

Government committed to protect and promote the welfare, social security, safety and health of labourers

Posted On: 25 JUL 2022 4:47PM by PIB Delhi

The Central Government is committed to protect and promote the welfare, social security, safety and health of labourers. Central Government has enacted the Building and Other Construction Workers (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1996 [BOCW (RE&CS) Act, 1996] now subsumed in the Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code, 2020 (OSH Code, 2020) to regulate the employment and conditions of service of building and other construction workers and to provide for their safety, health and welfare measures and for other matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

As per Section 22 of the BOCW (RE&CS) Act, 1996, State/UT Governments through State/UT Building and Other Construction Workers' Welfare Boards are empowered and entrusted for registration & renewal of the BOC workers and make provisions for the welfare schemes for Building and Other Construction Workers relating to life and disability cover, health and maternity cover, financial assistance for education of wards of the registered Building and Other Construction Workers, transit housing, skill development, awareness programs, pension etc.

In order to safeguard the interest of labourers regular inspections are conducted under Section 42 of the BOCW (RE & CS) Act, 1996, which provides for an enforcement machinery in the form of inspecting staff appointed by the appropriate Governments, who are vested with powers of entry, search and seizure in respect of all premises within their jurisdiction wherever building or construction work is being carried out. Appropriate action is taken by the Inspecting Authorities including initiation of prosecution cases against defaulters under the extant laws.

For the welfare of the construction workers, a 'Model Welfare Scheme for Building and Other Construction Workers and Action Plan for strengthening Implementation Machinery' has been prepared and forwarded to all the States/UTs for its strict compliance.

Several instructions under Section 60 of the BOCW(RE&CS) Act, 1996 have been issued from time to time to State/UT BOCW Welfare Boards for optimum utilization of the cess funds for the social security and other welfare measures of the BOC workers which include the benefits of welfare schemes of the State Welfare Boards and social security schemes of the Central/State Governments like Health Insurance Scheme through PM-JAY (Ayushman Bharat), Life and Disability Cover through PM-Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana, PM-Suraksha Bima Yojana and Life-long Pension after 60 years through PM-Shram Yogi Maandhan Yojana and subsistence allowance during unemployment, illness, epidemics, natural calamities by using cess fund collected for the welfare of BOC workers.

Further, in the backdrop of a challenging situation due to the outbreak of Covid-19 which led to financial constraints among the Building & Other Construction Workers (BOCW), the States/UTs were advised to frame a scheme under Building and other Construction workers (BOCW) Act, 1996 for

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transfer of funds in the bank account of BOC workers. In response, during first wave of Covid- 19, Rs. 5618 crores were disbursed to 1.83 crore BOCW workers and during second wave, Rs. 1795 crores have been disbursed to 1.23 crore workers.

This information was given by the Minister of State for Labour & Employment, Shri Rameswar Teli in a written reply in Lok Sabha today.
