Social security has existed since time immemorial and it is as old as man himself. It has been referred to even in early 'Vedic Hymns'. Social security is a dynamic concept so it always keeps changing and does not stay in the same place or condition.

It is a kind of help provided to workers at the times of hazards of life but in ancient time or before independence it was in unorganized form and after freedom its development became fast and Indian government constituted a lot of legislations to ensure social security to workers. Various steps have also been taken for the social security of general people. Social security is a world wide concept so not only in India but also at international level a lot of efforts have been taken for it.

After industrialization in second half of the nineteenth century the need of social security increased in India, due to the excessive use of machinery and dangerous equipment/processes. India launched a lot of programmes for the social security of the workers but they were not up to the satisfaction level. During the period of eighties to nineties a lot of research and study have been conducted but after changing the time the need has arisen to modify the existing labour laws. Thus, it is necessary to reconduct a study about social security measures to find out the loopholes and problems for appropriate implementation.

A sample of 300 workers was taken to evaluate the working, implementation, enforcement machinery, utility, impact of social security legislations in Haryana. Percentage method has been used for the analysis.

**MAJOR FINDINGS**

The major findings based on the facts and figures are given below.

- It has been found that an overwhelming majority of respondents was of males in the selected factories which were a considerable issue to discuss about.
A positive indication was revealed about the training of the workers because the workers in majority (64 per cent) were trained. Proper training has been imparted to the employees in selected establishments.

The study showed that a big fraction of employees (74.4 per cent) was associated with union which reflected that the workers of the selected industries were organized.

**Workmen's Compensation Act**

- An overwhelming majority (95.7 per cent) has heard about the existence of the Workmen’s Compensation Act but 42.6 per cent of respondents were aware about the various provisions.

- From the survey, it was found that an overwhelming majority i.e., 83.5 per cent of respondents was in favour of timely and properly getting of compensation under the Workmen's Compensation Act however, only 14.9 per cent of interviewees responded negatively.

- More than half of the workers i.e. 52 per cent in the case of disablement benefit expressed somewhat satisfaction with the implementation of this Act.

- A big fraction of respondents that was 57.5 per cent who were somewhat satisfied with the implementation of the dependent benefit which is an important provision under the Workmen’s Compensation Act.

- As about the satisfaction regarding the overall implementation of the Act, which is very much necessary for the success, a majority of workers (80.3 per cent) was somewhat satisfied, whereas none of the interviewees was found fully satisfied with it.

**Employees' State Insurance Act**

- No doubt, the ESI Act has been implemented in a large number of factories in Haryana but the awareness level of the workers especially, about some of the provisions i.e. maternity, disablement and dependent benefits was low and overwhelming majority i.e. 71.7 per cent was unaware about the funeral benefit and as about the contribution in the ESI, 52 per cent were low aware.
None of the respondents were fully satisfied with the implementation of medical, sickness, maternity, disablement, and dependent benefits. Those found satisfied were in between 8.6 per cent and 12 per cent. The percentage of somewhat satisfied workers was in the range of 40.5 per cent and 46.9 per cent and those who were not satisfied their percentage was in the range 43.3 per cent and 48.6 per cent.

As many as 47.4 per cent respondents were somewhat satisfied with the implementation of the ESI Act.

It has been found that 46.4 per cent respondents were not satisfied with the working of the enforcement machinery. It was followed by 45 per cent who were somewhat satisfied.

The ESI hospitals/dispensaries are established to facilitate the workers during illness. It has been observed that most of the workers (73.9 per cent) were getting the medicines occasionally. Only 8 per cent workers mentioned regular availability of medicines.

For the treatment of any illness, injury, and disease workers have to go in the ESI dispensaries/hospitals where the ESI medical and para-medical staff deal with them but a majority of workers (65.4 per cent) pointed out the uncordial behaviour of the ESI para-medical staff and it was 54.4 per cent in case of medical staff. Workers were annoyed with factory administration and management too for not checking unethical behaviour and improper delivery of services in the ESI hospitals/dispensaries.

The ESI hospitals/dispensaries are established to help and provide medical services to the labourers but as regard the claiming of the benefits under the ESI scheme it was observed that 72.8 per cent workers, faced difficulties in claiming the benefits. Only 23.2 per cent respondents easily get the benefits.

Most of 61.3 per cent workers sometimes go to the ESI dispensaries due to lack of facilities and procedural lapse, they have to wait long hours for their turn.
Under the ESI Act, there is a provision to lodge complaint against uncordial behaviour of the ESI staff but the empirical study revealed the fact that a thick majority of workers (61.3 per cent) never registered any complaint against their improper behaviour however, 78 per cent replied that no action was taken on their complaints.

Success is very important for any legislation and it was get during survey that 69.4 per cent respondents favoured to some extent success of the ESI Act.

**Employees’ Provident Fund Act**

As regarding the awareness of the Employees’ Provident Fund Act. Most of the employees (96.7 per cent) heard about it and the awareness was high in the case of superannuation, withdrawal, non-refundable advances and contribution whereas, low about the provisions death benefit, permanent invalidation, resignation and termination, dismissal and migration.

Provident Fund is an old age benefit but prior to retirement workers can get advance from it for any need such as for the construction of house, operational surgery, children marriage etc. To get advance from provident fund, workers have to go through a proper procedure. The survey revealed that an overwhelming majority of respondents favoured the easy availability of the advances from provident fund.

Workers are given advances from provident fund most of them were somewhat satisfied and satisfied with it.

Government provides interest on the workers’ deposited provident fund. The rate of interest was 12 per cent since 1989-90 to 2000-01 but after that the decreasing phenomena in the rate interest was observed. 87.4 per cent of workers were found dissatisfied with the present rate of interest paid by the government on the provident fund.

The settlement of claims took 10 to more than 30 days as reported by considerable percentage of workers.

As many as 85 per cent workers expressing high utility of withdrawal benefit when the need arose.
About 70 per cent workers favoured that the Provident Fund Act was to some extent successful in achieving its objectives.

**Maternity Benefit Act**

- The Maternity Benefit Act is a paramount measure of social security for women workers in industrial area but in the chosen industries, out of randomly selected workers i.e. 300 only 8 were women and all of them were found aware about the Act. As about the provisions of pregnancy leave, illness leave during pregnancy and medical benefits 75 per cent female employees were highly aware, however, the awareness somewhat low (62.5 per cent) in case of miscarriage, benefit after her and child death and nursing breaks.
- The women employees who were asked about the satisfaction with maternity benefit majority (62.5 per cent) were somewhat satisfied with the maternity benefits and rest 37.5 per cent was satisfied.
- More than 87 per cent of female employees agreed with availability of proper implementation of the Maternity Benefit Act.
- The Maternity Benefit Act provides a lot of facilities to female employees after pregnancy. Women workers were asked about the utility of maternity benefits, a majority (62.5 per cent) agreed that there was high utility of the maternity benefits.
- As about the success of the Maternity Benefit Act 75 per cent respondents opined that the Act got success to some extent in achieving its objectives.

**Payment of Gratuity Act**

- The perceptions of the interviewees showed that 80 per cent employees have knowledge about the various provisions of the Payment of Gratuity Act.
- Regarding the level of the satisfaction with the Payment of Gratuity Act, most of the workers were somewhat satisfied and satisfied with the implementation of the Act.
- The workers were asked about the success of the Payment of Gratuity Act, 48.4 per cent opined that it was a success to some extent and 46 per cent did not opine about it.
Other Findings

- It has been observed that in the opinion of more than three fourths of the workers, the social security administration in the factory was to some extent efficient and effective. It was followed by those who reported full effectiveness.

- Factory managements appoint Welfare Officers to handle the workers' problems and a question was thrown about the nature of such Welfare Officers and more than half (54.5 per cent) agreed with the cooperative nature of the Welfare Officers, however, 35.6 per cent reported indifferent attitude.

- To make any industry successful, workers' participation is needed in management but during empirical study it was revealed that a large number of workers i.e. 74.4 per cent did not participate in management because managements did not have any scheme of ensuring their participation.

- The survey shows that various social security legislations have vital impact on workers as an overwhelming majority opined about it.

- The Labour Department, Haryana is responsible for the proper implementation of the several Labour Acts in the state and bears the responsibility to reduce worker’s problems but it was found that officials of the Labour Department have least interest to contact the workers to know their problems. Majority (71.4 per cent) workers did not ratify officials’ visits.

SUGGESTIONS

During the study a number of problems and challenges were found before relating to social security legislations. An attempt has been made to suggest measures for improving the social security.

Awareness Generation

Majority of workers were not found fully aware of the specific provisions of the various Social Security Acts. Without full awareness, it will be difficult to provide them full benefits. Therefore, appropriate actions are required to generate awareness.
Strategic Objective

To enhance knowledge and awareness among workers about the several provisions and benefits of the social security legislations.

Action to be taken

By Government

- Generate awareness among workers through seminars, workshops, press media and electronic media.
- Appoint special officers having full knowledge of the Social Security and Labour Welfare Acts to visit the factories for the sake of disseminating knowledge through various means.
- Direct implementation agencies to play active role at plant level to enable the workers to have regular visits over the proper enforcement of the Acts.
- Provide financial help to the factory managements, trade unions and various bodies to conduct the awareness generation programmes or events.

By Autonomous Bodies (ESIC, EPFO)

- Establish regional boards and local committees in every industrial area to provide knowledge about requisite provisions of the Acts.
- Gear up its public relation machinery to contact with workers frequently to impart them information about their rights.
- Printing and distribution of pamphlets in English, Hindi and even in regional languages or dialects to disseminate awareness.
- Publication of small booklets about the benefits, coverage, provisions and administrative machinery of the Social Security Acts and also mention the achievements and failures of them.
- Impart knowledge through advertisement and wall writings in colonies of the workers.
By Factory Management

- Arrange special lectures by experts on various provisions of the Social Security Acts for the benefit of workers.
- Prepare educational programmes for illiterate workers to make them aware about their rights.
- Conduct short labour laws courses for the offices-bearers or leaders of trade unions to make them up to date about legislations.
- Encourage trade unions to organize educational or awareness programmes around the labour colonies.
- Direct the Labour Welfare Officers to constantly interact with the workers to make them aware of the specific provisions of the several Labour Acts and the contact points to get the benefits and redress the grievances if any thereof.
- Ensure that the Welfare Officers are easily available/approachable.

By NGOs/Civil Society

- Prepare special awareness programmes.
- Help workers by providing education at free time.
- Develop requisite modules.
- Arrange ‘nukkar natak’ and informal interactions with workers.
- Manage/arrange programmes for workers to produce awareness.

Speedy Disposal of Cases

Since the process of disposal of cases under the Labour Acts is time consuming being cumbersome, therefore, appropriate actions are required to expedite the process of providing requisite benefits to the workers.

Strategic Objective

Ensuring speedy disposal of cases.
**Action to be taken**

**By Government**

- Arrange training for the staff directly dealing with the cases under Social Security Acts.
- Provide sufficient funds for the required training.
- Educate the staff for the best utilization of time in the interest of the workers.
- Instruct the staff to strictly adhere to time schedules.
- Recruit the new staff to fill the vacant posts.

**By Autonomous Bodies**

- Keep constant check on the working of the case disposal staff.
- Create dialogues with managements about pending cases since long.
- Appoint more personnel / employees to remove the insufficiency of staff.
- Punish the employees for improper or late work, if necessary.
- Motivate the staff to understand the problems of the workers.
- Open the staff collage for the employees' education for the staff duties.

**By Factory Management**

- Dispatch various cases to the concerned body as soon as possible to take necessary action.
- Regular reporting by the officials to the management for getting the feedback.
- Issue instructions and help the needy workers till the workers get compensation from the decided body.
- Create a factory level fund to assist workers immediately.

**By NGOs /Civil Society**

- Put/create pressure on management or other bodies to remove loopholes.
• Start a struggle against the staff members who infringe the rules and are inactive in work.

Proper Implementation of Provisions

Various benefits are provided under the Acts but without proper implementation sometimes they do not work up to the satisfaction level. Implementation machinery should work properly and efficiently.

Strategic Objective

Facilitate the workers for getting benefits under the Social Security Acts.

Action to be taken

By Government

• Conduct the training programmes for untrained employees involved in enforcement process.

• Amend the labour laws to increase the benefits according to inflation.

• Increase the cash benefits under ESI and WCA to the satisfaction of beneficiaries.

• Create a national body to monitor the implementation of social security measures.

• Build / construct the effective coordination in between the related bodies.

By Autonomous Bodies

• Open the mobile units to settle the claims and advances within 10 days under Employees' Provident Fund Act.

• Improve the medical benefits under the ESI Act.

• Simplify the procedure of claiming benefits under distinct Acts (ESI, EPF, MBA and WCA).

• Impose the fine on the rule- breakers as penalty.

• Increase the medical bonus for female workers under Maternity Benefit Act.
• Develop communication between the enforcement machinery and workers to know about their satisfaction level.

**By Factory Management**

• Make better the implementation machinery working at the factory level.

• Create coordination between factory level administrative machinery and state machinery.

• Take action on workers complaints about implementation.

• Refer to the complaints of employees to the authorized body if required.

• Arrange for sudden checking for the appropriate implementation of the Acts.

**Hospital/Dispensary Facilities**

Hospital/dispensary facilities are provided to the insured workers and their families. The facilities should to be monitored regularly. To reduce workload in industrial areas more hospitals/dispensaries are needed. Medical facilities provided to workers are required to be improved.

**Strategic Objective**

Providing the effective medical and health facilities.

**Action to be taken**

**By Government**

• Establish more hospitals/dispensaries in the industrial areas to reduce the workload and facilitate the beneficiaries.

• Encourage public-private partnership to provide better medical and health facilities to the ESI covered workers.

• Modernize the ESI hospital and equipped them with latest instrument and technology.

• Open the ESI medical colleges to enhance medical education with the collaboration of the ESIC.

• Revise the medical bonus provided to the female employees during pregnancy.
- Ensure appointment of efficient and capable physicians and surgeons.

**By ESIC**

- Start mobile dispensaries to provide benefits at the doorstep.
- Simplify the procedure of claiming the medical benefits.
- Ensure the availability of every kind of prescribed medicines in dispensaries.
- Reimburse in full for the payment made by the workers on the production of the necessary bill for the purchase of the medicines from the market.
- Appoint stock supervisors to make certain the adequate supply of the medicines.
- Remove the waiting period of two days for sickness benefit.
- Give no claim bonus to those ESI covered workers who do not avail benefits during the whole year.
- Start the health pass book for workers.

**By Factory Management**

- Make it sure that the required medical facilities in the form of First Aid are available in the factory.
- Arrange frequent and proper ambulance services at factory level.
- Check regularly the medical facilities are being provided, if needed take prompt action.
- Recruit a medical supervisor to monitor the medical amenities at the ESI hospitals.

**Behavioural Change**

The medical and para-medical staff working in the ESI hospital and dispensaries is in the need of behavioural change because their attitude has not been always cooperative and favorable.

**Strategic Objective**

Ensuring behavioural and attitudinal change.
Action to be taken

By Government

- Identify the official in the need of behavioural and attitudinal changes.
- Arrange workshops and orientation course in which experts from psychology be invited to deliver lectures and interact with the staff to change their mindset and behaviour.
- Punish the officials having improper or unprofessional behaviour.
- Direct the state officials to check regularly the behaviour of the para-medical and medical staff working in the ESI hospitals.

By ESIC

- Arrange sudden supervisions to examine the behaviour of the staff.
- Encourage trade union leaders to lodge complaints against adamant officials.

By Factory Management

- Monitor regularly the dealing of official with the workers.
- Take action against adamant officials.
- Lodge complaints at the ESIC local offices, if any.
- Manage classes for factory officials to amend their behaviour.

Other Suggestions

- The coverage area of the Acts should be widen to cover all the workers.
- An integrated social security scheme should be started to stop the overlapping of the various benefits under distinct Acts.
- Various Study groups, committees and Labour Commission should be appointed time to time to evaluate the performance of social security legislation.
- The IT roll-out plan of the ESIC should be implemented as soon as possible.
- Wage ceiling should be removed to come under the coverage area of the Act. The Acts should be implemented in every establishment where 5 or more workers work.
- An alternative scheme should be started to seasonal factories and other establishments where the ESI scheme can not be ratify.
- The EPFO should develop its own mechanism to invest, properly the deposited money of the workers.
- The rate of interest should be increased on provident fund according to inflation.
- The computerization plan prepared for the Provident Fund Act should be enforced as soon as possible to take transparency and efficiency in the administration of the Act and all the workers should cover under this plan.
- It is suggested that the gratuity of 15 days should be increased to 30 days for permanent and it should be 15 days despite of 7 days in case of casual or seasonal workers.
- Recruitment of female employees can be increased to ensure their participation in management.
- Workers committees or other mean should be used in factories to increase the participation of workers in management.

It can be concluded that the organized efforts are necessary for the welfare of labour class. They are the most vulnerable and deprived section of the society in the need of protection, security and assistance. A lot of weakness has been found relating the proper implementation, inadequacy of benefits, long procedure of assigning benefits etc. Obviously such factors create great hurdles in the proper execution of social security and are also responsible for the limited utilization of the social security legislation which hit the basic aim and objectives of the social security. The social security system needs to be effective and constructive and should have of more and more coverage areas. The government should get the confidence of the working class to protect them from uncertain contingencies so that they can happily contribute towards social security schemes.