

AN EMPIRICAL SURVEY OF WORKERS' PERCEPTIONS ON SOCIAL SECURITY MEASURES IN INDIAN RAILWAYS- A CASE STUDY

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DOI: **10.5958/2249-877X.2022.00021.2**

ABSTRACT

In human life, there are two stages of dependency childhood and old age. Apart from them in the intervening years of adult life a person is likely occur to spells during which he/she cannot earn a living. Such spells are sickness, maternity, disablement arising out of employment injury etc. Social security system aims to help individuals in such times of dependency. It is an indispensable part of the government social policy and an important tool to prevent contingencies and provide a decent standard of life. The study endeavours to examine the perceptions of workers towards the social security measures implemented in Indian Railways, basically a case study focussed on Diesel Locomotive Works (DLW) which is a second production unit of Indian Railways. The study is organised in four sections. Section I contains introduction while a brief knowledge about the selected organisations has been discussed in Section II. Objectives of study along-with research methodology have been described in Section III. Section IV contains major findings of the study and on that basis, conclusion is drawn that indicated in Section V.

KEYWORDS: Social Security, Right to Social Security and Indian Railways.

I. INTRODUCTION

The concept of social security is as old as society itself, but was made popular during thirty's of the last century when the term 'Social Security' was first officially used in the United State Legislation- titled 'Social Security Act 1935'. International Labour Organisation defines social security as "protection which society provides for its members through a serious of public measures against the economic and social distress that otherwise would be caused by the stoppage or substantial reduction of earnings resulting from some specific contingencies relating to human life. As per the ILO such contingencies are sickness, maternity, employment injury, unemployment, old age, invalidity, provisions of subsidiaries for family with children, provision for medical care, and death".

In context of the world community's 'basic rights and freedoms to which all humans are entitled' social security has been explicitly recognised as a basic human right and is enshrined as such in international legal instruments. Article 22 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights lays down that everyone (every human being- as a member of society) has right to social security and is entitled to realisation through national effort and international cooperation and in accordance with the organisation. In practice, however, a very few countries have accorded it that status.

In India, it is not recognised as a fundamental right. The Supreme Court, however, ruled out the right of livelihood to every person which is ultimately the objective of social security, has enshrined in the Constitution of India. Indian Constitution under its Chapter IV 'Directive Principles of State Policy' embraces principles and policies pertaining to social security which makes responsible to the State for providing just and proper living standards to the working class through ensuring a well-structured framework of social security system.

It is important to consider that the term 'State' has occurred at many places in many rulings. In India, meaning of the State is considered as given in the Constitution of India which clears that the word "State" has different meanings depending upon the context in which it is used. In context of Part IV of the Constitution, it is considered as per the definition given in Article 12. According to Article 12, the following will be included under expression of the 'State':

- Government of India;
- Parliament of India;
- Government of each of the States which constitute the Union of India;
- Legislature of each of the States which constitute the Union of India;
- All local authorities within the territory of India;
- All local authorities under the control of the Government of India;
- All other authorities within the territory of India; and
- All other authorities under the control of the Government of India. Therefore, the Indian Constitution makes responsible to the Central Government, State Governments and all authorities working under their control for provide social security benefits to the people of India. Considering this thing various measures have been implemented in the country provided social security benefits through appropriate organisations.

II. Profile of the Selected Organisations- Development of railways in India can be traced back in the year 1832 when first railway project was put forward for constructing a railway line between Madras and Bangalore. But, first train (that was a 14 carriage passenger train) ran between Boribunder to Thana on 16th April, 1853 covering a distance of 34 Kms. in 75 minutes which is treated as formal birth of railway in India. In 1951, the rail system was nationalised as a government unit. Presently, it is working as a departmental undertaking under the Ministry of Railways, Government of India. With it's more than 150 years history, it* is one of the largest infrastructure and busiest rail networks transporting about twenty-five million passengers and two and half million tons of goods daily. As a national common carrier transporting passenger and goods over its vast network, Indian Railways has always played a key role in India's social and economic development.

In order to proper functioning of railway system, production of rail parts and equipments forms an integral part in the country. To attain self-sufficiency in this field six production units have been set up at different parts of the country which are functioning as independent units under the control of the Railway Board. Diesel Locomotive Works (DLW) is one of them which established in August 1961 as the second production unit of Indian Railways in technical collaboration with American Locomotive Company (ALCO) of USA for ensuring the indigenous supply of heavy duty diesel-electric locomotives. At present, DLW has become the India's

largest manufacturer of diesel locomotives with the help of technological collaboration of M/S General Motors of USA and produced 5516 diesel locomotives from its inception to 31st March, 2009.

III. Objectives and Methodology of the study- The study has been conducted with the objective to examine the perceptions of workers on social security measures implemented in the organisation and offer suggestions for improving the effectiveness of those measures.

The following methodology has been adopted to achieve the set up objectives:

➤ **Sample Design-** Sample for the present study is obtained by stratified random sampling technique based on working class of the workers which has been categorised into two groups viz. officer and employee. Officer consists of Class A & B staff whereas; employee contains personnel of Class C & D. At the time of study total 5926 personnel- 159 officers and remaining 5767 employees, were working in the organisation. Out of them, a sample of 200 respondents consisting of 175 from employee and remaining 25 from officer group has been drawn and used for study purpose. It is important to clear that out of 200 respondents, 35 respondents were women and all from employee group. Questions related to maternity were asked only from women respondents.

➤ **Analysis & Interpretation-** Mathematical as well as statistical tools have been applied for analysis the data collected from the respondents. Percentage as a mathematical tool has been widely used for comparison purpose whereas; statistical technique like chi-square test has been applied to find out significance, if any, between the perceptions of officers and employees on different issues relating to the implemented measures. Calculated value of chi-square is compared with the table value for given degree of freedom at 5 % level of significance. If calculated value is more than the table value, the difference is considered as significant, i.e. it could not arisen due to fluctuations of sampling. On the other hand, if the calculated value is less than the tabular value, the difference is considered as insignificant i.e. it is regarded as due to fluctuations of simple sampling and hence ignored. Table value of chi-square at 5% level of significance on degree of freedom 1 and 2 are equal to 3.84 and 5.99 respectively.

IV. Findings of the Study- Major findings of the study have been discussed on the following pages:

1. Implementation of Social Security Measures in Indian Railways- The need for social security planning has now assumed utmost importance in all parts of the world because it provides a safety mechanism against the contingencies regarding human life and ensures a decent standard of living. It contributes positively to the productive process and to human well being. Acknowledging this, various social security schemes are implemented in Indian Railways. Some of the important ones are workmen's compensation, provident fund, pension, maternity benefit and gratuity schemes. Though, DLW is a production unit of Indian Railways; therefore persons working therein are also covered by the schemes as implemented in Railways. A brief outline about each scheme has been discussed below:

1.1 Workmen's compensation scheme operates through the Workmen's Compensation Act, 1923 which provides an amount of compensation for any personal injury caused by an accident arising out of and in the course of employment. It covers contingencies relating to disablement and death as the result of employment injury.

1.2 Provident fund scheme is implemented as per the provisions of Provident Funds Act, 1925 for safeguarding the future of employees after retirement and their dependents in case of early death. The scheme mainly provides protection against contingencies relating to the retirement/old-age and death.

1.3 Pension is the generic form of the long term periodical cash benefits provided in case of invalidity, old age and on the death of the breadwinner. In Indian Railways, the pension scheme was introduced in 1957 as per the provisions of the Provident Funds Act, 1925 which effect from 1st April, 1957. Currently the scheme does not cover the employees appointed on or after 1st January 2004.

1.4 In Indian Railways, maternity benefit is provided according to the provisions of the Indian Railway Establishment Code*. As per this, female railway employees including apprentices who have less than two surviving children are entitled to receive maternity benefit for a maximum period of 180 days (w.e.f. 01/09/2008). The benefit shall be provided from the date of its commencement i.e. from the date of child’s birth. In addition, maternity leave for 45 days in the entire career shall be granted in case of miscarriage including abortion from the date of miscarriage. During such period, female employees shall be paid leave salary equal to the pay drawn immediately before proceeding on leave.

1.5 Gratuity is one of the most important social security benefits provided in case of retirement or death. Lump-sum payment is made to an employee by his employer due to retirement or invalidity and in case of employee’s death while in service, the amount of the gratuity is payable to his dependents. In Indian Railways, gratuity scheme implements under the Payment of Gratuity Act, 1972. As per provisions of the scheme, railway administration provides this benefit to its employees either on retirement or death whichever is earlier.

2. Workers’ Perceptions on the Implemented Measures- It has been recognised that only the implementation of any scheme is not sufficient and necessary to measures its effectiveness. The effectiveness of a scheme mostly depends on the perceptions of beneficiaries’ i.e. what is the opinion of beneficiaries regarding such scheme? Perceptions of the workers regarding various aspects of the implemented schemes such as awareness about the schemes, procedure of drawing benefits and adequacy of amount of benefit have been discussed as under:

TABLE- 1 RESPONDENTS’ PERCEPTIONS ON THE AWARENESS OF SCHEMES

Awareness of Schemes		Respondents’ Perceptions		
		Group-wise		Total
		Officers	Employees	
Workmen’s Compensation	Aware	25 (100)	126 (72)	151 (75.50)
	Unaware	0 (00)	49 (28)	49 (24.50)
Chi-square Value: 9.281		df: 1		Significant
Provident Fund	Aware	25 (100)	132 (75.43)	157 (78.50)
	Unaware	0 (00)	43(24.57)	43 (21.50)
Chi-square Value: 7.815		df:1		Significant
Pension	Aware	22 (88)	120 (68.57)	142 (71)
	Unaware	3 (12)	55 (31.43)	58 (29)
Chi-square Value: 4.0101		df: 1		Significant
Maternity	Aware	0	15 (42.86)	15 (42.86)

	Unaware	0	20 (57.14)	20 (57.14)
Chi-square Value: Nothing				
Gratuity	Aware	25 (100)	119 (68)	144 (72)
	Unaware	0 (00)	56 (32)	56 (28)
Chi-square Value: 11.110		df: 1		Significant

Source: Field Study

Table 1 shows awareness level of respondents' indicating that on the whole majority of the respondents were aware about the schemes except the maternity benefit scheme. Category-wise analysis further clears that officers were fully aware about the schemes, whereas, employees were not fully aware. In case of maternity benefit scheme, majority of the respondents were unaware. Difference between perceptions of officers and employees is tested with the help of chi-square. The value of chi-square, in case of all schemes (except in maternity benefit scheme) is statistically significant. Therefore, it is concluded that awareness level of employees (Category C and D workers) was low as compare to the officers (Category A and B workers).

TABLE- 2 RESPONDENTS' PERCEPTIONS ON PROCEDURE OF GRANTING BENEFITS

Procedure of Granting Benefits		Respondents' Perceptions		
		Group-wise		Total
		Officers	Employees	
Workmen's Compensation	Complex	14 (56)	93 (53.14)	107 (53.50)
	Simple	11 (44)	32 (18.29)	43 (21.50)
	No opinion	0 (00)	50 (28.57)	50 (25)
Chi-square Value: 13.933		df: 2		Significant
Provident Fund	Complex	14 (56)	85 (48.57)	99 (49.50)
	Simple	11 (44)	47 (26.86)	58 (29)
	No opinion	0 (00)	43 (24.57)	43 (21.50)
Chi-square Value: 8.597		df: 2		Significant
Pension	Complex	12 (48)	90 (51.43)	102 (51)
	Simple	10 (40)	30 (17.14)	40 (20)
	No opinion	3 (12)	55 (31.43)	58 (29)
Chi-square Value: 8.612		df: 2		Significant
Maternity	Complex	0	11 (31.43)	11 (31.43)
	Simple	0	4 (11.43)	4 (11.43)
	No opinion	0	20 (57.14)	20 (57.14)
Chi-square Value: Nothing				
Gratuity	Complex	13 (52)	79 (45.14)	92 (46)
	Simple	12 (48)	36 (20.57)	48 (24)
	No opinion	0 (00)	60 (34.29)	60 (30)
Chi-square Value: 12.652		df: 2		Significant

Source: Field Study

It is clear from Table 2 that on the whole almost half of the respondents were expressed that procedure of drawing benefits under different schemes, except the maternity benefit scheme, was

complex. Category-wise analysis indicates that majority of the respondents from both categories were having same responses i.e. complex. As a result of unawareness, a significant number of employee respondents' were unable to express their opinion in any direction. Again it is necessary to consider that as compare to employees, more officers were opined that the procedure was simple. Differences existed between the perceptions of officers and employees are tested with chi-square. The value of chi-square reflects that such differences are significant. Thus, it is concluded that procedure of drawing benefits were relatively simple for officers than the employees.

TABLE- 3 RESPONDENTS' OPINION ON THE ADEQUACY OF BENEFITS

Adequacy of Benefits		Respondents' Perceptions		
		Group-wise		Total
		Officers	Employees	
Workmen's Compensation	Adequate	20 (80)	93 (53.14)	113 (56.50)
	Inadequate	5 (20)	30 (17.14)	35 (17.50)
	No opinion	0 (00)	52 (29.72)	52 (26)
		Chi-square Value 6.895	df: 2	Significant
Provident Fund	Adequate	17 (68)	84 (48)	101 (50.50)
	Inadequate	5 (20)	47 (26.86)	52 (26)
	No opinion	3 (12)	44 (25.14)	47 (23.50)
		Chi-square Value 3.727	df: 2	Insignificant
Pension	Adequate	19 (76)	100 (57.14)	119 (59.50)
	Inadequate	3 (12)	20 (11.43)	23 (11.50)
	No opinion	3 (12)	55 (31.43)	58 (29)
		Chi-square Value 3.3358	df: 2	Significant
Maternity	Adequate	0 (00)	11 (31.43)	11 (31.43)
	Inadequate	0 (00)	2 (5.71)	2 (5.71)
	No opinion	0 (00)	22 (62.86)	22 (62.86)
		Chi-square Value: Nothing		
Gratuity	Adequate	21 (84)	89 (50.86)	110 (55)
	Inadequate	4 (16)	26 (14.85)	30 (15)
	No opinion	0 (00)	60 (34.28)	60 (30)
		Chi-square Value 10.005	df: 2	Significant

Source: Field Study

Table 3 indicates the perception of respondents on the adequacy of benefits provided under different schemes. On the whole, more half of the respondents were opined that benefits available under the schemes, except the maternity benefit scheme were adequate. Category-wise analysis indicates that again a significant number of respondents from employee group were having defensive attitude. The analysis further reflects that such benefits were relatively more adequate for officers than the employees and also register a difference. In case of workmen's compensation and gratuity, the value of chi-square is statistically significant leading to conclusion that benefits provided under such schemes were more adequate for officers as compare to employees. In case of provident fund and pension schemes difference between the

perceptions of officers and employees is insignificant and therefore concluded that benefits provided under such schemes were equally adequate for both categories of personnel.

IV. CONCLUSION- The need for social security planning has now assumed utmost importance in all parts of the world. In India, principles and policies pertaining to social security are enshrined by the Constitution under its Chapter IV 'Directive Principles of State Policy' which makes responsible to the State for providing just and proper living standards to the working class through ensuring a well-structured framework of social security system. It provides a safety mechanism against the contingencies regarding human life and ensures a decent standard of living.

From the study it is found that schemes implemented in Indian Railways secure the life of railways employees against contingencies from birth to death which also covered persons working in DLW. The study reveals that the awareness level of Category C and D workers was low i.e. workers of Category C and D were not having full knowledge about the schemes implemented in organisation. The study further indicates that though the procedure of drawing benefits was complex for both groups but at the same time it was relatively simpler for officers and amount of benefits provided under the schemes was adequate. Based on the findings from the study it may be concluded that social security schemes were not much effective and improved by taking the few steps. Proper efforts should be made for providing full knowledge about the implemented measures especially to staffs of category C and D so that they clearly expressed their opinion on the related issues. As the study found that procedure of drawing benefits was complex and therefore it should be simplified.

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