

India honored with the ISSA Good Practice Award for Asia and Pacific 2024

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India has been honored with the International Social Security Association (ISSA) Good Practice Award for Asia and Pacific 2024, presented by Dr. Mohammed Azman, President of ISSA, at the Regional Social Security Forum in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

Employees' Provident Fund Organization (EPFO) received five Certificates of Merit for Communication channels, E-proceedings: A case on use of information and communication technology in justice delivery, Massive district outreach programme (Nidhi Aapke Nikat), Multilingual call centres and Prayaas initiative. The awards were received by Mr. Ashok Kumar Singh, DG, ESIC on behalf of EPFO.

The five award categories and brief description about each is as follows -

Communication Channels: - Reaching stakeholders through different Media

EPFO has adopted the *ISSA Guidelines on Communication by Social Security Administrations* and implemented it by preparing communication framework document (CFD) to effectively and efficiently communicate with stakeholders. Digital and non-digital communication strategy is being adopted for efficient and timely communication. Webinars, short message services (SMS) and e-mails, social media, information education communication (IEC) videos, camps under *Nidhi Aapke Nikat 2.0* (a massive district outreach programme, etc, are used to educate and communicate with stakeholders.

E-proceedings: A case on use of information and communication technology in justice delivery

Ensuring regular compliance is a critical aspect of a contributory social security system. In this process, the regulators conduct judicial proceedings to determine the dues from the defaulting employers. The inquiries were done in a physical mode leading to time delays and there were concerns regarding higher levels of transparency. It has made the inquiry process online end-to-end, ensuring fairness, and enhanced transparency, in addition to reducing the average inquiry time.

Nidhi Aapke Nikat 2.0 :- Ensuring last mile delivery of Services

EPFO has presence in the country through 139 Regional Offices and 117 District Offices. However, there is absence of EPFO in more than 500 districts of the country, leading members to sometimes undertake extensive journeys to EPFO offices for various tasks such as online claim submission, grievance redressal, etc. In an effort to enhance convenience for members, pensioners and employers, and bring services closer to their residences the Nidhi Aapke Nikat programme was started. Nidhi Aapke Nikat 2.0 is held throughout the country on 27th of every month, where grievances are resolved on the spot. This has also promoted the Government's policy of ease of doing business and ease of living.

Multilingual Call Centres: - Effort towards an inclusive grievance redressal

Vast geographical expansion and a multitude of languages spoken across India present challenges in disseminating information about social security schemes under the Employees' Provident Fund and Miscellaneous Provisions Act 1952. To address the challenge, EPFO has made the information

accessible and free of charge in 12 major regional languages, in alignment with the ISSA Guidelines on Service Quality. These call centres help in efficient grievance redressal and ensuring member satisfaction by resolving doubts and problems in the language of the member.

Prayaas – Prioritizing Pensioners

It is an initiative undertaken by EPFO for handing over pension payment orders (PPO) to retiring members of the Employees' Pension Scheme, 1995 on the day of retirement itself. Numbers of the PPO issued under this initiative is rising consistently.

EPFO also received a **Special Mention for Digital Life Certificate** (Jeevan Pramaan Patra), highlighting the commitment of EPFO to support pensioners with digital ease. The Digital Life Certificate also known as the Jeevan Pramaan Certificate is an additional facility for filing Life Certificates for pensioners enabled by the biometric authentication system that is Aadhaar-based.

These awards recognize the efforts undertaken by EPFO to reform and adopt good practices in line with changing economic and social milieu. This international recognition will further inspire team EPFO to strive harder for the service of its members.

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