Abstract

Government of India launched numerous insurance schemes to improve health care and make it reachable for the weaker section of the society. Employees’ state insurance scheme is the first social insurance measure in India to provide socio-economic protection to the employees. ESI scheme was implemented in India in 1952 under the regulations of ESI Act 1948. As on 31st March 2017 ESIC has the coverage of 12.37 crores beneficiaries and 2.93 crores insured employees. The first regional office of ESIC was opened in 1956 in Kerala and now it extended to all the districts with five regional offices and total number of employees is 8,68,900. The present paper is analyzing the perception of employees according to the awareness and satisfaction of employees towards ESI scheme in Kerala. The study is based on primary data and 400 employees were selected for the study. It is clear from the study that there is significant difference among the employees of five regions in their awareness and satisfaction towards ESI scheme and 35 percent of variance in satisfaction is due to awareness of employees. So it is suggested that to conduct the awareness programmes and simplify the procedures and formalities of the ESI benefits to upturn the level of satisfaction towards ESI scheme.

Keywords: Awareness, Employees, ESIC, ESI Scheme, Satisfaction

INTRODUCTION

Health and wellbeing of employees are the important factors for the development of any nation or organization. Promotion of health and safety will enable the employees to contribute to the best of their ability. So companies are aiding wellness efforts in their workplace to promote employees especially through providing health insurance policies. Health insurance protects employees from unexpected, high medical costs and provides financial protection against large medical bills by paying a small amount of premium. Government of India also launched numerous insurance schemes to improve health care and make it reachable for the weaker section of the society. Employees’ state insurance scheme is the first social insurance measure in India to provide socio-economic protection to the employees after Independence and it is regulated by Employees’ State Insurance Corporation. ESI scheme was implemented in India in 1952 under the regulations of ESI Act 1948. As on 31st March 2017 ESIC has the coverage of 12.37 crores beneficiaries and 2.93 crores insured employees. The first regional office of ESIC was opened in 1956 in Kerala and now it extended to all the districts with five regional offices and total number of employees is 8,68,900. Employees and employers are contributing 1.75 percent and 4.75 percent to ESI scheme every month. So the employees have the right to get all the services provided by the ESIC. The present paper is analyzing the perception of employees according to the awareness and satisfaction of employees towards ESI scheme in Kerala.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Ramesh and Neelam (2012) in their study analyzed the satisfaction of employees and utilization of health care services under ESI Scheme in Rohtak district, Haryana. It was noted that 64.6 percent of the insured persons were satisfied with the ESI services and rest were dissatisfied. Distance of ESI- health care facility from their residence followed by income, caste and behavior of doctor are the important factors for utilizing the ESI services at ESI dispensary. They concluded that it is imperative to improve the ESI services for increasing the satisfaction of insured persons.

Divya and Vijayachandran Pillai (2014) made a study on the awareness and satisfaction of employees towards ESI Scheme in the service sector in Kerala. Beneficiary employees are equally selected from shops, financing company and educational institutions. They inferred that the beneficiaries from educational institutions are more aware of about ESI scheme than other two classes and also there is no significant association between occupational status of the employees and their preference in the selection of hospitals and the level of satisfaction from various ESI benefits. The study revealed that dispensaries and hospitals are not functioning up to the expected level of insured persons.

Parri and Renjithkumar (2016) tried to identify the awareness and utilization of ESI benefits and problems encountered from the use of ESI dispensaries in Erode district, Tamilnadu. They found out that the lack of medicines and other facilities for treatment, lack of doctors and misbehavior of supporting staff were ranked as the most burning problems faced by insured persons from ESI dispensaries. Poor medical care and poor attention are the main reasons for not utilizing the medical benefits under ESI scheme after retirement. They suggested that to improve the function of various boards like regional, local and departments like inspectorate, ESI courts to develop better co-ordination among various stake holders of ESI.

Ananda Kumar and Porkalai (2017) in their study analyzed the awareness and satisfaction of employees with the level of utilization of ESI policy. They opined that employees of the company are not completely educated and majority of them are not fully aware about ESI policy. So they are not fully benefitted from the ESI scheme. Hence the company need to focus on awareness and utilization of ESI policy more familiar and it will lead to high productivity results in healthy organization.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

ESIC is the first institution for providing social security and health insurance to the employees in India. Financial and medical assistance offer a feeling of social security and support in the minds of employees and it improves their productivity and efficiency. In spite of all the endeavours made by the ESI Corporation for the effective
function of the ESI scheme in the country, the earlier studies state that the employees are not satisfied due to low quality drugs, long waiting period, unusual delays in reimbursement of money, lack of or low interest of employers and low awareness of ESI procedures (Dash U, 2011). This study made an attempt to analyze the awareness and satisfaction of employees of Kerala towards ESI scheme as it is a contributory health insurance for the low level income community of the society.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY
1. To assess the level of awareness and satisfaction of the beneficiary employees towards ESI Scheme in Kerala
2. To study the impact of awareness on the level of satisfaction of employees towards ESI Scheme in Kerala

HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY
1. There is no association between the socio-economic factors and level of awareness of employees towards ESI scheme.
2. There is no significant difference among the employees in the regions with their level of awareness towards ESI Scheme in Kerala.
3. There is no significant difference among the employees in the regions with respect their satisfaction level towards ESI Scheme in Kerala.
4. There is no significant impact of awareness on the level of satisfaction of employees towards ESI Scheme in Kerala.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY
The study is descriptive in nature and based on primary data. The primary data is collected from the respondents of five regions based on structured interview schedule and discussions with the officials of ESI Corporation. Proportionate sampling method is used to determine the sample size according to the total number of employees registered under ESI scheme as on 31st March 2017 and the sample size is 400. The Regions and sample size are Ernakulam (171), Kollam (52), Kozhikode (63), Trivandrum (52) and Thrissur (62). Chi-square test, Anova and Regression analysis were used to find out the association, difference and impact among the variables.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY
The Employees’ State Insurance Scheme as per the ESI Act provides social protection to employees in the organized sector and their dependents. This study mainly conducted to analyse the awareness and satisfaction of employees enrolled in ESI scheme in Kerala. Awareness and satisfaction of employees from five ESI regions were collected for the study. Awareness covers formalities of ESI scheme, various benefits and functioning of ESIC. Satisfaction about ESI Corporation, ESI benefits and hospital were analysed to find out the level of satisfaction of employees towards ESI scheme.

LEVEL OF AWARENESS OF EMPLOYEES
Level of awareness is analyzed on the basis of socio-economic factors and regional wise of beneficiary employees under ESI scheme. Awareness is classified into low, moderate and high level according to their awareness in ESI scheme, benefits, functioning of ESIC. Chi-square test is used to find out the association between socio-economic factors and level of awareness of Employees towards ESI scheme.

HYPOTHESIS 1
There is no association between the socio-economic factors and level of awareness of employees towards ESI scheme.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Socio Economic Factors</th>
<th>Classification</th>
<th>Level of Awareness</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Chisquare Value</th>
<th>P-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>High</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Below 25</td>
<td>4(28.6%)</td>
<td>5(35.7%)</td>
<td>5(35.7%)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>24-35</td>
<td>32(23.0%)</td>
<td>57(41.0%)</td>
<td>50(36.0%)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>35-45</td>
<td>47(29.2%)</td>
<td>77(47.8%)</td>
<td>37(23.0%)</td>
<td>161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Above 45</td>
<td>20(23.3%)</td>
<td>53(61.6%)</td>
<td>13(15.1%)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>48(25.0%)</td>
<td>100(52.1%)</td>
<td>44(22.9%)</td>
<td>192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>55(26.4%)</td>
<td>92(44.2%)</td>
<td>61(29.3%)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illiterate</td>
<td>0(0.0%)</td>
<td>1(33.3%)</td>
<td>2(66.7%)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSLC</td>
<td>21(32.3%)</td>
<td>35(53.8%)</td>
<td>9(13.8%)</td>
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<td>HSC</td>
<td>30(26.8%)</td>
<td>62(55.4%)</td>
<td>20(17.9%)</td>
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<td>UG</td>
<td>22(23.2%)</td>
<td>42(44.2%)</td>
<td>31(32.6%)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>PG</td>
<td>24(32.4%)</td>
<td>32(43.2%)</td>
<td>18(24.3%)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical/Diploma</td>
<td>6(11.8%)</td>
<td>20(39.2%)</td>
<td>25(49.0%)</td>
<td>51</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peroid of</td>
<td>Less than 1 year</td>
<td>4(50.0%)</td>
<td>2(25.0%)</td>
<td>2(25.0%)</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table:1-Socio-Economic Factors of Employees and Level of Awareness towards ESI

HYPOTHESIS 2
There is no significant difference among the employees in the regions with respect to their level of awareness towards ESI Scheme.

HYPOTHESIS 3
There is no significant difference among the employees in the regions with respect to their satisfaction level towards ESI Scheme.

HYPOTHESIS 4
There is no significant impact of awareness on the level of satisfaction of employees towards ESI Scheme.
From the table 1 it is clear that out of 400 employees 192 have moderate level of awareness about ESI scheme. 103 employees have low level and 105 have higher level awareness.161 employees are coming under the age of 35-45 years and 77 percent has moderate level awareness. Male and female employees are more on moderate level of awareness and it constituted by 52.1 percent and 44.2 percent. Table 1 reveals that the calculated P-value less than 0.05 except the factors gender and salary per month at 5 percent level. Hence the null hypothesis is rejected and it can be concluded that there is association between age, education, period of service and level of awareness towards ESI Scheme. Gender and salary per month have no association with the level of awareness since its significant values are higher than 0.05.

**HYPOTHESIS 2**

There is no significant difference among the employees in the regions with their level of awareness towards ESI Scheme in Kerala.

Table 2 explains the level of awareness among employees of regions of Kerala about ESI scheme. Since the P-value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected and it can be derived that there is significant difference among the employees of five regions about the level of awareness. Employees of Kozhikode region are less aware according to the mean value of 29.77 when it is compared with the mean values ranges from 33.68 to 34.80 of other regions.

**REGIONAL WISE SATISFACTION OF EMPLOYEES TOWARDS ESI SCHEME**

Satisfaction of employees about ESI scheme among the employees of regions was tested with the following hypothesis.

**HYPOTHESIS 3**

There is no significant difference among the employees in the regions with respect their satisfaction level towards ESI Scheme in Kerala.

Table 3 reveals that the calculated P-value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected and it can be derived that there is significant difference among the employees of five regions about the level of satisfaction towards ESI Scheme. Employees of Kozhikode region are less satisfied according to the mean value of 35.72. The mean values of other regions are coming in between 36.68 and 39.23.

**IMPACT OF AWARENESS OF ESI SCHEME ON THE LEVEL OF SATISFACTION**

Regression analysis is used to find out the relationship between the awareness and satisfaction of employees about ESI scheme and the impact of awareness on the satisfaction of employees. Awareness is taken as independent variable and satisfaction as dependent variable.

**HYPOTHESIS 4**

There is no significant impact of awareness on the level of satisfaction of employees towards ESI Scheme in Kerala.
The $R$ value of 0.595 in the table 4 indicates positive correlation between awareness and level of satisfaction of employees towards ESI scheme. The $R^2$ value 0.355 indicates that 36 percent of the total variance in the dependent variable level of satisfaction can be explained by the awareness of employees about ESI scheme. The $P$-value of F-test is 0.000, which is less than the significant level of 0.05. Hence the null hypothesis is rejected and it can be concluded that there is significant impact of awareness on the level of satisfaction of employees.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Employees’ state insurance scheme is one of the measures of social security and plays a very important role by taking care of the health of the employees and their families working in several small organizations. ESIC and the state have the role in the effective running of the institutional infrastructure in terms of financing of the benefits and ensuring the flow of contributions from employees and employers. According to the economic changes ESIC is also modifying its regulations to increase the coverage and accessible the services of ESI benefits to all the employees of organized sector. According to the study majority of the employees coming under moderate level of awareness and employees of five regions of Kerala have significant difference in their satisfaction level towards ESI scheme.

Since 48 percent of employees coming under the moderate level of awareness, it is suggested that to conduct Panchayat and Block wise awareness programmes about ESI and its benefits. Employees are not fully aware about the procedures of ESI benefits. So it is good to instruct the employer to display the procedures and regulations in regional language in common place. The procedures and formalities should be simplified as the most of the employees are mainly depending their small amount of salary for their livelihood. It creates a sense of security while going to work that will definitely increase the productivity at workplace.

REFERENCES

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