

Social Security Schemes for Tea Garden Workers

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The Plantations Labour (PL) Act, 1951 regulates the conditions of work in plantations and provide for the welfare of plantation labour which includes tea garden workers. The Act envisages the employers to provide the workers with housing, medical facilities, sickness and maternity benefits and other forms of social security measures. There are provisions for educational facility for the worker's children, drinking water, conservancy, canteens, crèches and recreational facilities for the benefit of the tea plantation workers and their families in and around the work places in the tea estates. The PL Act is implemented through the concerned State Governments for which separate Rules have been framed by them.

Apart from these facilities, the Plantation Commodity Boards under their respective schemes during Medium Term Framework (MTF) period are extending Labour welfare measures to the plantation workers.

The government has subsumed the Plantation Labour Act in the Labour Code on Occupational, Safety, Health and Working Conditions, 2020 and Social Security Code, 2020. These Codes have been passed by the Parliament and thereafter have been assented to by the President and then after notified. The Code on Social Security 2020 envisages giving of option to plantation owners to enrol its workers as member of ESIC (Employees State Insurance Corporation). The ESIC provides multiple benefits like sickness benefits, unemployment allowance, maternity benefit etc. besides medical benefits to its members.

Temporary workers are engaged in the tea gardens of West Bengal (as also elsewhere) who are primarily engaged during the peak plucking months. The workmen are provided the benefits, as applicable under the Acts such as the Employees Provident Fund and Miscellaneous Act 1952, the Payment of Gratuity Act 1972, the Employees Compensation Act 1923 etc.

This information was given by Minister of State (I/C) for Labour & Employment Shri Santosh Kumar Gangwar in a written reply in Rajya Sabha today.

MS/jk

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