



ESIC की बात आपके साथ-II KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

क्या आप ESIC हेल्पलाईन नम्बरों को जानते हैं ?

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BACKGROUND AND SUMMARY

In May, 2021 we started 'ESIC की बात आपके साथ', a series of quick surveys, to provide regular worker feedback to ESIC on some of their services, with the aim to improve these ESIC services for 140m people in the country.

The first Report on awareness about ESIC's Covid-Relief scheme among IPs was published in May 2021 and is [here](#). It was discussed with ESIC's top management in June, 2021. The results of the survey had shown extremely low awareness of Covid-relief ESIC schemes among the workers eg. 96% of IPs did not know about any of the COVID relief measures which were contributing to their low utilization/success. Since then, there seem to be some improvement in activity on ESIC's Facebook page; unlike the past, we have observed regular updates and sometimes multiple posts on a single day on Covid relief schemes and the relief received by beneficiaries. We await actions on our other recommendations. There is still a very long way to go on this front as we have highlighted for past four years.

This second Report in the series is on IP experiences with ESIC help line and with complaint reporting/resolution through some of ESIC's various redressal channels. The latter have recently been repackaged under a "Here to Hear" initiative, launched on ESIC's Facebook page in June 21.

The following surveys were conducted during between May and July 2021. Most of these workers have been either injured in the past and/or assisted by SII on one of these schemes, are on contract and work for MSME sector, introducing a bias in these findings. However, these are one of the most vulnerable segments among IPs and growing in number. ESIC needs to serve them better.

In summary, these surveys show that ESIC helplines are not well known and not functioning well, despite outsourcing, and the online complaint mechanism are neither well known/understood nor a preferred mode for escalation/resolution for workers, who are not as digital savvy as these mechanisms need them to be. A much better help line performance, a more intuitive "hear to hear" mechanism and restarting of Suvidha Samagam are required as soon as possible.

SURVEY I: KEY FINDINGS ABOUT ESIC HELP LINE

The below are based on a survey of 96 IPs, who had called ESIC Helpline numbers in April and May 2021:

- 1. During Covid Wave 2 Lockdown, these 96 IPs tried calling ESIC helpline number mainly to seek advice on their problems or seek information related to ABVKY, TDB and PDB. Only 10% called to complain.**

Of these 96 IPs:

- 90 IPs called on the General Helpline number 1800112526 and only 6 IPs called on the Medical Helpline number 1800113839.
- The reason for which they called:
 - More than half - 53% - called seeking advice to resolve their problem.
 - 36% called to seek information on ABVKY, TDB and PDB, and
 - Only 10% called to raise a complaint

- Of those above, seeking information, 66% IP calls were about ABVKY and 14% for TDB and 11% for PDB.

This sample of workers is already aware of ESIC to some extent due to SII's assistance and yet they needed to call these help lines numbers, demonstrating the importance of these channels to IPs.

2. Almost half of these IPs could not speak to anyone on ESIC's helpline, despite majority of them having tried calling multiple (3-4) times.

- 45% IPs could not speak to anyone. Of these:
 - 70% IPs' call did not ring at all. Of these, half of them did not even hear a dial tone, and 17% only heard COVID message and the phone got disconnected thereafter.
 - 30% IPs' calls rang but was not picked. Majority called multiple times - 37% tried calling 3 times and another 47% IPs tried calling 4 times or more.

3. When connected, the call response/information was of low quality and the majority felt that the suggested solutions were not helpful.

- Of the 55% IPs who were able to speak to a call center staff:
 - 25% had to call twice and 19% had to call 3-4 times.
 - Of the 70% IPs who received a suggested solution, 35% IPs did not find it helpful as they were simply asked to visit the branch office and 22% were redirected to their employer.

SURVEY 2: KEY FINDINGS ABOUT ESIC HELP LINE AWARENESS

1. In another survey with 117 IPs conducted during May 2021, and despite these having used ESIC services in the past, majority did not know where to find it.

- 87% were not aware of the ESIC helpline number, out of which 64% did not know where to find it.

SURVEY 3: KEY FINDINGS REGARDING USE OF ESIC'S COMPLAINT REDRESSAL CHANNELS

To understand the accessibility and problems faced by workers in using the complaint redressal mechanisms, other than help line, we carried out another survey with 108 IPs during July 2021. The key findings are as follows:

1. Most IPs are not aware of redressal mechanisms and when they need to complaint, most of them visit branches.

Of the 108 IPs:

- 58% IPs did not know how to raise a complaint through any means including helpline no.

- Only 18% IPs are aware of UMANG App, still making it the most known redressal system, closely followed by knowledge of helpline no by 7%. (Note only 13% aware in the survey 2 sample – demonstrating consistent low awareness)
- 9% (10 IPs) made a complaint, out of which the majority (8 IPs) did by visiting the local office.

‘हेल्पलाइन नंबर पर फ़ोन करके, यदि शिकायत हो जाती है तो ऑफिस आने -जाने में समय और पैसे बच जायेंगे’ ।
- अजीत कुमार, 26, उत्तर प्रदेश

2. Redressal mechanisms of CPGRAM (through ESIC Website and Umang App) are underused, possibly because of very low awareness of ESIC website/Umang app, and two mandatory pieces of information, that many workers do not know/have.

Of the 108 IPs surveyed:

- 87% are not aware of the ESIC website, so they don’t use IP portal on their own.
- 84% do not know that ESIC falls under Ministry of Labor and Employment – a mandatory information they have to complete, to complain.
- 72% either don’t have email Id or have forgotten or don’t know about it - another mandatory information to register on CPGRAM.

CPGRAM PORTAL:



Figure1: After logging in to CPGRAM, complainant has to select the Ministry to proceed to complaint – this can be automated

3. Although virtual Suvidha Samagam has now begun, workers want physical Suvidha Samagam to resume, so that their cases are heard face to face and resolved early.

- 51% IPs wish physical Suvidha Smagam must resume as soon as possible.
- 36% IPs feel that worker issues are heard and resolved better at a physical Suvidha Samagam.

‘एक ही जगह सब लोग मिल जाते हैं वो भी आमने सामने से समस्या बताने में बहुत आसान है , ऑनलाइन शिकायत करने में मुझे दिक्कत है ,ऑनलाइन में एक्सपर्ट नहीं हूँ।’
रवि कुमार वर्मा, 31, उत्तर प्रदेश

RECOMMENDATIONS

The above findings highlight the poor services available through ESIC help line and low awareness and usage of complaint resolution systems.

To address, these below are our recommendations, some of which have been repeatedly suggested in the past but not implemented:

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HELPLINE NUMBER

1. **Display of helpline number** on documents possessed by IP, for example print it on e-pehchan card, OPD Ticket & Slip etc.
2. **Train helpline team** for better first time call-resolution and track their quality-performance professionally to improve it continually.
3. **Keep the helpline functional/technically robust** so that IP does not have to call multiple times to just get through to someone.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CPGRAM

4. In the process of raising a complaint through CPGRAM, **automate the selection of ministry** rather than the complainant having to choose it.
5. To make CPGRAM website multilingual and have regional languages options/settings.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SUVIDHA SMAGAM

6. Resume physical Suvidha Samagam once a month asap, and ideally on Sundays as workers lose a day wages to attend on a working day.
7. Standardize Suvidha Samagam’s performance monthly Management Information (MI) to be submitted by SRIOs to HO with status, trends and recommendations. We had submitted detailed Suvidha Samagam recommendations in the past in 2018.

The above recommendations will not only improve IP experience but also reduce footfall at ESIC branches thereby reducing ESIC costs.