

Labour



The Labour Department seeks to implement the visions of the new govt. with renewed vigour with the following welfare objectives for labour in mind-

- facilitate harmonious industrial relations in the state,
- enforce various labour laws for ensuring basic rights of the workers, decent and safe working conditions and Labour Welfare
- provide social security to the workers, including their family, through different social security measures and
- help job seekers in getting appropriate jobs and enhancing their employability through 'skill development'.
- Ensuring meaningful minimum wages to the workers by periodic revision / fixation of minimum wages in scheduled employments,
- Beneficiary centric administration of social security schemes with additional emphasis on awareness generation,
- Restructuring the administrative machinery, introduction of computerized services and infrastructure development.

In spite of having necessary mechanism in place, industrial relations in the state was far from being satisfactory. Workers were deprived of basic rights and decent and safe working conditions, a large section of workers especially unorganized sector workers led an unsecured life full of uncertainties and there was mismatch between the employment available and the skill of the job seekers.

The new Government is committed to change the situation for the better. The Government machinery has been restructured to make it effective and efficient. **Employment bank is under process of being formed for the benefit of jobseekers as well as employers.** The Government has also started reviewing the labour laws and social security schemes to make them worker centric. New thrust is there for dissemination of information relating to social security schemes for the unorganised

sector workers and to register all such workers under appropriate schemes.

Hon'ble Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee addressed a huge **meeting of the unorganised workers on 25th February this year at Yuva Bharati Krirangan. This is the first Government meeting of its kind in the history of the Labour Department attended by thousands of workers pouring in from all over the State. In the meeting, Hon'ble Chief Minister announced enhancement of existing benefits for the unorganised workers and the launching of 'Samajik Mukti' Card** through which they will be able to get these benefits. More precisely, all the relevant benefit schemes will be brought under this Yojana and all the workers in the unorganised sector will be gradually given the card to enable their easy access to the benefits.

Kanoria Jute Mill, Gondolpara Jute Mill, India Jute Mill, Wellington Jute Mill, Loomtex Jute Mil, Hooghly Jute Mill and Delta Jute Mill have been opened.

Work in all the tea gardens have started. The state government is cautious about the fact that all tripartite agreements carry enough meaning.

The long pending charter of demands in Kesoram Rayon have also been dissolved.

Industrial Dispute Act and The Minimum Wages Act are given maximum emphasize. By now, State Government has already declared the revised minimum wages in respect of 31 scheduled employments and 20 more will be declared soon.

The State Assisted Programme for Unorganized Workers (SASPFUW), a pioneering project for unorganized workers have been computerized by developing web-based system. It is expected that more than 30 lakh beneficiaries are to be covered. This project will get top priority from government. It is service-centric, response oriented and all the problems related to Provident Fund will be addressed through statewide Regional Labour Offices and also LWFC (Labour Welfare Facilitation Centre), CSC (Common Service Centre).

The Camp Approach for registration and coverage of construction, transport and Provident Fund beneficiaries has been concentrated and would continue on regular basis. Meanwhile more than 4 lakhs workers have already been enrolled under Building and other Construction Welfare Schemes. More pragmatic vision is ascribed to extend facilities to all beneficiaries under RSBY Scheme — such cashless premium based Scheme with the introduction of Smart Card against each family consisting of five members will cover the untapped area well beyond BPL target groups.

With augmenting pressure on application and execution of different Laws in force, the formation of LWFC is another noteworthy attempt of Labour. This LWFC is a miniature of Labour Directorate — responsible for de-centralized mode of Labour Administration to work in coordination with Block Development office and Regional Labour Office.

In keeping with Central Social Security Board for unorganized workers, the State Social Security Board so created is going to get more responsibility with the merger of unorganized workers welfare Board — a decision to minimize the number of members and ensure functional simplification.

State Labour Welfare Board has disbursed Rs. 9.70 lakh as scholarship and stipend against 653 workers' children which was long pending for the reason not known. The Auditorium of Labour Welfare Board, was extremely ramshackle, is being thoroughly inspected to be modernized in line with any leading Auditorium of National Standard.

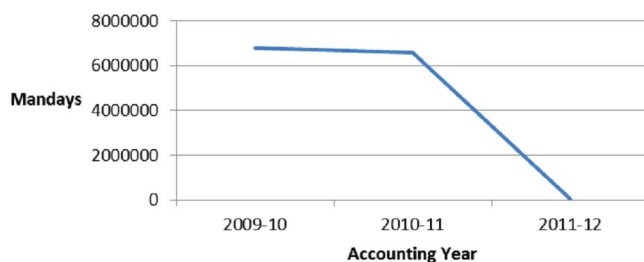
State Labour Institute, an academic store house of Labour Department, is directed to examine all Certificate and Diploma Courses in consultation with V. V. Giri National Institute of Labour and to subscribe Labour Journals and Bulletins to facilitate better understanding with adjoining State. Meanwhile a certificate course for the unorganized workers has already been conducted resulting greater enthusiasm among the workers.

The Department has achieved modest to spectacular achievements in its different functional areas as given below.

Industrial Relations: Work Stoppages

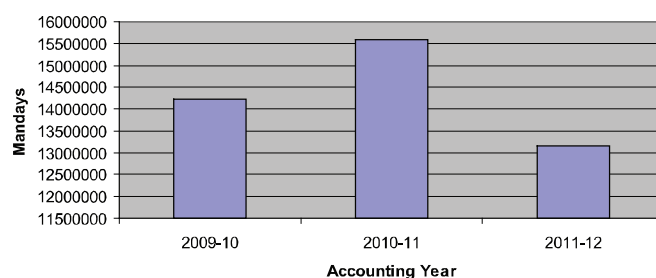
The new Government adopted a proactive and balanced approach based on the principle of **'Save Industry, Save Workers'** while dealing with industrial disputes and strongly discouraged any kind of work stoppages. This approach dramatically reduced the number of man-days loss due to work stoppages. **In the year 2011-12 there is a loss of 60 thousand man-days only due to strike. Whereas during the year 2010-11, 65 lakhs 80 thousand man-days and during 2009-10, 68 lakhs man-days were lost.**

Mandays Lost in WB due to Strike



In the case of **lockout**, the year 2011-12 witnessed a **loss of 1 Crore 31 lakh 70 thousand man-days**. This figure is substantially lower than that of 2010-11 which saw a loss of 1 Crore 55 lakh 90 thousand man-days and 2009-10 which saw a loss of 142 lakhs 20 thousand man-days

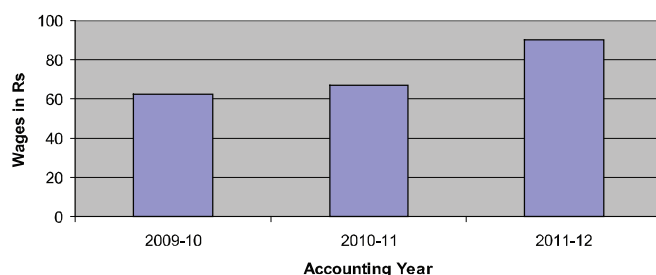
Mandays Lost in WB due to Lockout



Wages in Tea Industry

Under the aegis of the new Government there was an industry wide Tripartite Agreement in Tea Industry, signed on 04.11.2011 and 27.03.2012 which benefited approximately 2.5 lakh workers employed in the industry. Wage increase of the daily rated workers in Tea Industry by these **Agreements rose from Rs.67/- to Rs.90/- in the year 2011-12 which is an increase of 34.33% whereas the wage increase of the said daily rated workers under the previous agreement dated 23.08.2008 in the year 2010-11 was 7.2% only and in the year 2009-10 it was 7.7% only.**

Increase in wages of daily rated workers in Tea Industry



ENFORCEMENT OF LABOUR LAWS:

There are different labour laws to protect the interest of the workers, to provide them safe and decent working conditions and labour welfare facilities. But the enforcement of the provisions of these laws was very weak in the state. The new Government focussed on stronger labour law enforcement which resulted in a considerable rise in number of prosecution cases launched for violation of different labour laws.

Sl. No.	Year	No. Of Prosecution Cases Filed
1.	2009-10	331
2.	2010-11	384
3.	2011-12	1065

Safety

- During 2011 total no. of inspection of factories has increased up to 24% as against that of 2010.
- No of fatal accidents has reduced by 12.37% in 2011 as compared to 2010.
- Medical examination of workers has increased almost 50% in the year 2011
- 100% increase in inspection of construction sites has been observed during 2011.
- A significant rise (21.13%) in inspection of accident prone factories (MAH) with special emphasis on mock drills of disaster preparedness plan. Concept of inter factory mock drill competition was introduced with a view to enhancing the scheme and preparedness and to promote mutual aid between individual units.

Social Security

Provident Fund for Unorganised Workers (SASPFUW)

Sl No	Financial Year	No of cases of Final Payment	Amounts Disbursed as Final Payment
1	2009-2010	8,511	1,88,93,859
2	2010-2011	13,111	3,29,17,635
3	2011-2012 (Provisional)	19,591	5,00,06,928

Achievements under Building & Other Construction Workers Act

Year	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Beneficiary enrolled in the year	44,757	1,55,087	2,43,114
Fees collected	53,53,040	1,81,97,620	4,05,55,320
Cess collected in the year	71,77,38,157	96,37,98,935	104,54,45,926
No of beneficiaries	532	6847	68836
Amount disbursed in the year	22,12,836	1,27,85,789	9,29,96,069

Benefit disbursement under West Bengal Transport Workers Social Securities Scheme- 2010

Financial Year	No. Of Persons Received Benefits	Amount of Benefit Disbursed (Rs.)	Cess Collected (Rs.)
2010-11	2	60,000	3,20,45,590
2011-12	890	55,20,914	11,31,99,846

"Udiyaman Swanirbhar Karmasansthan Prakalpa"-2008 (Uskp)

The objective of the scheme is to assist registered unemployed youth to take up economically viable projects by providing subsidy from the State Government and credit on easy terms from banks and financial institutions. Under the USKP, a loan amount up to Rs. 50,000/- per person is provided to the unemployed youth and 25% of loan amount is provided as a subsidy by the State Government

Sl. No.	Year	Case Sponsored	Case Sanctioned	No. of case Disbursed
1	2009-10	6291	383	86
2	2010-11	2767	160	48
3	2011-12	7560	2513	1863

Rastriya Swastha Bima Yojona (RSBY)

Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojna (RSBY) has been launched by Ministry of Labour and Employment, Government of India to provide health coverage for Below Poverty Line (BPL) families by providing **Biometric RSBY Smart Cards**

through which they can get health benefit in Empanelled Hospitals through Package Rates.

Financial Year Wise Comparative Analysis of the achievements

1. Enrolment of Beneficiary

Financial Year	Implementing Districts (No.)	Target Households	Enrolled Households
2009-10	4	1192133	819302
2010-11	13	5669228	3739953
2011-12	18	7562323	4412225

- In Financial Year 2011-12 West Bengal Has covered all the 18 Districts in the State (Except Kolkata where UHS is Running). In all Districts - Enrolment Done with BPL Households of both Rural & Urban belt.
- MGNREGS Job Card Holders were incorporated in RSBY Scheme in two Districts – Namely East Midnapore & Hooghly. All MGNREGS card holder with more than 15 days job will be covered by RSBY card.

2. Hospitalization Rate: Since inception Hospitalization number as well as Rate of Hospitalization (Per Month and Per Lakh Hospitalization) has increased significantly.

Fin Year	No. of Districts Covered	No. of Empanelled Hospitals	Total Hospitalization	Hospitalization Per Lakh of Enrolled Households	Rate of Hospitalization Per Month
2009-10	4	99	10355	1264	305
2010-11	14	292	77609	2075	681
2011-12	15	345	131872	3042	762

- In 2011-12 District Hospital of Howrah District incorporated as Service provider of RSBY Scheme. In near future Public Hospitals shall be included within the ambit of RSBY service provision which certainly would lead to increase in number of hospitalizations with better health care management.

Major Policy Decisions/Reforms by the Labour Department since June, 2011

The Labour Department has changed its approach to play a meaningful role in the lives of the workers and their families. It has become balanced and proactive in developing harmonious industrial relations in the state. Strict enforcement of labour laws is stressed to protect the interest of the workers. Minimum wages are rationalised to make them meaningful. Social security schemes have been made more beneficiaries centred and employment exchanges are in

the process of being revamped through formation of 'Employment Bank'.

Grievance Redressal Cell:

The Labour Department has set up a centralised 'Enquiry and Grievance Redressal Cell' for the workers. Similar cells have also been set up in different Directorates to guide the workers and to make it easy for them to get their grievances redressed without any harassment.

Jute

Dilution of compulsory packaging order for jute bags was a major threat to the proper functioning of the jute industry in this state. This problem was taken up by the Hon'ble Chief Minister, Smt. Mamata Banerjee with the Government of India and the problem has been solved to the satisfaction of the Indian Jute Mills Association and the Trade Unions.

Revision / Fixation of Minimum Wages:

The Government has revised minimum wages for most of the scheduled employments under the Minimum Wages Act, 1948 resulting in an increase of minimum wages ranging from 21% (in Rope Industry) to 48% in (Agriculture). While revising or fixing the rates of minimum wages the calculation is now done on the basis of 2700 calorie consumption per day per unit in place of 2200 calorie. The Government also simplified it by bringing uniformity of minimum wages in place of a variety of minimum wages prevalent in the different scheduled employments and by dividing the state in two broad zones instead of many.

Samajik Mukti Yojona:

More than 93% of the workers of our state belong to the unorganised sector. Labour Department has different schemes run by different Boards for the unorganised workers employed in different employments. A large number of unorganised workers are migratory in nature and they also shift from one employment to another employment. To ensure that they get the benefits under these schemes, **it has been decided to introduce a smart card 'Samajik Mukti Card' for such unorganised workers. With this card an unorganised worker will be able to get benefits under the schemes easily and expeditiously in a hassle free manner.** It has also been decided to bring parity in the benefits provided under different schemes. To make the Boards beneficiary centric, efficient and effective different Boards have been brought under one CEO/Secretary. Labour Welfare Facilitation Centres have also been set up at all Blocks and Municipalities to improve service delivery mechanism and to ensure easy access to the workers.

Enhancement of quantum of some important existing benefits for Construction Workers w.e.f 1.4.2012

- Decentralization of the process of registration of construction workers as beneficiaries - Inspectors posted at Labour Welfare Facilitation Centers in

Rule	Name of the benefit		Existing Rate	Enhanced rate w.e.f 1.4.2012
274	Accident	Hospitalization	Rs.5,000/- (maximum)	Rs.10,000/-
		Disablement	Rs.25,000/-	Rs.50,000/-
275	Death	Normal	Rs.30,000/-	Rs.50,000/-
		Accidental	Rs.1,00,000/-	Rs.1,50,000/-
276	Pension	Beneficiary	Rs.5 00/-	Rs.750/-
276	Education		Rs.2,000/-- to Rs.15,000/-	Rs.4,000/- to Rs.30,000/-
280	Medical	Treatment	Rs.10,000/- p.a(max)	Rs.20,000/- p.a(max)
		Surgery	Rs.30,000/-- p.a (max)	Rs.60,000/- p.a(max)
281	Maternity		Rs.3,000/-	Rs.6,000/-
282	Other welfare measures	Tool purchase	Rs.1,000/-	Rs.2,000/-
		Marriage assistance	Rs.5,000/-	Rs.10,000/--

Blocks and Municipalities are empowered to act as Beneficiary Registering Officers in respect of registration of beneficiaries.

- Extension of coverage of construction work: All work connected with brick kiln, brick making & fly ash, cement & other materials ; all work related to stone breaking & stone crushing have been included as “Construction Work”

Employment Bank

The Government has decided to form online web based ‘Employment Bank’ where the job seekers will be able to upload their resumes which can be accessed by the employers. This will enable the job seekers to get appropriate jobs at other parts of the country or even outside the country. The employers will also have wider choice. The government will also be able to know the skill gaps and will be able to design skill development programmes accordingly.

West Bengal Electronics Industry Development Corporation Limited (WBEIDC) has been entrusted with the work of development of the web-portal and procurement of hardware for this purpose.

Skill Development Initiatives

- **Career Corners** equipped with career-related books and magazines have been established **At all the Employment Exchanges /** University Employment Information and Guidance Bureaus (72) of the State (except District Employment Exchange Raniganj and Barrackpore and UEI&GB Jadavpur University), 52 Colleges throughout the State and 17 ITIs
- **Test of Competencies and Certification :** Most of the Workers working in the Unorganised sectors acquire their skill informally and do not possess any certificate in support of their skill. This sub-scheme targets enhancing employability of such group by certification of their skill after a test of competency
- **Development of Persons With Disability :** First the ‘Residual Mental and Physical Abilities’ of the persons would be assessed and then on the basis of that assessment special skill training would be provided to them through enlisted institutes.
- **Skill Training Of Domestic Workers :** To develop / upgrade the skill of such individuals in handling various domestic appliances through a 3-days ‘proshikkhan shibir’ and promote awareness regarding safety, first-aid etc. among them. Stipend of an amount Rs.100/- per trainee per day is provided.
- **Special Coaching For Entry Into Defence Forces In Non-commissioned Posts :** To enhance the placement rate of the youth of the State by providing guidance and training to the aspiring youth through Residential Training Camps of 5-days duration prior to the “Recruitment Rallies” or selection tests conducted by the armed force.
- **Skill Training Of The Workers Of The Locked-out Industries:** Skill of the workers who were provided with financial assistance under the FAWLOI scheme would be upgraded free of cost with an objective to make the workers of the locked-out industrial units of the State employable.

Restructuring

The process of restructuring is going on at different levels to make the functioning of the Department effective, efficient and worker centric. Apart from opening Labour Welfare Facilitation Centres at Block and Municipality levels and opening centralized Grievance Redressal Cells, merger of Shops and Establishments Directorate with the Labour Directorate is also under process. Two separate cells for the Jute and tea Industry have also been formed.

Posts lying vacant for long time at different levels have been filled up and infrastructure of the offices has been developed by procuring latest IT equipments and connectivity. To make the service delivery mechanism effective and efficient the Government has decided to go for computerization.