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Law and schemes for the Welfare of Beedi workers

The central government has formulated Beedi and Cigar Employees Act 1966 for the welfare of Beedi workers. The provisions of this Act are being implemented by Labour departments of the State governments. Under this law, the labour department has announced the appointment of an inspector. According to the Section 4 of above law, there is a provision to give a license to the employers of Beedi industry.

For the welfare of Beedi workers, health, baby crèche, canteen, working hours are fixed but the benefits of these provisions can be availed only by those workers who are working within the employer's industrial premises. There is a provision to get leave, bonus, and gratuity along with the issue of appointment letter to the Beedi workers. An employer can be punished in case of any violation of the provisions under this law.

The full benefit of implementation of various provisions under this law is not reaching the homebased worker but the benefit of minimum wage and identity card reaches a minimum number of them. In the southern states of India, the payment for work is accompanied with cash as bonus and leave encashment to these laborers.

Presently there is a difficulty with reference to Beedi workers as most of the Beedi manufacturers are not getting the work done at their industrial premises and instead homebased workers are carrying out the work of Beedi making at their homes consequently they are denied the benefits of the welfare schemes. Only the work of drying, labeling and packaging of beedi's is undertaken at the industrial premises.

The central government is implementing Beedi Workers Welfare Legislation Rule 1976 - a beedi welfare fund has been organized for the benefit of beedi workers. Beedi workers are provided various welfare works such as health services, social security, educational support, housing and recreational schemes etc through this fund.

Beedi Welfare Fund Manual 1976 has been formulated under the Beedi Workers Welfare Legislation Law of 1976. As per the provisions of this manual, presently an amount of Rs.5/- per thousand beedi is levied as cess on beedi employers. From this recovered cess different welfare schemes are implemented for the beedi workers.

As per the Beedi workers, Beedi Welfare Fund Manual 1976, Government of India has set up Central and State level tripartite consultative committees which advise the central government regarding the administrative appraisal and procedure related issues of the welfare fund. The head of central consultative committee is the central Labor Minister and the heads of the state level consultative committees are the respective Labor Ministers. Besides government members, the tripartite consultative committees have members from workers and employers in equal numbers. State level Consultative Committees have been formed in the states of Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Gujarat, Kerala, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal.

In order to formalize the public welfare concept of the Indian Constitution, Government of India has formed Labor Welfare Organization under aegis of The Ministry of Labor and Employment. The Welfare schemes are conducted under the direction of Director General (Labor Welfare) - an officer of Joint Secretary Level. The head office of this organization is situated at Jaisalmer House, Man Singh Road, New Delhi. Labor Welfare Organization conducts welfare schemes under the Beedi and Cigar Workers Welfare Fund Law 1976 for the Beedi workers. In view of the country's large area, it has been divided into nine regions for smooth and easy implementation of the schemes. Each region is headed by Welfare and Cess Commissioner under whom the benefits of the schemes are provided to the beneficiaries.





- The head offices of various welfare and cess commissioners and the areas under their jurisdiction are given below:

S.#	Head Office	Names of the States and Union Territories covered by the Head Office
1	Allahabad	Uttar Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Delhi and National Capital Region (NCR), Chandigarh Union Territory
2	Bangalore	Karnataka, Kerala and Lakshadweep
3	Bhilwara	Rajasthan, Gujarat and Haryana
4	Bhubaneswer	Orissa
5	Hyderabad	Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Pondicherry and Andaman & Nicobar
6	Jabalpur	Madhya Pradesh
7	Karma	Bihar and Jharkhand
8	Nagpur	Maharashtra, Goa, Daman & Diu and Dadra & Nagar Haveli
9	Kolkata	Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Manipur, Tripura, Mizoram, West Bengal and Sikkim



Brief description of Welfare Schemes under Beedi Workers Welfare Fund is as follows:

1. Health schemes
2. Educational schemes
3. Housing schemes
4. Social security schemes
5. Recreation schemes

Health
Housing
Educational
Social security
Recreation
schemes

1. Following health related schemes are conducted

a. Permanent and mobile dispensary schemes

Under this scheme if the number of beedi workers is five thousand they will be provided with permanent and mobile dispensary while in case the number is between three to five thousand then there is a provision of a permanent or a mobile dispensary. Under this scheme free medical facility is provided to the beedi workers and their dependents.

b. Maternity benefit scheme

Women beedi workers are given a grant at the rate of Rs. 1,000/- each for the first two deliveries.

c. Family Planning operation scheme

If beedi workers having two children undergo the family planning operation then they are given a grant of Rs. 200/- as a benefit under this scheme only once in a life time. This can be availed either by the husband or the wife.

d. Scheme for paying cost of Spectacles

Each beedi worker will get Rs. 150/- for buying spectacles and Rs. 20/- for its lens. The benefit of this scheme is given only to the beedi worker and not to his dependent.

e. Heart ailment and kidney treatment scheme

As per this scheme a maximum amount of Rs. 1,30,000/- for heart ailment and maximum Rs. 2,00,000/- for kidney treatment, are payable. Under this scheme maintenance allowance for nine months at the rate of Rs. 750/- to Rs. 1,000/- is also payable. Before beginning the treatment, prior approval of the concerned Welfare Commissioner is necessary.

f. Scheme for homebased treatment of Tuberculosis -

Cost of medicines at the rate of Rs. 50/- per month and maintenance allowance for nine months at the rate of Rs. 600/- to Rs. 750/- per month are payable. In special cases the duration of treatment can be extended by three months.

g. Scheme for Reservation of beds in Tuberculosis disease hospitals

Beedi worker patients will be provided free treatment for 9 months and during this period maintenance allowance would be given at the rate of Rs. 600/- to Rs. 750/- per month. Daily food allowance at the rate of Rs. 15/- or a yearly grant of Rs. 20,000/- per patient is payable.

h. Cancer treatment scheme –

Full financial support is provided for treatment taken at an approved cancer hospital. Under this scheme maintenance allowance is payable for nine months at the rate of Rs. 600/- to Rs. 750/-. In addition a travel allowance for the patient and one attendant is payable along with Rs. 50/- per day per person. Before beginning the treatment, prior approval of the concerned Welfare Commissioner is essential.

i. Leprosy treatment scheme

In case of in house treatment facility Rs. 30/- per day or total expense and in case of treatment as outdoor patient Rs. 6/- or total expense whichever is less is payable. Maintenance allowance of Rs. 200/- to Rs. 300/- is payable to the beedi worker for nine months.

j. Mental illness treatment scheme

For treatment of mental illness in approved hospitals an amount of Rs. 180/- per month for state beds and for third class level independent bed Rs. 900/- per month for 6 months is payable. Maintenance allowance for the patient's dependents is Rs. 600/- to Rs. 750/- per month for 9 months.



2.Educational schemes

Education related financial benefits are given at the following rates:-

Classes	Type of benefits	Students (female)/(Rs.)	Students (Male)/(Rs)
Class 1 to 4	Dress/slate/books	250.00	250.00
Class 5 to 8	Financial support	940.00	500.00
Class 9	Financial support	1140.00	700.00
Class 10	Financial support	1840.00	1400.00
Class 11 to 12	Financial support	2440.00	2000.00
P.U.C 1 and 2 Graduation/Three Year Diploma	Financial support	3000.00	3000.00
Professional Degree (B.E/M.B.B.S/B.M.C Agriculture)	Financial support	8000.00	8000.00

It may be noted that under the scheme the above benefit is only for the beedi worker's children. Applications are to be made in the prescribed forms every year before 15th September.

3 Housing Schemes

a. Amended, Integrated Housing Scheme 2007 for Beedi workers -

Those beedi workers who have more than an year old identity card/own land or have land owned jointly with other members of their family, can apply in the prescribed forms to get a grant of Rs. 40,000/- payable in two installments. Apart from this amount, most state governments give beedi workers of their states additional cash or grant. To get benefit under this scheme the monthly income of the beneficiary families should not exceed Rs. 6, 500/- per month.

b. 3.2 Financial help to beedi workers cooperative society for construction of work shed and go downs -

According to the scheme Rs. 1,50,000/- or 75% of the total expense (cost) whichever is less is payable in two installments.

4 Social Security

Group insurance scheme

On application along with requisite documents as per the scheme for the beedi workers, in case of natural death Rs. 10,000/- and in case of accidental death Rs. 25,000/- is payable. Under this scheme, even in case of partial physical disablement a compensation amount of Rs. 12,500/- is payable.

5 Recreational Schemes

a. Movie show

As per the scheme free movie shows can be arranged by the Labor welfare organization in areas having predominance of beedi workers.

b. Scheme to provide television sets

Under the provision of this scheme Rs. 10,000/- can be provided for purchase of color and Rs. 4,000/- for black and white television.

c. Scheme to organize games/ social and cultural programs –

For this purpose 50% of the total expenses incurred by the management or a maximum of Rs. 2000/- per year is payable. Labour Welfare Organization can organize the above in each area having more than 10,000 beedi workers, for which there is a provision of spending up to Rs. 10,000/-

d. Holiday Home scheme (Puri – Orissa)

The beedi worker are provided to and fro second class railway fare including reservation charge. Each worker will get Rs. 3/- as sightseeing charge along with three day free accommodation at the holiday home, Puri.

e. Scheme for Construction of Community centre at the Beedi workers residential colony -

A maximum grant up to Rs. 1,00,000/- is payable as per this scheme, for the construction of a community centre.