

## **REPORT OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL**

### **21<sup>st</sup> ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

**25<sup>th</sup> April 2014**

I have great pleasure in reporting to the 21<sup>st</sup> Annual General Meeting the various developments and happenings concerning the affairs of the Association since the last meeting.

I am indeed happy to report that we have been able to undertake a number of programmes in collaboration with Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES), ILO, Indian Institute of Science, (IISc) Bangalore and some of our corporate members like. Petronet LNG, ONGC, ESIC, CWC, IOCL, Dara Shaw & Co. and Rajasthan Productivity Council. During this period we have organized the following conferences and seminars:-

- ❖ In November 2011 a national Seminar on social security for migrant workers at Vadodara.
- ❖ During the year 2012 two round table conferences, one on feasibility of introducing social pension, in Kolkata, and the second on feasibility of introducing social floor at Bangalore;
- ❖ In July, 2013 held a workshop on social security for unorganized workers in Kolkata
- ❖ In December, 2013 at Jaipur on labour law reforms in association with National Labour Law Association and Rajasthan Productivity Council.
- ❖ Two Seminars on e- governance on social security – one in Kolkata on 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2013 and the second one in Delhi', on 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2013.

Kolkata seminar on e-governance was supported by M/s BRICs, Mumbai, CQuel, Kolkata, Development Consultancy Pvt. Ltd(DCPL), Kolkata, & M/s Marathon Electricals, Kolkata. The Delhi seminar was sponsored by Petronet Lng, ESIC and Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE). In both the seminars discussion centered round the present status of e-governance in EPFO and ESIC to meet the challenge arising out of sheer size of cliental serviced by these organizations.

- ❖ In March 2014, a round table conference on social protection floor with special reference to food security in Bangalore.

During 2014 we propose to hold three workshop/ seminar in collaboration with FES and one study project on working of the construction workers welfare boards and initiate an awareness programme on sexual harassment at workplace.

It is my pleasant duty to report in details about our pioneering research project in the field of pension regarding impact of Employees' Pension Scheme, 1995. We had to make efforts spread over three years for obtaining sponsorship for this study. In this regard our thanks are due to International Labour Office, New Delhi, being the first organization to agree to partially support our project after which FES and ONGC generously came forward. We were also fortunate to get a working partner in the Department of Management Studies, Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore which spearhead the technical aspect of the project led by Prof. K.B.Akhilesh and his team in conjunction with Shri RKA Subramanya, Shri A.Viswanathan and your Secretary General who all constituted the project team for this study. You would happy to note that we were able to generate internal resource for partially funding the project which cost us approximately Rs.12 lakh including the cost of printing of the report. We received invaluable support from a number of Addl. CPFs/RPFs and Enforcement officers of the EPFO, the

members of the Mumbai Chapter, Kolkata Chapter and Rajasthan Chapter but for whose help and cooperation our field study could not have been completed so quickly with success.

The report was formally released by Dr. K. Kasturirangan, Member, Planning Commission at a convention organized by Indian Management Association, Bangalore on 11-1-2013 in the presence of our Vice President, Dr A K Balyan and before a gathering of more than 200 HR experts. For the purpose of the project study we had organized four Round Table Conferences in four metro cities of Delhi, (18 February 2012), Mumbai, (24<sup>th</sup> February 2012), Bangalore, (3<sup>rd</sup> March 2012) Kolkata(28 March,2012) with a view to intermingle with the various stake holders of the scheme- the trade union leaders, the representative of the chambers of commerce, the employers' & their Associations, the actuaries and the experts on pension to elicit their views on eight important issues which had emerged from the field survey carried out by our project group. One of the leading national newspapers, The Hindu, had carried an elaborate article commending the assessment of the Scheme.

The report was formally submitted to the Ministry of Labour and Employment after which we were invited by the Ministry to make a presentation of our report and its recommendations before the Union Labour Minister which took place on 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2013. You would be happy to know that responding to a public invitation from the Committee on Petitions, Rajya Sabha for suggesting amendments to the Employees' Pension Scheme, 1995. We had submitted our response and had made a detailed presentation before the Committee on 29<sup>th</sup> July 2013. I received generous help from Shri A. Viswanath in preparing our presentation before the Committee on Petitions. The Committee appreciated our report and accepted three major recommendations of ours viz.

enhancing level of minimum pension to Rs.1000/- per month, indexation of pension and removing wage ceiling for eligibility of membership. The said recommendations of the Committee are available in the 147<sup>th</sup> Report of the Committee. We are pursuing the matter with the government.

During the year 2012, on 26<sup>th</sup> March 2012, Jaipur Chapter of the Association had celebrated the world social security day by organizing a seminar on "Health for All" in collaboration with Rajasthan Productivity Council. On this occasion Rajasthan Chapter released a book on "Public Health Issues in India". This book is based on the proceedings of the Round Table Conference held therein in 2010 by our Association in collaboration with FES. The book was formally released by your Secretary General in presence of Dr. T.P.Jain, a renowned health specialist and Justice P.C.Jain (Retd.), President, Jaipur Chapter.

We have been able to upgrade our website – [www.ssai.in](http://www.ssai.in) both in terms of news contents and in terms of quality of presentation. I am happy to inform you that we not only have carried out technological upgradation of the website, we are now uploading the programme of activities for the entire year at the beginning of the year and are announcing various developments in the world of social security and developments in the labour market. We have now added quick links so that the visitors to our site can easily migrate to ILO, ISSA, Ministry of Labour and Employment and Ministry of Rural Development sites for updating themselves. I would request all the members to visit the website regularly. Your visit is now being counted to know whether the site is becoming popular. It will gladden you to know that because of the website we have been able to enroll some experts/academicians as member. I do hope that there will be more and more such members coming to our fold. One can download the membership

application form from our site itself. Our activities are also being displayed in the photo gallery.

During the period under report I have great pleasure to report that two of the Chapters of the Association viz. Kolkata Chapter and Rajasthan Chapter have remained very active and have organized quite a few important events. Similarly, Bangalore Chapter, although all the office- bearers are not in position, has been able to support one programme every year, thanks to the interest taken by some of the senior members there.

FES, Asian Pacific Region, had organized a Conference on universalisation of social security model for the region in Kathmandu during October 2012. Your Secretary General had participated in the conference on invitation and had presented a paper on the strategy to introduce social security for the unorganised workers. On invitation of School of Social Work, Marian College, Kuttikanam & International Council for Social Welfare (ICSW), South Asian Region your Secretary General participated & presented a paper on unorganised workers in this international conference on social protection held in collaboration with ICSW & UNESCO in May 2013.

Like previous years we have brought out a souvenir to commemorate our Annual Day as well as Annual Lecture on social security. This year's lecture on social security will be delivered by Dr. Ravi S. Srivastava, Center for Social Studies, JNU, New Delhi who has very recently published a book on "A Social Protection Floor for India" as an ILO project. This year's souvenir of ours contains eight well considered articles contributed by our own members on various aspects of social security in India.

It is my duty to underline some of the weaknesses in our Association. The most glaring weakness is that the younger members are not coming forward to

take the mantle from us. Recently, when I was in Bangalore in connection with our conference on 14<sup>th</sup> March 2014, Shri R.K.A.Subramanya expressed his earnest desire to be relieved of the burden of editing the journal due to his advance age. We shall have to find a substitute and that is a big problem. Similarly, I think we should plan getting a Secretary General No one should be expected to do the same job for years together. There should be retirement in voluntary service also. Our GB should be reconstituted keeping these issues in view.

Before I close my report I cannot help saying a few words about our President and Vice President. Our beloved President, Sanatbhai, in spite of his age, is with us and that is his greatness. Our beloved Vice President, Dr. A.K.Balyan has been a live-wire in calibrating the operational machinery of the Association. And whatever he is doing, he is doing so silently that it is hardly perceptible. But believe me. it is because of him the Association is able to take up many ambitious projects like, the study of EPS 1995 and is embolden to take more activities than done ever before. I should also like to acknowledge our debt to my colleagues in ESIC who during last three years, have supported our activities in a number of occasions. Similarly, I must acknowledge the contribution of Shri Sushobhan Sarkar, Secretary, Kolkata Chapter and his company, M/s Cquel & Shri U C Jain & AN Roy of Rajasthan Chapter in raising resources for funding number of activities. Another member of ours, I would request all the members to give loud applause appreciating the help provided by Dr. Balyan, ESIC, ONGC, CWC, Shri U C Jain, Shri AN Roy and Shri Sarkar.

Thank you all.

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