

Pilot project for ESI cover to construction workers in Haryana: Gangwar

PTI | Apr 18, 2018, 04:17 PM IST

New Delhi, Apr 18 () The government plans to launch a pilot project in Haryana to examine the feasibility of providing health cover to building and other construction workers through Employees' State Insurance Corporation (ESIC), Labour Minister Santosh Gangwar said today.

"We are planning to start a pilot project in Haryana. This will enable us to know about the practical problems while implementing this programme," Gangwar said while addressing a conference on building and other construction workers here.

"In order to provide health services, we should bring building and other construction workers in the fold of Employees' State Insurance (ESIC) scheme," the minister said.

"The employers contribution to ESI should be paid by states and they file ESI returns instead of employers for these workers. States can give employers as well as employees' contributions towards ESI out of building and other construction workers cess collected by them," the minister suggested.

Noting that there are around five crore building and construction workers, the minister said that this move will ultimately benefit 20 crore people as family members of these workers would also be covered under the ESI scheme.

The Building and Other Construction Workers Welfare Cess Act, 1996, provides for levy and collection of cess. The cess has been levied and is being collected at 1 per cent of the cost of construction.

The cess is collected by states and Union territories and utilised for the welfare of building and other construction workers by the State Building and Other Construction Workers Welfare Boards constituted under the Building and Other Construction Workers (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1996.

According to Labour Ministry data, the states collected Rs 42,256.92 crore as building and other construction workers cess while they spent Rs 12,030.14 crore. There are 3.04 crore registered workers with states.

"In Uttar Pradesh, total population is 21 crore but 36 lakh building and other construction workers are registered. We need to increase registration," the minister said

The minister also expressed concerns over huge amount of building and construction workers cess collected by states lying idle and said that this amount would be insufficient if states start spending on welfare of these workers.

"We need to ensure that cess collection machinery should work properly so that full amount can be realised through this exercise. It should also be ensured that the fund collected through cess should be utilised properly for welfare of workers," he added.

He urged the states to issue identity cards to these workers and properly run machinery to collect full amount of building and other construction workers cess. KKS KKS MR MR