measures, the Ministry stated as under:

“There are 4 number of Bauxite mines, in Lohardaga district of Jharkhand, registered with DGMS in Shram Suvidha Portal. In the past 7 inspections were made during the year 2023 & 2024 in these Bauxite mines of lohardaga. No deficiencies were pointed out regarding supply and use of PPEs (Helmets, Shoes, Fluorescent Jacket, etc.)

After the meeting of Parliamentary Standing Committee on 28.2.2025, Inspection of Bauxite mines were done again by Senior officers of DGMS on 01.03.2025 & 03.03.2025.

During the inspections, it was observed that general working conditions were in order. PPE kits have also been issued to the workers. However, deficiencies with respect to dressing and removal of overhang of bench, adequate fencing, dust suppression measures and medical examination of workers were noticed.”

The management has been suitably advised on the deficiencies observed and their compliance is being followed up by DGMS. Mine wise status of medical examination as well as issue of PPEs given below:

S. No	Name of the mine & owner	Manpower		No. of persons undergone IME /PME		PPE's issued to persons		
		Departmental	Contractual	Departmental	Contractual	Helmet	Safety Shoes	Fluorescent Jacket
1	Bagru Hill Bauxite Mines M/s Hindalco	139	39	139	39	178	178	178
2	PAKHAR Bauxite Mines 115.13 M/s Hindalco	14	254	14	254	268	268	268
3.	Pakhar Bauxite Mines(109.507) M/s Minerals & Mineral	8	328	8	328	336	336	336
4	Pakhar Bauxite Mines(15.58) M/s Minerals & Mineral	3	3	0	0	6	6	6

XIV. INDIAN LABOUR CONFERENCE

147. The Ministry were asked to state as to when was the last Indian Labour Conference held and when the next such Conference is proposed to be held. The Ministry were also requested to indicate the reasons for not holding Indian Labour Conference. The Reply received from the Ministry is as under:

“The 46th Session of Indian Labour Conference (ILC) was held in New Delhi on 20-21 July, 2015. The Government has been holding tripartite consultations on important labour policies/issues from time to time.”

XV. G20 FEASIBILITY STUDY ON DEVELOPMENT OF INTERNATIONAL REFERENCE CLASSIFICATION

148. In the context of G20 Feasibility Study on Development of International Reference Classification the Ministry furnished the following details:

G20 Feasibility Study on Development of International Reference Classification

- ❖ During India's G20 Presidency in 2023, G20 leaders committed to establishing well-managed, regular, and skills-based migration pathways.
- ❖ As part of this effort, they agreed to explore the development of an international reference classification of occupations based on skill and qualification requirements.
- ❖ The International Labour Organization (ILO) and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) will conduct a feasibility study on this classification, with a completion target of 2026 and annual progress updates.
- ❖ This classification will help Indian youth bridge global skill shortages by enhancing cross-country comparability, benchmarking, and mutual recognition of skills and qualifications.
- ❖ **Feasibility Study (by 2027) - Led by ILO & OECD**
 - The study will explore the feasibility of the international reference classification including a pilot in Green, Digital, and Care sectors, which face severe skill shortages.
 - 4 countries including India, Germany, and Brazil are participating in this study.
 - The estimated total cost is €800,000 (₹7.35 Cr), with contributions from:
 - ✓ India: €700,000 (₹6.44 Cr)
 - ✓ Germany: €100,000, paid directly to OECD in consultation with ILO.
- ❖ **Next Steps:**

India is signing an MoU with ILO to contribute its pledged funds and support the study.

149. In this context the representative of the Ministry during evidence deposited as under:

“When India was holding the presidency of G-20, at that time a decision was taken that the skill qualifications available all over the world should come on a standard framework. India has taken the initiative to conduct a feasibility study. We are majorly financing it. The MoU is yet to be signed This work will begin. After that, it will help the Indian laborer to be absorbed in foreign countries, because our skill qualifications will be standardized with the skill qualifications of the world.”

PART-II

OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

I. OVERALL FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

1. The Committee note that BE of Rs. 22531.47 crore for the year 2024-25 was reduced to Rs. 18307.22 crore at RE stage while the Ministry were able to spend only Rs. 9527.66 crore viz. 52% (as on 15.02.2025). According to the Ministry, the major remaining portion (77%) of the Revised Estimates (RE) for 2024-25, amounting to Rs. 8779.56 crore, is pending primarily under ELI Scheme (NEGS) which is yet to be approved by the cabinet. The expenditure under the ELI scheme will depend on the final approval from the Cabinet and the timing of such approval. It is expected that the allocation in RE 2024-25 under the other schemes will be utilized. The Ministry do not anticipate any significant unspent funds by the end of 31st March, 2025, except for the ELI scheme. The Ministry are making all out efforts to obtain the final approval from the Cabinet at the earliest. The Ministry have, subsequently, informed that out of Rs. 11044.05 crore surrendered during 2024-25, Rs.9999.50 crore pertain to ELI Scheme. The Ministry have also stated that the other Schemes for which funds have been surrendered are ABRY, National Database for Unorganised Workers (NDUW), LESS, etc.

The Committee feel that although the funds allocated under ELIS during 2024-25 have been surrendered, the Ministry need to continue pursuing the matter regarding seeking approval of the Scheme and after the same is approved, revisit the plan of action for utilization of funds in 2025-26 and take prudent measure so as to increase the BE at RE Stage.

2. The Committee find that the pace of expenditure during the first two quarters of 2024-25 is more or less as per Quarterly Expenditure Plan, however, during the third & fourth quarter, the expenditure is less due to

several reasons including non-approval of ELIS, for which the Ministry persistently followed up from time to time. The Committee have observed that in some of the Schemes the guidelines issued by the Ministry of Finance regarding ceiling of expenditure in the last quarter and the last month have not been strictly adhered to by the Ministry during 2024-25. The Committee call upon the Ministry to ensure that these guidelines are followed in letter and spirit in 2025-26 and, thereafter, also.

3. As informed by the Ministry, the Re-appropriation of funds of Rs. 1118.25 crore under DGMS, DGFASLI, NDUW, PM-SYM, DGE, Labour Bureau, etc. was done only on functional requirements and strictly following the provisions contained in GFRs. The Committee expect that the provisions contained in GFRs will be adhered to in 2025-25 and, thereafter also.

Allocation for North Eastern Areas.

4. The Committee note that BE of Rs. 2191.07 crore for North Eastern Areas has been reduced to Rs. 1758.97 crore at RE stage during 2024-25. The BE for 2025-26 is Rs. 3208.67 crore. With regard to the reasons for reduction of funds at RE stage during 2024-25, the Committee were apprised that the North Eastern Region (NER) is provided with gross budgetary support amounting to at least 10 % of the allocation of schemes. If the revised estimates for the scheme are reduced for any reason, the NER components will be automatically reduced. As on 15.02.2025, the Ministry's NER expenditure is Rs. 909.51 crore compared to the Ministry's total expenditure up to 15.02.2025, Rs. 9527.66 crore, which is almost 10%.

The Ministry further stated that for BE 2025-26, the increase in fund allocation for the North Eastern Areas is mainly due to a 100% increase in the allocation under the ELI Scheme from Rs. 10,000 crore to Rs. 20,000 crore. The Ministry are making all out efforts to obtain the final approval

from the Cabinet for ELI scheme at the earliest so that the increased funds can be fully utilized during FY 2025-26

The North Eastern areas of the country have hilly and rugged terrain and due to these geographical challenges, the labourers undergo a lot of hardships, especially in navigating the terrain and facing hazardous work environment while being employed in tea gardens and other plantations. Accordingly, the Committee are of the firm opinion that a holistic development of the North Eastern areas is necessary to bring about positive changes in every sphere of the regions for which funds are granted under each Ministry/Department in Budget. There has to be specific/tailor made programmes to provide assistance to labourers particularly in the areas of mobility, shelter and health. The education of children of labourers should also be given focus. Therefore, the Committee want the Ministry to give high priority regarding proper allocation of funds to the North-Eastern Region for the development of the region.

II. IMPLEMENTATION OF FOUR LABOUR CODES

5. The Committee note that the Government have notified four Labour Codes, namely, the Code on Wages, 2019 on 8th August, 2019 and the Industrial Relations Code, 2020, the Code on Social Security, 2020 & the Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code, 2020 on 29th September, 2020 by amalgamating 29 labour laws. These Codes are yet to be implemented. As a step towards implementation of the four Labour Codes, the Ministry have pre-published seven draft Rules during the period 07.07.2020 to 03.06.2021 whereby comments of all stakeholders including general public have been invited.

Labour is in the Concurrent List of the Constitution and under the Labour Codes, rules are required to be framed by the Central Government as well as by the State Governments. The Central Government and a

number of States/UTs have pre-published rules under four Labour Codes. As on 31.12.2024, 01 State viz. West Bengal and 01 UT viz. Lakshadweep have not yet pre-published the Rules on the Code on Wages, 2019. 01 State viz. West Bengal and 02 UTs viz. Lakshadweep and NCT of Delhi have not pre-published the Rules on the Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code, 2020. 02 States viz. Nagaland and West Bengal and 02 UTs viz. Lakshadweep and NCT of Delhi have not pre-published the Rules on the Industrial Relations Code, 2020. 02 States viz. Tamil Nadu and West Bengal and 02 UTs viz. Lakshadweep and NCT of Delhi have not pre-published the Rules on the Code on Social Security, 2020.

Thus, while 32 States/UTs have pre-published the Rules under all 4 Labour Codes, 1 State viz. West Bengal and 1 UT viz. Lakshadweep have not pre-published rules on all the 4 Labour Codes. The Committee express deep concern to note that the four Labour Codes, which were notified in 2019/2020 are yet to be implemented. The Committee are of the firm view that the efforts being made by the Ministry to pursue the States/UTs, which have not yet pre-published the draft rules have not yielded the desired results. The Ministry need to be more proactive in their approach as even after the Rules are pre-published by all the States/UTs, a lot further needs to be done for implementation of the Codes at the ground level. The Committee, therefore, while expressing their displeasure on the progress of work being undertaken since 2019, impress upon the Ministry to further intensify their efforts, fix deadlines, improve coordination and monitoring mechanism and ensure pre-publication of draft Rules by all States/UTs by providing all necessary hand holding required in completion of the task without further loss of time. The Committee would like to be apprised of the progress made in this regard. Considering the cardinal importance of the implementation of the Labour Codes, the Committee is in the process of examining the same in detail by seeking the opinion of the stakeholders and will be presenting a Report to the Parliament in due course.

III. NATIONAL CAREER SERVICES

(a) Integration with 30 States for information exchange

6. The Committee note that one of the features of the NCS Portal is integration with States/UTs for information exchange. The Committee have been apprised that 23 States/UTs have been integrated and 07 States are directly using NCS. The Committee have also been apprised that the integration of the remaining 6 States/UTs is under process and is likely to be completed by July, 2025. The Committee desire that the exercise for integration of the remaining 6 States be completed as per the laid down timeframe so as to enhance the career and employment opportunities of the intended beneficiaries. The Committee further desire that the exercise regarding the linking of overseas jobs on NCS Portal be also completed expeditiously.

(b) Third Party Evaluation of Scheme

7. The Committee were apprised that the Scheme has been approved for continuation during 15th Finance Commission Cycle, i.e., 2021-26 and third party evaluation of the Scheme has been entrusted to M/s Quality Council of India on 11th December, 2024 and the field work is likely to be completed by 07th March, 2025. The Committee hope that the field work has been completed as per stipulated time period and desire that further follow up action be taken so as to ensure that the third party evaluation is completed well before the expiry the term of the 15th Finance Commission.

(c) On-boarding of Managed Service Provider (MSP) for NCS 2.0

8. The Committee have been apprised that NCS 2.0 portal will be launched to facilitate activities duly integrating various new features like AI enabled smart job matching, job recommendation engine, integrated data system for better employment service to both job seekers and

employers. The Committee have also been apprised that the exercise for the selection of the Managed Service Provider (MSP) has been initiated and is at the stage of finalization. The Committee desire that post selection of MSP, further follow up action be taken on priority so as to ensure that on boarding of MSP for development of NCS 2.0 is completed in a time bound manner.

(d) Setting up of PM e2E (Pradhan Mantri Education to Employment) Career Lounges and preparation of uniform guidelines for employment portals of the States.

9. The Committee were apprised that the work relating to setting up of 02 Career Lounges in Model Career Centre with Industry Partnership and preparation of uniform guidelines for employment portals of the States is under process. The Ministry have informed that both PM E2E (Pradhan Mantri Education to Employment) Career Lounge are set to be launched and make operational by March 2025. The Committee trust that the Ministry would meet their commitment and both the Career Lounges would become operational in March, 2025.

10. The Committee have also been apprised that the study of employment portals of 5 States/UTs has been completed for preparation of uniform guidelines and that of the remaining States is likely to be completed by May, 2025. The Committee call upon the Ministry to complete the exercise for study of employment portals of the remaining states on priority so as to ensure that the uniform guidelines are timely issued and thereafter, implemented in letter and spirit by all States/UTs.

(e) Job Fairs Organised

11. The Committee are concerned to note that in the 7,337 job fairs organized during 2024-25 (as on 31.01.2025) through the NCS Portal in which 37,138 employers participated, out of 5,68,019 job seekers, who had participated only over 1 lakh job seekers were selected i.e. only 18% job seekers were selected. The Committee desire that the reasons for such a low placement/selection be analysed and corrective measures be taken so as to meet the requirement of employers and also to increase the number of selected candidates.

(f) Feedback and placement details under NCS

12. The Committee are deeply concerned to note that during 2024-25 (as on 31.01.2025), only 35.23 lakh candidates were provisionally selected through portal and job fairs against the 1.94 crore vacancies posted by the Employers, which is not encouraging.

The Ministry have persistently maintained that notifying final hiring figures is not a mandatory requirement of NCS Portal as they do not get any feedback from Employers as well as selected candidates on the grounds that the selected candidates change jobs on getting better job opportunities. The Committee find that this proves as a lacuna for understanding the number of candidates finally selected every year through this portal. The Committee impress upon the Ministry to have a re-look at their policy and ensure that placement details are made available on the portal by getting necessary feedback from both employers and the selected candidates.

13. In addition, the factors responsible for less number of candidates being selected vis-à-vis vacancies viz skill gaps, lack of requisite experience, location limitations, industry-specific requirements, employer preferences, etc. also need to be addressed on priority in consultation with

various stakeholders like the Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship and Industry Associations so as to achieve the objective of the Ministry to promote skill development and strengthening employment services. The Committee, while strongly recommending the Ministry to take corrective measure in this regard, would like to be apprised of the developments made in this regard within one month.

(g) Employment trends as per PLFS data

14. The Committee note that the data on Employment and Unemployment is collected through Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) which is conducted by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) since 2017-18. The survey period is July to June every year. As per the data available in latest Annual PLFS Reports, the estimated Worker Population Ratio (WPR) indicating employment on usual status for females of age 15 years and above (including contractual workers in Organized and Unorganized Sectors) has increased from 28.7% in 2019-20 to 40.3% in 2023-24.

Observing that the upward trend bring to the fore the positive aspect of participation of more women workforce in both organized and unorganized sectors, the Committee impress upon the Ministry to further intensify their efforts through other innovative measures like encouraging employers to engage more women workforce, organizing awareness campaigns in rural/remote/hilly/underserved areas in particular about NCS portal, etc. so as to further increase women participation in various sectors, thereby uplifting their social and financial status.

(h) Funds allocation and utilization

15. The Committee note that the BE and RE under National Career Services for 2024-25 was Rs. 58.00 crore, out of which an amount of Rs.

37.37 crore (64.43%) only has been utilized, as on 15.02.2025 which leaves Rs. 20.63 crore (35.57%) as unspent balance. The Committee have been apprised that the entire amount of Rs. 58.00 crore would be utilized for payment of committed liabilities of Consultancy agency, System Integrator, Social Media agency, etc. during the FY 2024-25.

The Committee, thus, find that the Ministry intend to utilize around 35% of RE in the remaining one and a half month of the fourth quarter implying that the guidelines issued by the Ministry of Finance with regard to ceiling of expenditure, i.e., 33% in last quarter and 15% in the last month of the financial year are not being adhered to by the Ministry. The Committee, therefore, call upon the Ministry to ensure that, in future, the expenditure is incurred as per the quarterly expenditure plans and also by observing the quarterly and monthly ceiling of expenditure fixed by the Ministry of Finance.

IV. WELFARE OF SC/ST JOB SEEKERS THROUGH COACHING AND GUIDANCE

16. The objective of the Scheme is to enhance the employability of SC/ST jobseekers through vocational guidance, career counselling, computer training, pre-recruitment training, etc. The Scheme has been approved for continuation during 15th Finance Commission Cycle i.e., from 2020-21 to 2025-26.

(a) Third Party Evaluation of the Scheme

The Committee have been apprised that the third party evaluation of the scheme has been entrusted to M/s Quality Council of India (selected through GeM) on 11.12.2024 and the field work has been completed on 17.02.2025. The Committee desire that the exercise be completed in a time

bound manner and further follow up action be taken well before the completion of term of the 15th Finance Commission.

(b) Funds allocation and utilization

17. The Committee note that the BE and RE for 2024-25 was Rs. 20.60 crores, out of which, an amount of Rs. 15.97 crore (77.52%) has been utilized till 19.02.2025 leaving an unspent balance of Rs. 4.63 crore, and as informed by the Ministry, rest of the amount would be utilized for payment of committed liabilities of Stipend, Academic fee, etc. during FY 2024-25. **The Committee are satisfied with the utilization of funds under the Scheme and trust that the remaining balance will be utilized by 31.03.2025.**

(c) Physical Targets

18. The Committee note that in 2022-23, out of 2400 trained SC/ST candidates, only 821 candidates [543(SC) and 278 ST]] viz. only 34.20% got employment, whereas in 2023-24, out of 2160 trained SC/ST candidates, only 606 (SC 427 and ST 179) viz. only 28% got employment. **The Committee are not satisfied with the physical performance and desire that the Ministry need to have a serious review of the training module and other relevant factors, which may be responsible for selection of less number of candidates so as to ensure that there is considerable increase in employment of trained SC/ST candidates under the Scheme.**

V. NEW EMPLOYMENT GENERATION SCHEME (ELIS)

19. The Committee note that three Schemes aimed at boosting employment and hiring in the formal sector, collectively known as 'Employment Linked Incentive' Scheme to be implemented through the Employees Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) was announced in the FY 2024-25 Budget Speech by the Finance Minister. The Committee further note that these schemes provide benefits to both employers and first-time employees enrolled in the EPFO. Under the Scheme, during 2024-25, the

BE of Rs. 10,000 crore was reduced to Rs. 6799.43 crore at RE stage. Out of which an amount of Rs.6799.37 crore has not been utilized as on 15.02.2025 i.e. there is 100% non-utilization.

The Committee have been apprised that the Scheme has been appraised by the EFC and is at the Draft Cabinet Note stage. Pending Cabinet approval, DoE has allowed only Rs 20 Cr to be used for pre-launch activities. Due to these reasons, the funds earmarked for FY 2024-25 remain unutilized. However, this will not impact the overall financial implications of the scheme as spending can commence only after approval.

The Ministry have also informed that so far as provisions and utilisation of Rs 20,000 crore during the financial year 2025-26 is concerned, the same has been earmarked against the estimated expenditure of Rs 28693.78 crores. More allocation can be sought as necessary, at RE stage. The Ministry have, subsequently, informed that Rs. 9999.50 crore has been surrendered, thereby implying that the Scheme has not been approved. The Committee expect that the necessary approval of the Scheme will be accorded in 2025-26 and desire that the preparatory work undertaken during 2024-25 need to be taken to the logical end so as to ensure that the earmarked funds are utilized during 2025-26.

VI. PRADHAN MANTRI SHRAM YOGI MAANDHAN (PM-SYM)

20. The Committee note that as on 31.12.2024, over 45.56 lakh beneficiaries have been enrolled under the PM-SYM scheme, excluding bulk enrollment of 5.06 lakhs beneficiaries for the period of 2019-20.

(a) Funds allocation and utilization

The Committee note that during 2024-25, the BE of Rs.177.24 crore was increased to Rs. 242.73 crore at RE stage, out of which, only Rs. 168.74 crore (70%) was utilized, as on 19.02.2025 and Rs. 73.99 crore

(30%) are yet to be utilised. The Committee have been apprised that BE was increased at RE stage on account of Government's liability for contribution and it is expected that close to the allocation in RE 2024-25 will be utilized. The Committee, thus, find that the Ministry have not been able to utilize even the funds of Rs. 177.24 crore as per BE. Although the Ministry have assured that they will be able to utilize the remaining Rs. 73.99 crore (30%) of enhanced RE of Rs. 243.73 crore in one and a half month of the last quarter, the Committee strongly feel that in future, the Ministry need to adhere to the guidelines issued by the Ministry of Finance with regard to expenditure ceiling in last quarter and last month of the fiscal.

(b) Achievement of Physical Targets

21. The Committee note that the target during 2024-25 & 2025-26 is to enroll 1 lakh beneficiaries each year and the number of registrations during 2024-25 is 1,17,066. The Committee appreciate that at least during 2024-25, the Ministry have been able to achieve physical target and desire that the momentum be kept unabated during 2025-26 also.

(c) Evaluation of the Scheme

22. The Committee have been apprised that the detailed evaluation of the PM-SYM scheme requires actuarial evaluation for which an actuarial firm has been on-boarded and the work has commenced. The Ministry have further stated that on the basis of the report of the actuarial evaluation, scheme parameters will be comprehensively reviewed and a draft cabinet note for a revised scheme will be prepared by mid FY 2025-26. Considering the fact that the Department of Expenditure, Ministry of Finance has extended the PM-SYM Scheme in the present form till 31.03.2026, the Committee desire that the necessary approval of the revised Scheme be

obtained, as per the target fixed and well before the completion of term of the 15th Finance Commission.

VII. NATIONAL PENSION SCHEME FOR TRADERS AND SELF-EMPLOYED PERSONS

23. The Committee note that, as on 31.12.2024, approximately only 58 thousand beneficiaries have been enrolled under the NPS Traders Scheme which was launched on 12.09.2019. The Department of Expenditure, Ministry of Finance has extended the Scheme in present form till 31.03.2026.

Physical and Financial Progress

As regards financial progress, the Committee note that the Scheme has allocation of Rs.1 lakh only during 2024-25 and the utilization upto 15.02.2025 was Rs. 6000 only. Further, the physical target for 2024-25 was to enroll 10,000 beneficiaries, however, only 4505 beneficiaries could be enrolled. The Committee find that the physical as well as financial progress of the Scheme is not up to the mark. The Committee have been apprised that the major features of NPS-Traders are akin to that of PM-SYM and work on actuarial evaluation of PM-SYM has commenced and the report of the actuarial evaluation is likely to be received by April end. Once it is reviewed by the Ministry and various options are evaluated, revision of the scheme/future plan will be firmed up. Considering the fact that both NPS traders and PM-SYM require revamping and have been extended till 31.03.2026, the Committee exhort the Ministry to ensure that sincere efforts are made to complete the entire revamping exercise at the earliest.

VIII. NATIONAL DATABASE FOR UNROGANISED WORKERS (NDUW)

24. The Ministry of Labour & Employment has launched eShram portal on 26.08.2021 with an objective to create National Database of Unorganised

Workers (NDUW). The eShram portal is meant to register and support the unorganised workers by providing them a Universal Account Number (UAN). As on 04.03.2025, over 30.69 crore unorganized sector workers have registered on eShram Portal, on self-declaration basis.

(a) **E-Shram – “One-Stop-Solution”**

The Committee note that the Ministry have launched eShram – One-Stop-Solution on 21st October, 2024, which entails integration of different Social Security/Welfare Schemes at Single Portal i.e. eShram, which will provide a single platform to unorganized workers to have easy access to a variety of Government Welfare Schemes. The data of 13 Social Security/Welfare Schemes have been integrated/mapped with eShram, which *inter-alia* includes Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, National Social Assistance Programme (Indira Gandhi National Disability Pension Scheme), Indira Gandhi National Widow Pension Scheme, National Family Benefit Scheme, Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana – Gramin (PMAY-G) and Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi Scheme, etc. of various Ministries. The Ministry have further informed that mapping or integration with Central and State Government Welfare and Social Security Schemes is a continuous and ongoing process.

Observing that, at present, only 13 Central Social Security/Welfare Schemes have been integrated/mapped with eShram and no State Government Welfare and Social Security Schemes has been integrated, the Committee exhort the Ministry to work towards mapping/integration of all Central and State Government Social Security Schemes under this common umbrella in the shortest possible timeframe so that the benefits available under various schemes reach the unorganized workers.

(b) **Onboarding of 20 crore more unorganized workers on e-Shram Portal.**

25. The Committee note that in addition to 30.69 crore unorganized workers, already registered on eShram Portal as on 04.03.2025, approximately atleast 20 crore more unorganized workers need to be registered, however no physical target has been fixed for 2025-26. The Ministry have informed that as per the approval of the Expenditure Finance Committee (EFC), eShram envisaged registration of 25 crore unorganised workers till 31st March, 2025. The Ministry of Finance, Department of Expenditure have accorded approval for continuation of eShram beyond Financial Year 2024-25 for one year i.e., 1st April, 2025 to 31st March, 2026, within the limit of the originally approved outlay of the scheme on 18th November 2024 but no target for registration was given. The registration of unorganised workers on eShram has been slowly but steadily inching towards saturation. In such a situation due to wide variation in registration numbers, it has become difficult for Ministry to anticipate and fix a physical target for registration of unorganised workers for the Financial Year 2025-26 and beyond.

The Committee have been apprised that the Ministry have enumerated several measures to address the challenges in the registration process and spread awareness amongst unorganized workers, which *inter-alia* include launch of multilingual functionality on the eShram portal on 7th January, 2025 using the Bhashini platform, which allows workers to interact with eShram portal in 22 Indian languages thereby improving accessibility and promoting inclusivity for all; launch of the eShram mobile application on 24th February, 2025, which provides real-time access to welfare schemes integrated with eShram thereby significantly improving accessibility and convenience, awareness through SMS, social media campaigns, etc.

The Committee appreciate the endeavour embarked upon by the Ministry to extend the Social Security benefits to the large section of

unorganized sector workers who are in dire need of such benefits. The Committee would, however, desire to reiterate their earlier recommendation made in their 1st Report (18th Lok Sabha) on Demands for Grants (2024-25) and call upon the Ministry to take one step forward and evolve some more innovative measures through intensive and methodical approach on the lines similar to the door to door survey being conducted while undertaking Census so as to cover each and every unorganized worker in a time bound manner. The Committee would like to be apprised of the progress made in this regard. It is pertinent to point out in this regard that the ultimate aim of the eShram portal to provide social security and employment opportunities to the unorganised workers in a structured fashion shall always be accorded prime importance.

(c) Criteria for verification of eShram registrants.

26. The Committee note that the verification of eShram registrants involves several key criteria to ensure the accuracy and authenticity of the data. eShram involves Aadhaar eKYC verification, for registration of unorganised workers, thus authenticated information including name, age (DoB), gender, address and photograph of workers is retrieved from UIDAI itself. Further, it has been mandated to use biometric mode of authentication if any worker is getting registered in assisted mode through Common Service Centre (CSC). Other details of workers are captured on a self-declaration basis. The Committee have been apprised that eShram data is being shared with all States/ Union Territories and while doing so, it is advised that, the status of all the eShram registrants belonging to their respective States/ Union Territories must be verified before extending any social security/ welfare scheme to them.

The Committee desire that while sharing data, States/UTs may also be advised to maintain security and confidentiality of the data. The Committee further desire that States/UTs may also be advised to verify

credentials of all the persons belonging to their respective State/UT and registered on eShram so as to ensure that the credentials of the registrants are foolproof. This will also ensure that only genuine and intended beneficiaries get the benefits of various Social Welfare Schemes.

(d) Ex-gratia Payment to the e-Shram Registrants

27. The Committee note that the Ministry aimed to provide accidental risk cover to all unorganised workers registered on the eShram portal through the Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana (PMSBY) until 31st March, 2022. However, due to technical and operational issues PMSBY could not be operationalised.

The Committee have been apprised that since PMSBY benefits could not be applied retrospectively, it was decided to offer the same benefits as ex-gratia payment to eligible claimants registered on eShram. Accordingly, all unorganised workers registered on the eShram portal by 31st March, 2022, are eligible to initiate claim. Incidents occurred after registration and on or before 31st March, 2022, are considered for ex-gratia payment. The ex-gratia module was launched in August 2023 and decision of approval or rejection is under the purview of State/ UT Government, as per ex-gratia guidelines issued by Ministry of Labour & Employment.

The Committee appreciate the positive move/ initiative taken by the Ministry in providing the much needed relief to the claimant/legal heir of the eShram registrants, who met with accidental deaths or disability during 26.08.2021 to 31.03.2022.

28. The Committee are, however, concerned to note that, as on 18.02.2025, out of 702 claims (474 in 2023-24 and 228 in 2024-25) approved by District Magistrate/District Collector, the payment has been made to only 501 (330 in 2023-24 and 171 in 2024-25) claimants and the remaining 201 claimants are yet to get ex-gratia payment due to

administrative/procedural reasons. The Committee feel that the very purpose of any social security scheme is defeated if the ex-gratia amount is not timely paid to the claimant. The Committee, therefore call upon the Ministry to ensure that the payment to the remaining claimants be made on priority for timely receipt of ex-gratia payment.

29. The Committee have also been apprised that the B.E. of Rs. 176.84 crore was revised downwards to R.E. of Rs 26.93 crore owing to the lesser number of ex-gratia claims approved by the approving District Authorities under one time ex-gratia payment to the eShram registrants who met with accidental death or disability during 26.08.2021 to 31.03.2022. The Ministry had received around 3,250 numbers of enquiries related to accidental claim benefits, through eShram GMS portal. Further, it was envisaged that similar number of incidents, may also be forthcoming once the module is launched. In view of this Rs. 140 crore was earmarked for this purpose. However, as on 15.02.2025, only around Rs. 10 crore has been disbursed on this count and therefore, the fund requirement was revised downwards. The remaining amount of Rs. 13.02 crore will be utilized to clear the committed liabilities upto 31.03.2025. The Committee trust that the Ministry will be able to utilize the earmarked funds.

(e) Revamping of Shram Suvidha and Samadhan Portal

30. The Committee have been apprised that for the convenience of employers and employees, Shram Suvidha and Samadhan Portals are being revamped and the exercise will be completed by August, 2025. While appreciating the initiative taken by the Ministry, the Committee desire that the August 2025 deadline for the revamp be stringently adhered to in the larger interest of Employees as well as Employers.

(f) Third-party evaluation and outcome review of the National Database of Unorganised Workers (NDUW) / eShram Scheme

31. The Committee note that the Department of Expenditure has agreed to the continuation of National Database of Unorganised Workers (NDUW) / eShram scheme for the FY 2025-26 within the limit of originally approved outlay of the scheme i.e. Rs. 704.01 crore, which will also make NDUW/eShram scheme co-terminus with remaining 15th Finance Commission period ending on 31st March, 2026.

The Committee have also been apprised that in terms of DoE's O.M. dated 23.02.2017 aligning the schemes with financial resources cycle of Central and State Governments, it is desirable to align the scheme with the Finance Commission cycle. The Ministry have, therefore, initiated the process of third-party evaluation and outcome review of the National Database of Unorganised Workers (NDUW) / eShram scheme which may take some time. The Ministry have further stated that, depending upon the outcome review, the scheme can continue in its present form or be amended with necessary modifications for the 16th Finance Commission cycle, for which approval of Department of Expenditure will be obtained in due course.

The Committee appreciate that the step timely taken by the Ministry is in the right direction and desire that the road map for completing the exercise be devised and its implementation ensured so as to complete the exercise in a time bound manner so that the Ministry have a clear picture of necessary modifications to be made in the scheme well before the completion of term of 15th Finance Commission.

(g) Registration of online Platform Workers on the e-Shram Portal

32. The Committee note that in line with the budget announcement 2025-26 for registration of platform workers on the eShram portal and providing them health care under PM Jan Arogya Yojana (PMJAY) to assist

nearly one crore gig workers, the Ministry are on-boarding platform Aggregators onto the eShram portal for which the Ministry have developed a separate module for Aggregators on e-Shram for their registration as well as registration of platform workers engaged by them. There is no official database /estimate on how many aggregators are in existence. As on date, 10 major platforms namely- Zomato, Blinkit, Uncle Delivery, Urban Company, Swiggy, Uber, Rapido, Ola, Zepto & Ecom Express have been onboarded on e-Shram portal. The onboarding of platform workers through aggregators is an ongoing process as this is a growing sector. Onboarding of platforms is expected to pick up with the launch of the scheme for providing social security to Platform workers through PMJAY.

The Ministry have further stated that according to NITI Aayog, the number of gig workers, including those working on online platforms was 77 lakh in 2020-21 and is projected to rise to over 1 crore by 2024-25, reaching 2.35 crore by 2029-30. It is estimated that approximately 35 lakh platform workers will be eligible for the scheme in FY 2025-26, with the number expected to expand to over 1 crore by 2029-30. It is expected that through this module updated data of platform workers will be available.

The Committee note that as on 19.02.2025 70,306 platform workers of 36 States/UTs have been registered in eShram portal. The States having more than 4000 platform workers registered on eShram are West Bengal (24,799), Assam (9,816), Maharashtra (6,995) and Uttar Pradesh (4,222). Observing that nearly 35 lakh platform workers will be eligible for the Scheme in 2025-26 and out of them only 70,306, are registered on eShram as on 19.02.2025, and with the onboarding of 10 major Aggregators on eShram, the Committee expect that there will be considerable increase in registration of platform workers. However, it is imperative on the part of the Ministry to identify and locate all the Aggregators who are in existence at present and take fruitful steps to onboard them on the eShram Portal

expediently so that the intended beneficiaries are not deprived of the proposed social security/health benefits.

33. The Ministry have also mentioned that the provision of healthcare to Platform Workers under Ayushman Bharat PM Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY) is proposed to be implemented by expanding the base of the existing AB-PMJAY scheme to include the Platform Workers. Since National Health Authority (NHA) already possesses established infrastructure and systems along with coordination mechanism with States/UTs for delivering healthcare benefits to various groups of beneficiaries, these existing mechanisms of NHA are intended to be leveraged to provide benefits to the eligible Platform Workers.

The Committee desire that it will be in fitness of things if the Ministry of Labour and Employment also coordinate with NHA and provide desired/requisite handholding so that the healthcare benefits under AB-PMJAY are timely made available to the Platform Workers.

IX. LABOUR WELFARE SCHEME

34. The Scheme has three components viz. Health Care Scheme, Housing Scheme and Education Scheme. While the Housing Scheme has attained sunset, the Health Care Scheme, which is demand driven, and Education Scheme are in operation.

(a) Physical Targets under Education Scheme

The Committee observe that under the Education Scheme, the target was to cover 1 lakh beneficiaries, while only 29,563 beneficiaries were covered upto 16.01.2025 resulting in shortfall of 70,437 intended beneficiaries viz., approx. 70% of the target. As informed by the Ministry, the payment to 29,563 beneficiaries have already made and the payment for additional 78,118 applications for AY 2024-25 has been approved which are uploaded on National Scholarship Portal. Consequently, the total number of beneficiaries benefitted will be 1,07,681 by 31st March, 2025, which is well above the target hence there will be no short fall. The Committee appreciate that the proactive measures taken by the Ministry have led to fulfilling the desired target during the year.

(b) Income ceiling for financial assistance for education to the wards of Beedi Workers

35. The Committee are concerned to note that one of the grounds for rejection of applications under Education Scheme is that some of the applicants did not meet the income criteria of the Scheme such as Rs. 1.2 lakh per annum ceiling set for Beedi workers. The Committee have been apprised that the eligible income ceiling for financial assistance for education to the wards of Beedi workers was revised from Rs. 3,500 per month to Rs. 10,000 per month i.e. Rs. 1.2 lakh per annum in April 2003 and at present no proposal is under consideration to revise the income ceiling limit. Observing that the income ceiling has not been increased for

the last 22 years, the Committee are of the considered view that the Ministry take a relook in the matter and earnestly consider to revise the ceiling keeping in view the inflation and other relevant factors so that the benefits of the Schemes are truly extended to the deserving wards of Beedi workers.

(c) Funds allocation and utilization

36. The Committee note that during 2024-25, out of the allocation of Rs. 50.68 crore, only Rs. 14.99 crore (30%) was utilized, as on 15.02.2025 viz. almost 70% of the funds allocated were unutilized. On a pointed query, the Committee have been apprised that the proposals amounting to Rs. 30.60 crore under LWS (Education) and Health are under process and the total expected expenditure upto 31st March, 2025 is Rs. 45 crore. The Committee, thus, find that out of 70% balance of RE as on 15.02.2025, 60% will be utilized in the last one and half month of 2024-25. The Committee strongly feel that in future, the Ministry need to adhere to the guidelines issued by the Ministry of Finance with regard to expenditure ceiling of 33% in last quarter and 15% in the last month of the fiscal.

(d) Third-party Evaluation of the Scheme

37. The Committee note that the third-party evaluation of the Labour Welfare Scheme (LWS) is underway and the draft report has been submitted for analysis. The Ministry have informed that the appraisal process is expected to be completed before the commencement of the 16th Finance Commission discussions, and necessary modifications will be proposed based on the evaluation outcome.

The Committee appreciate that the Ministry are reviewing the findings and recommendations to assess the continuation of LWS beyond 2026-27 in alignment with the 16th Finance Commission and to ensure better implementation, stakeholder consultations, financial planning, and

digital enhancements are being considered. The Committee trust that the timeline for completion of the appraisal process will be met.

X. CENTRAL SECTOR SCHEME FOR REHABILITATION OF BONDED LABOURER – 2021

38. The Committee note that the number of bonded labourers rehabilitated during the last three years viz. 2022-23, 2023-24 and 2024-25 (upto 31.01.2025) was 673; 468; and 246 respectively. The Committee, thus, find that there is persistent decrease in the number of bonded labourers rehabilitated during the last three years, which is encouraging. The Committee, however, are distressed to note that the scourge of bonded labour still persist in the society and spreading its tentacles.

The Committee are deeply concerned to note that out of the 246 bonded labourers released and rehabilitated during 2024-25, 50 were rescued from Rajasthan and the remaining 196 were rescued from Tamil Nadu. The Committee earnestly call upon the Ministry to address the menace of bonded labour with utmost seriousness and vigour by roping in the State/UT Governments; strengthening laws and implementing them effectively; enforcing rigorous punishments and stricter penalties; setting up fast track courts; spreading awareness amongst workers, etc. The Committee strongly feel that such a multifaceted approach can go a long way in eradicating the evil completely from the entire country.

39. The Committee are concerned to note that out of the 246 bonded labourers released/rehabilitated during the financial year 2024-25, there are 119 males, 51 females and 76 children. The Committee feel that the rehabilitation of these bonded labourers particularly women and children requires a multidimensional approach that addresses their underlying causes of exploitation. The Committee urge the Ministry to provide rescued labourers proper shelter in secure rehabilitation homes/centres, counseling and emotional support, immediate medical assistance, free legal aid and educate them about their legal rights. In addition, special care need to be accorded to ensure that the rescued children are re-integrated into the

formal education system and ample financial support for their education be made available. The Committee further exhort that adult rescued labour be extended vocational training and skill development to improve their employability alongwith job placement support that provide sustainable employment opportunistic to them.

XI. LABOUR STATISTICS

All India Survey on Migrant Workers (MWS) and All India Survey on Domestic Workers (DWS)

40. With regard to the status of All India Survey on Migrant Workers (MWS) and All India Survey on Domestic Workers (DWS), the Committee were apprised that the results of the surveys are being reviewed by a Task Force with the mandate to vet the methodology and conclusion as well as to give a proper perspective. The Task Force is expected to submit its report by end of March 2025. The Committee expect that the Task Force will submit its Report as per deadline of March, 2025 and desire that the outcome of the surveys be made available at the earliest so as to provide crucial input for recalibration of policy decisions pertaining to Labour Reforms, expansion of social security measures, availability of data on employment trends, migration patterns and its impact, urban and rural planning as well as gender and vulnerable group support.

XII. LABOUR & EMPLOYMENT STATISTICAL SYSTEM (LESS)

(a) Third Party Evaluation of the Scheme

41. The Committee note that in order to continue Labour & Employment Statistical System (LESS) Scheme in next finance commission cycle and critically evaluate the activities of Labour Bureau, the Third Party Evaluation of Labour and Employment Statistical System (LESS) Scheme

has been entrusted to Arun Jaitley National Institute of Financial Management (AJNIFM), a Center of Excellence under Department of Expenditure, Ministry of Finance in October, 2024. The Committee have been apprised that the team from AJNIFM visited Labour Bureau, Chandigarh and Regional Office, Chennai. Stakeholder discussions were also held by AJNIFM with field functionaries, academicians and State government departments. The exercise is likely to be completed tentatively by end of March, 2025. The Committee expect that the exercise will be completed as per stipulated timeline and desire that further follow up action be taken and completed in a time bound manner .

(b) Funds allocation and utilization

42. The Committee note that an allotment of Rs. 50.00 crore was made as BE for 2024-25, however, the allocation was reduced drastically at the RE stage to Rs. 26.58 crore and even against this considerably reduced RE, only Rs. 8.80 crore has been utilised till 20.02.2025 leaving a shortfall of Rs. 17.78 crore viz. 66.00% of RE. The Committee have been apprised that a major portion (35%) of the total funds allocated under the LESS scheme are for the SC & ST and North East components, which cannot be utilised as scheme is not beneficiary oriented.

The Committee do not find any justification for continuation of the Scheme and allocation of funds, which is not beneficiary oriented. The Committee call upon the Ministry to take immediate measures and ensure that there is no compromise with the funds allocated for the benefit of SC, ST and those belonging to NER.

XIII. EMPLOYEES' STATE INSURANCE CORPORATION (ESIC)

(a) Setting up of 10 new Medical Colleges

43. The Committee were apprised that establishment of 10 new Medical Colleges in 09 States and 01 Union Territory (NCT of Delhi) has been approved in the 194th ESI Corporation Meeting held on 08.10.2024 for which essentiality certificate and Consent of Affiliation have been received for all the locations. Application has been submitted to National Medical Commission (NMC) for Letter of Permission.

The Committee appreciate the efforts being made by the Ministry/ESIC for setting up new medical colleges and emphasize that the proposed 10 new Medical Colleges be established and operationalised in a time bound manner. The Committee further desire that efforts be made to setup Medical Colleges, in a phased manner, in those States/UTs which do not have any Medical College.

(b) Changes in the norms effected to improve services of ESIC in the North-Eastern States

44. The Committee note all one-doctor dispensaries will be upgraded to two-doctor dispensary with a minimum criterion of 1,000 Insured Persons, in the Northeast Region including Sikkim. Further, the catchment area for establishment and upgradation of health facilities have been increased or kept fluid in order to enable clubbing of 2-3 or more districts in one catchment area, wherever the time taken for commuting to the Dispensary (HUB) from the adjoining district (SPOKE) is up to 3 hours/up to 100 kms.

The Committee appreciate the efforts being made to facilitate enhancing medical facilities in NER and impress upon the Ministry/ESIC to upgrade infrastructure/ equipments and fill up vacancies of Doctors, Nurses and Paramedical staff in Hospitals/Dispensaries of ESIC across the country and particularly in NER.

(c) Availability of ESI Hospital facilities to the Tea Plantation Workers.

45. The Committee note that ESI Act is not applicable to plantation workers as the plantation workers are covered under a separate legislation namely 'The Plantations Labour (PL) Act, 1951' which regulates the conditions of work in plantations and provides for the welfare of plantation labour. The Plantations Labour Act requires the employers to provide the workers with housing, medical facilities, sickness and maternity benefits and other forms of social security measures. However, as per First Schedule of Code on Social Security, 2020, an employer of a plantation, may opt for application of ESIC facility in respect of the plantation by giving willingness to the Corporation, where the benefits available to the employees are better than what the employer is providing to them. The Code on Social Security, 2020 is yet to be implemented.

The Committee observe that the Tea plantation workers face several occupational health issues *viz.*, respiratory diseases, arthritis, skin diseases vector-borne diseases, malnutrition, pesticide poisoning, etc. The Committee call upon the Ministry to ensure that periodic inspections are carried out by the officials of the Ministry along with the employer of Tea Plantation to check the functioning of Clinics/health care facilities provided by the employers and also to ensure that all the basic medical facilities are made available to these workers. The Committee also feel that feedback be taken from the workers to understand their needs/grievances and also to improve health care facilities.

(d). Convergence of Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PM-JAY) with ESIC.

46. The Committee note that a decision has been taken to converge Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PM-JAY) with ESIC whereby the ESIC beneficiaries will have access to approx. 30,000 new hospitals and any person can avail facilities in ESIC Hospitals. The Ministry have informed that draft SOPs on modalities of convergence are ready. Further, the

convergence will be through the digital platform of the NHA and requires technical convergence between the HIS/ERP application of ESIC and NHA and, for the purpose, the MoU is under examination and the convergence programme shall be launched shortly.

The Committee appreciate the convergence of PM-JAY with ESIC for its potential to improve healthcare access and efficiency and recommend that convergence programme be launched at the earliest and efforts be made for leveraging of underutilized healthcare facilities under PM-JAY to provide full-fledged services to the ESIC beneficiaries.

(e) New Hospitals and Dispensaries

47. The Committee note that to improve the health services infrastructure, ESIC has approved the establishment /construction of a total of 104 new hospital projects and currently 16 new hospitals are under construction across the country.

The Committee have been apprised that frequent review of on-going projects are done at the regional level in close coordination with construction agencies. Project Monitoring Unit (PMU) has also been operationalized at regional level to monitor all the construction projects and ensure their timely completion. At the ESIC Headquarters level, regular interaction and review meetings with the construction agencies are conducted under the chairmanship of DG, ESIC. Furthermore, Construction Sub-Committee meeting is regularly conducted to supervise and monitor construction activities.

While appreciating the monitoring mechanism put in place by the Ministry/ESIC at Regional and Headquarters level, the Committee, impress upon the Ministry/ESIC to fix targets, chalk-out monthly plan and gainfully utilize the earmarked funds for the purpose and ensure that the hospitals are operationalized in a time bound manner so as to meet the present as

well as future requirements. This is essential as the coverage of ESI is to expand pan India after implementation of the Social Security Code, 2020.

XIV. EMPLOYEES' PROVIDENT FUND ORGANISATION (EPFO)

(a) Employees' Pension Scheme, 1995 (EPS, 1995)

48. The Committee note that a Grant-in-Aid is provided by the Central Government under Minimum Pension Scheme towards re-imburement of difference of amount between minimum pension of Rs. 1000/- (announced by the Govt. of India) and actual member pension under EPS-1995 (if it is less than Rs. 1000/-) w.e.f. 01.09.2014. The Committee have been apprised that in respect of 'Government support towards minimum pension', the RE of Rs. 985 crore is expected to be utilized during 2024-25 and BE for 2025-26 is Rs. 1000 crore. The Committee find that during the last three years, the average Government's support towards minimum pension is approx Rs. 980 crore each year.

Further, during evidence, the Committee were apprised that the Ministry have taken up the matter regarding revision of minimum pension of EPS, 1995 Pensioners on a number of occasions with the Ministry of Finance and their reply is awaited. The Committee have also been apprised that the proposal for increasing the minimum pension under EPS, 1995 from Rs. 1000 to Rs. 2000 per month by providing additional budgetary support, was not approved by the Ministry of Finance in the year 2020 and it was also a part of Ministry's pre-budget proposal in FY 2024-25.

In this context, the Committee in their 1st Report (18th Lok Sabha) on Demands for Grants (2024-25) of the Ministry had recommended that considering the manifold increase in the cost of living in 2024 vis-à-vis 2014 and other relevant factors, as put before the Committee by various Stakeholders during their oral evidences held in the year 2023, there is a need to seriously look into the aspect of considering an upward revision of

this amount. The Committee had further observed that notwithstanding the financial implications involved, the Ministry/EPFO need to take up this significant task sympathetically with a sense of urgency in the larger interest of the effected pensioners and their family members so as to arrive at an amicable solution. The Committee reiterate their earlier recommendation.

49. Further, the Committee express their strong displeasure about non-furnishing of information regarding action taken by the Ministry on the status of representations received from various stakeholders in the matter relating to increase in minimum pension despite the fact that the Ministry were specifically asked to provide these details, which indicates a casual approach in responding to the information sought by a Parliamentary Committee. The Committee, therefore, call upon the Ministry to exercise due diligence and caution in future in respect of the information sought by the Committee.

(b) Third Party Evaluation of EPS, 1995

50. The Committee note that the Ministry have awarded the contract for conducting Third Party Evaluation of the EPS 95 Scheme through RFP Route and the exercise is currently underway. In response to a specific query, the Ministry have further stated that in so far as conducting such evaluation in the past is concerned, as per available information, no such evaluation was conducted earlier. Observing that the Third Party Evaluation of the Scheme is being conducted after 30 years of its introduction, the Committee strongly recommend that the exercise be completed within a definite timeframe, preferably by the end of the year 2025 so as to assess effectiveness, sustainability and scope for further improvement, etc. of the Scheme. The Committee would like to be apprised of the progress made in this regard.

(iii) Non-Deposit of Contribution of Tea Plantation Workers of West Bengal

51. The Committee are deeply concerned to note that there are a number of PF defaulters particularly at Jalpaiguri PF Regional office who have defaulted in remitting PF payment of the workers and simultaneously defaulting on their own contribution as well. The Committee have been apprised that inquiries under section 7A of EPF&MP Act,1952 have been initiated against 100 such establishments and the total dues determined during the last three years is Rs. 68.67 crores. In addition, 15 FIRs have been filed in the last three years.

The Committee are of the considered view that PF defaults by establishments not only jeopardise the financial security and also erode the trust of the workers, besides highlighting systemic issues within establishment. The Committee, therefore, strongly recommend to buttress enforcement mechanisms viz., conduct of regular audits, stricter penalties for non-compliance and swifter legal proceedings, etc. and earnestly feel that these measures, if implemented in letter and spirit, will minimize the recurrence of such defaults.

52. Further, in response to a pointed query regarding involvement of middle men/agents for settlement of claim/retirement benefits of Tea Plantation Workers at Regional Office, Jalpaiguri, the Committee have been apprised that a committee has been constituted at the Zonal Office level with representatives from Vigilance and Audit of EPFO to review the claims disposal and rejection at RO Jalpaiguri. The Committee would like to be apprised of the outcome of the inquiry.

XV. DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF MINES SAFETY (DGMS)

53. The Committee note that inspection of mines are generated online through randomized, risk-based inspection system on Shram Suvidha portal. The modalities of “Risk-based inspection System” are based on various pre-defined parameters like category of mine, risks involved etc. to ensure transparency as well as accountability. The portal also facilitates online intimation to the mine management regarding the scheduled inspection of the mine. Besides, Inspections are also undertaken in case of complaints, accidents, dangerous occurrences or any other activity.

The Committee have been apprised that during inspection, the officials of the Directorate General of Mines Safety (DGMS) oversee the status of the compliance of the provisions of the Mines Act 1952, the rules and regulations made thereunder, including basic safety facility viz. supply/use of Personal Protective Equipments (PPEs), viz. Helmet, Dust respirator, Protective footwear etc., workplace safety, medical examination including training to the persons employed in mines, etc. Accordingly, based on the observations, mine managements are advised for resolution of deficiencies and compliances are followed up accordingly. For repetitive and serious violations, managements are issued improvement notices to comply with the provisions within the stipulated timeline. For urgent and immediate danger, prohibitory orders are issued. Punitive actions are also initiated where there were serious contraventions or major violations under provisions of the Mines Act 1952, thereby leading to prosecutions as applicable in the law. The Committee note that the number of inspections conducted during 2022, 2023, and 2024 are 8310, 9008 & 8385; the number of Enquiries are 1400, 1284 & 1557; the number of Improvement notices issued are 127, 233 & 256; and the number of prohibitory order issued are 216, 330 & 348 whereas the prosecutions launched were 24, 36

and 34 respectively, which appear to be on a lower side *vis-à-vis* the number of prohibitory orders issued.

The Committee are of the considered view that the mining sector involves hazardous and even life-threatening situations. In the wake of the fact that a mere negligence can cause irreversible injuries, if not casualties, the Committee firmly opine that inspections are highly mandatory to safeguard mine workers and promote safe mining practices. The Committee, therefore, strongly recommend to prioritize frequent inspections in high risk mining areas so as to minimize accidents, thereby saving valuable lives of mine workers.

XVI. INDIAN LABOUR CONFERENCE

54. The Committee have been apprised that the 46th Session of Indian Labour Conference (ILC) was held in New Delhi on 20-21 July, 2015. The Committee are dismayed to note that the reasons for not holding it during the last 10 years and the tentative date of its next session have not been conveyed to the Committee despite being specifically asked to do so. The Ministry have simply stated that the Government has been holding tripartite consultations on important labour policies/issues from time to time.

The Committee understand that holding the conference is a critical step towards strengthening tripartite mechanisms and fostering social dialogue which are essential for addressing the evolving needs of the workforce and ensuring equitable economic growth. During evidence before the Committee, the representatives of trade unions have expressed their serious concern for not holding ILC and have urged to convene the ILC to uphold the traditions of tripartism and also to address pressing labour issues. Observing that during the last 10 years, many important decisions involving labour issues including notification of 4 Labour Codes in the year

2019/20 have been taken, the Committee exhort the Ministry to convene the Indian Labour Conference at the earliest opportunity in the larger interest of the labour force.

XVII. G20 FEASIBILITY STUDY ON DEVELOPMENT OF INTERNATIONAL REFERENCE CLASSIFICATION

55. The Committee note that during India's G20 Presidency in 2023, G20 leaders committed to establishing well-managed, regular, and skills-based migration pathways. As part of this effort, they agreed to explore the development of an international reference classification of occupations based on skill and qualification requirements. As informed by the Ministry, the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) will conduct a feasibility study on this, with a completion target of 2026 and annual progress updates. The Ministry have further stated that this classification will help Indian youth bridge global skill shortages by enhancing cross-country comparability, benchmarking, and mutual recognition of skills and qualifications. Observing that, moving forward in the direction of attainment of the desired objectives, India is signing an MoU with ILO to contribute its pledged funds and support the study, and taking into consideration the massive advantages that are likely to be garnered by the Indian youth to exploit employment opportunities in the foreign markets, the Committee call upon the Ministry to take all viable measures and contribute towards timely development of an international reference classification of occupations based on skill and qualification requirements.

New Delhi;
26 March, 2025
05 Chaitra, 1947(Saka)

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