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11:00 AM | BY - PRESHIKA MA'AM



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ENGLISH BY PRESHIKA TONGAR



Important words used in editorial

opportunity cost – loss of other benefits while choosing something

hazardous – dangerous

⇒ Detrimental
Deleterious
Baleful
Harmful
Lethal
Toxic

mandatory – compulsory
Obligatory

Parlous
Perilous
Pernicious
Precarious

obligations – duties/responsibilities

occupational – related to work/job

financed – funded/paid for

shoring up – strengthening/supporting

empanelled – officially approved

beneficiaries – people receiving benefits

commendable – praiseworthy

Condemn

→ castigate

(criticize
(censure
(chastise
(chide

Commend
(praise/appreciate
laud/applaud
admire/adore

integration – combining together

predecessors – earlier programmes/versions

contending with – struggling against

predominantly – mainly

explicitly – clearly/directly

recognised – officially accepted

mandate ^{law/order} – officially require

proactive – taking action beforehand

Explicit
↳ clear/direct

Implicit
↳ hinted / Insinuation

Cost to access: On health check-up for workers The opportunity cost of accessing medical care remains high. The Union Labour Ministry has announced that it will provide a free annual health check-up to workers aged 40 years or more, following an existing provision in the new Labour Codes. The programme will be implemented through the Employees' State Insurance Corporation (ESIC). For workers in hazardous conditions, such as handling toxic chemicals or operating heavy machinery, check-ups are mandatory; if illness is detected, ESIC hospitals and dispensaries will provide free treatment. India already has a few workers' health obligations on paper, including under the Factories Act 1948 (only within factories), the ESI Act 1948, and the Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions (OSH) Code 2020. The new programme will be financed through the well-endowed ESI fund, although the government is still shoring up the number of beds and doctors available via PMJAY-empanelled facilities. At this time, operational evidence suggests that insured workers will be the main beneficiaries.

Commendable though the initiative is, its success is not guaranteed. At present, only around 31 crore of 94 crore workers are on the e-Shram portal, whose integration with ESIC is still in its early stages in many States. Labour Minister Mansukh Mandaviya also failed to address how a woman working in a garment home unit or as a domestic worker could access the longer maternity leave if she has no 'employer'. Annual check-ups for women

also warrant specific medical staff needs whereas many ESIC camps are crowded and dominated by men. As with many of its predecessors, the programme does not address the opportunity costs of accessing health care, forcing workers to continue contending with lost wages. An ESIC facility may also refer a worker to another centre if it lacks the resources for specific tests, leading to repeat visits and added time and cost. The new programme focuses predominantly on non-communicable diseases such as diabetes and hypertension. Heat-related illnesses are not explicitly recognised as occupational diseases under the ESI Act whereas construction and agriculture workers are most at risk of them. Waste-pickers and sanitation workers on the other hand face greater risk of infectious diseases such as hepatitis and leptospirosis. The scheme offers screening but does not mandate proactive vaccination. The government must meet workers where they are, through mobile occupational health units and — as the OSH Code 2020 stipulates for organised workers — at their places of work, and provide tokens to compensate them for time spent on check-ups. Otherwise, any scheme of this nature will not improve upon the already deficient system.

1. Which of the following statements is/are true according to the passage?
- A. ESIC will provide free annual health check-ups to workers aged 40 years or more.
 - B. Workers handling toxic chemicals must undergo mandatory health check-ups.
 - C. ESIC hospitals will provide free treatment if illness is detected.
- (1) Only A true
(2) Only B true
(3) Only C true
☒ (4) All are true

2. Which of the following issues regarding the new programme has been highlighted in the passage?

A. Many workers are still not registered on the e-Shram portal.

B. Women workers without formal employers may face difficulties accessing benefits.

C. Opportunity costs such as lost wages remain unaddressed.

(1) Only A true

(2) Only B true

(3) Only A and B true

~~(4) All are true~~

3. Which of the following statements is/are false according to the passage?

A. Heat-related illnesses are explicitly recognised under the ESI Act.

B. Waste-pickers are mainly at risk of infectious diseases. True

C. The scheme mandates compulsory vaccination for workers. False

(1) Only A false

(2) Only C false

(3) Only A and C false

(4) All are false

4. According to the passage, which of the following can improve workers' access to health care?

- A. Mobile occupational health units
- B. Health check-ups at workplaces
- C. Compensation for time spent on check-ups

(1) Only A true

(2) Only B true

(3) Only A and C true

~~(4) All are true~~

5. Which of the following statements is/are correct about the scheme?

- A. The programme mainly focuses on non-communicable diseases.
- B. ESIC facilities may refer workers to other centres for specific tests.
- C. The integration of e-Shram with ESIC is fully completed in all States. *False*

~~(1) Only A true~~

~~(2) Only A and B true~~

~~(3) Only C true~~

~~(4) All are true~~

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