

SOCIAL SECURITY OF UNORGANISED WORKERS IN INDIA

The concept of social security has been transformed from charity-based to right-based approach. In fact, access to social security is one of the human rights. Therefore, ideally, everyone, irrespective of the nature of occupation, profession or status, should be a part of some mechanism for enjoying a decent standard of living. However, only about 7% of the total workforce avail the benefits of social security laws, and the rest (93%) belonging to the unorganised sector are actually not getting the benefits because they fail to meet certain technical criteria of law or laws are just not implemented for them. At present, unorganised workers have to spend out of their meagre incomes for all contingencies such as illness, and in their old age they are helpless. These workers adopt informal means such as borrowings, and their continued dependence on such strategies only renders them more vulnerable. Besides, the money spent for the social security in India is very low compared to other developing countries. With due respect to the constraint in budget, the State must strive to achieve the constitutional mandate of at least providing the bare necessities of life by implementing equitable means of distribution. We must not view ill-health or malnutrition as a contingency rather it is a continuing certainty of life. Therefore, we must appreciate social security as a system to provide overall security for a person in the family and work place. It is appreciable that India of late has taken few initiatives for protecting the unorganised workers, but the needs are pretty high and the existing schemes are not sufficient. An attempt has been made in this paper to highlight the concepts of social security and unorganised sector, and to dwell upon the relevant laws and schemes relating to social security.