

Sushri Shobha Karandlaje Chairs 2nd Regional Meeting on Labour Reforms and Employment

Government Committed Towards Welfare and Social Protection of Workers and Facilitating Employers in Generation of Quality Jobs

Posted On: 06 SEP 2024 5:54PM by PIB Delhi

Sushri Shobha Karandlaje chaired the 2nd regional meeting on labour reforms and employment in Chandigarh today. The meeting was held with northern States and Union Territories (UTs) namely, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, Ladakh, Chandigarh and Rajasthan. This meeting is the second in a series of nationwide consultations being held by the Ministry of Labour & Employment through six regional meetings with the States/UTs in the spirit of strengthening cooperative federalism.

In her opening address, Sushri Shobha Karandlaje highlighted the critical need for labour reforms to make India the world's largest economy by 2047. She added that our nation should transcend the colonial legacy in the existing labour laws which have originated in the pre-independence era, therefore, the Government of India has modernized, simplified and harmonized 29 labour laws into 04 Labour Codes.



Union Minister highlighted the vision of the Hon'ble Prime Minister to provide comprehensive social protection coverage from "cradle to grave" for the unorganized workers and their dependents at par with organized workers, including through the e-Shram portal. In this context, the Government of India is committed to working with States/UTs for strengthening and expanding services and benefits of Employees' State Insurance Corporation (ESIC) to all districts in the nation, she added. She further mentioned that the best

practices of the States/UTs Governments in terms of social protection and welfare schemes should be continued and reinforced in alignment with the Codes.

Ms. Sumita Dawra, Secretary, MoL&E, set the context for the meeting by highlighting the need for greater convergence in the efforts of States/UTs and the Centre for implementing ongoing labour reforms. She stressed on the need for the States/UTs to plug the gaps and divergences in their respective draft rules by harmonizing and aligning them with the Central rules for ensuring a seamless roll out of the Labour Codes, as a consistent regulatory framework across States/UTs is vital for the development of industry and welfare of workers.

An enriching exchange of insights and ideas was held with representatives of States/UTs on key issues with a focus on Labour Reforms, eShram, Building and other Construction Workers (BoCW), Employment Generation and Employment Linked Incentives (ELI).



Discussion was also held on the e-Shram portal, and it was noted that within a short span of three years since its launch, more than 30 crore unorganised workers have been registered on the portal. The importance of time-bound registration of such workers on the portal was reiterated in view of the recent Union Budget 2024-25 announcement of strengthening e-Shram portal as the “one stop solution” for providing them easier access to Central Social protection and welfare schemes related to availing skill development, job matching, pension, housing, health, financial assistance, life and accidental insurance and medical insurance. In this direction, the Secretary, MoL&E urged the States/UTs to expedite two-way integration with the e-Shram portal.

Emphasizing on the benefits of the recently launched BoCW Management Information System (MIS) portal, Ms. Dawra urged the States/UTs to register on this portal and update their details, including fund utilization and on boarding of data on workers registered under various central and state welfare schemes. This portal will aid States/UTs in making informed data-driven decisions for making more effective welfare policies for such workers, she added.

Stressing that employment generation and improving employability are key priorities of the Government of India towards realizing the Hon’ble Prime Minister’s vision of Viksit Bharat@2047, the Secretary, MoL&E highlighted various initiatives taken by the Government of India in this direction, including the announcement of Employment Linked Incentive (ELI) schemes in the recent Union Budget 2024-25.

The Secretary, MoL&E also highlighted expectations of the Central Government from States/ UTs, which are as follows:-

- i. Employment data collection and adoption of a focused approach for creating quality jobs;

- ii. Strengthening of a coordinated approach to framing of rules under Labour Codes by States/UTs.
- iii. Timely and regular submission of employment returns and job-fair details to MoL&E on NCS portal.
- iv. Time-bound two-way integration with the e-Shram portal;
- v. Verification of BoC workers' data and extension of coverage of Central Government's Social Protection Schemes to BoC workers through respective BoC workers welfare cess funds.

During the meeting, the representatives of States/UTs shared their best practices, views, suggestions and concerns with respect to the key labour and employment issues being discussed, which were duly addressed and noted by the Ministry. They commended the Government of India for its initiative of reaching out to them and offering them crucial support in advancing the ongoing labour reforms. The States suggested that access to data of workers registered at e-Shram may be shared with the States/UTs at the district level for more efficient and faster identification of eligible beneficiaries of various welfare schemes.

Dr. Onkar Sharma, Chief Labour Commissioner (Central) thanked the representatives of States/UTs for their encouraging participation and assured them of full support of the Government of India for expediting their efforts. He also expressed his appreciation for the Chandigarh administration for facilitating the successful organization of the meeting.

The next meeting in this series of regional consultations with States/UTs is scheduled to be held in Rajkot for the western States and UTs in the following week.

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(Release ID: 2052591)