Vigilance Awareness Week, 2016
(सतकर्ता जागरूकता सप्ताह, 2016)
31.10.2016 to 05.11.2016

THEME:
‘PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN PROMOTING INTEGRITY AND ERADICATING CORRUPTION’

विषय:
(ईमानदारी को प्रोत्साहन देने तथा भ्रष्टाचार उन्मूलन में जन सहभागिता)
The Central Vigilance Commission, as the apex integrity institution of the country, endeavours to promote integrity, transparency and accountability in public life. Observance of Vigilance Awareness Week every year is one such outreach measure wherein all the stakeholders are encouraged to prevent and combat corruption. The Commission has decided that this year the Awareness Week would be observed from 31st October to 5th November 2016 with the theme “Public participation in promoting Integrity and eradicating Corruption”.

To mark the Vigilance Awareness Week 2016 and for promoting awareness regarding integrity and ethics amongst the stakeholders of the EPFO, a special e-newsletter has been attempted from the Chief Vigilance Officer’s desk, which has been released by the Central Provident Fund Commissioner today, the 31st of October 2016.
As the biggest administrator and provider of Social Security in India, **EPFO** plays a significant role in its economic as well as social development.

The Employees’ Provident Funds & Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1952, extends to whole of India except the state of J&K. The EPFO administers the three Schemes namely Employees’ Provident Funds Scheme 1952, Employees’ Pension Scheme 1995 and Employees’ Deposit Linked Insurance Scheme 1976. The employees of an establishment (covered under EPF & MP Act, 1952) drawing wages up to Rs.15000/- are eligible to join the EPFO from the date of joining the establishment.

**Services of the EPFO**

To ensure accountability, transparency and a service-oriented culture, the EPFO has been continuously re-inventing itself. In recent times it has initiated a number of measures to empower its stake holders through IT led e-governance platforms. In recognition of its efficient service delivery, the EPFO has won the National Award for e-Governance 2015-16, in the ‘innovative use of technology in e-governance’ category for launching the Universal Account Number (UAN).
Which establishments are covered under the Act?

Every establishment, which is engaged in any one or more of the industries specified in Schedule-I of the Act / any activity notified by the Central Government in the Official Gazette, and employing 20 or more persons are eligible to be covered. An establishment which is not otherwise coverable under the Act may be covered with the mutual consent of the employer and the majority of its employees on voluntary basis under section 1(4) of the Act.

How does the EPFO operate?

The Organization is constantly working towards bringing in transformative changes in service standards and securing the ultimate satisfaction of the stakeholders. A brief overview of the major areas of operation of the EPFO is as under:

**COMPLIANCE MANAGEMENT**

Compliance begins with coverage of establishments under Sections 1(3) (a), 1(3) (b), 1(4) and 2A of the Act. After coverage, the employers are required to comply with the provisions of the Act and the Schemes framed under it, by enrolling their employees / workers as members of the Fund; deduct provident fund contributions from their salary and deposit the same with the Fund after making matching contributions.

Non-compliance of the following types are normally reported:

- Dispute on the applicability of the Act,
- Non-payment of provident fund and allied dues and
- Non-enrollment of all eligible Members.

How does the EPFO deal with non-compliance?

To ensure compliance, the Act provides for the following categories of action against the defaulter:

- Assessment of dues through quasi-judicial enquiry;
- Levying damages for belated remittance of contribution by the employer;
- Recovery of P.F. and allied dues with penal damages / interest through prohibitory orders and other legal and coercive measures;
- Filing prosecution cases before the appropriate courts of law;
- Registering default cases with Police Authorities.
Which services are offered by the EPFO?

- Being the trustee of the three funds (namely the Provident Fund, the Pension Fund and the Insurance Fund) the EPFO makes prudent investment of the money out of the Funds, as per approved investment norms of the Ministry of Finance, Government of India, before returning the earnings to the members.
- Making final settlement and allowing partial withdrawals from the Provident Fund accumulations.
- Making payment of superannuation pension, short service pension or disablement pension.
- Settling payment of provident fund, family pension and deposit linked insurance to the family of the deceased member.
- Transferring provident fund accounts of the members on request.

What are the Major challenges before the EPFO?

The existing high level of human interface between EPFO officials and the employers/employees has raised various impediments in providing hassle free services to the stakeholders. The challenges/issues are:

- Ensuring real time coverage of establishments and enrolment of all eligible employees / workers as members.
- Removing administrative bottlenecks for the employers.
- Detection of timely defaults regarding payment of provident fund and allied dues of the members by their employers.
- Convergence of existing multiple account numbers of an individual member into a universal account number.
- Excluding any member, who has been allotted a universal account number, from applying and obtaining multiple account numbers.
- Identification and verification of members / beneficiaries and providing online services for all EPFO benefits to bona-fide members.
IT led initiatives

The need for generating public confidence in the service delivery of the EPFO has never been felt more intensely than now. In order to increase the efficiency, transparency and accountability of the services, the EPFO has introduced multiple technologies. They are summarized as under:

**Online Registration of Establishments (OLRE)**

The EPFO has launched a revised process of registration wherein the employer will be able to apply online and upload the digitally signed documents at the time of application itself. About 1.41 lac establishments have been reportedly registered. The OLRE portal is also integrated with Govt. of India’s e-Biz portal and Ministry of Labour & Employment’s Shram Suvidha portal for extending ease of business to maximum number of employers.

**Universal Account Number (UAN)**

The EPFO has started issuing a Universal Account Number to every contributing member of the Employees’ Provident Fund. The UAN has facilitated single account number to almost 5 crore members with ensured portability of the account number upon change of employment of the individual member. The UAN is being further seeded with Aadhaar number of the member for eliminating duplication of account numbers.

**Electronic challan-cum Return (ECR)**

Establishments have to submit their statutory returns online and those establishments, whose bankers are SBI, can also make online payments now. This ensures elimination of multiple paper returns and facilitates almost real-time updation of member accounts and establishment ledgers.

**Unified Shram Suvidha Portal**

EPFO is also part of the Unified Shram Suvidha Portal of the Ministry of Labour & Employment. The Portal that ensures data sharing between different regulatory bodies helps in enhancing transparency and reduces the scope of corruption considerably.

**Online Transfer Claims Portal (OTCP)**

Members’ claims for transfer of accounts necessitated by job/location changes have been made e-enabled and the processes have been completely digitalized.
Mobile based Applications

- Activation and access to UAN based member account by the members,
- Access to pension disbursement details by the pensioners,
- SMS based claims' payment tracking facility and
- Monthly SMS alerts to all UAN holders regarding the credit of PF Contributions in their accounts.

Disbursement of Pension through Core Banking Solution

Disbursement of Pension through Core Banking Solution (CBS) has been initiated to credit monthly pension directly in the pensioners account on the first day of the month. Such a step has enabled the Organization to meet the legitimate expectations of pensioners who are entitled to timely payment of pension. This has benefited nearly 50 lacs pensioners across India, and has enhanced customers' satisfaction.

THE WAY FORWARD

EPFO is in the process of centralizing its database, portals and operations. With the implementation of digitally secured centralized operations, the EPFO would be providing:

i) Online settlement of Claims.
ii) Online disbursement of Pension through a Centralized portal.
iii) Electronic remittance of PF Contributions through multiple Banks.
iv) Electronic allotment of UAN and seeding it with Aadhaar, Bank account number and Mobile Number.
v) Last mile connectivity of the employees through Common Service Centers (CSC) of the DIT, Govt. of India.

The status of the claims preferred by the members is available in a search mode on the website through the link Know Your Claim Status. Now a member can visit the site any time to know whether his claim has been approved and whether the payment has been processed. In case he/she has mentioned his/her mobile number in the claim form, he/she would also receive SMS alert at each stage of the claim processing.
VISION 2030

A) Universal Social Security Coverage on mandatory basis by way of Provident Fund, Pension and Life Insurance for all workers of the Country.

B) Online services for all EPFO benefits with state-of-the-art technology.

C) Implementation of policies for a benefit structure with adequate support level of Social Security.

MISSION

Our mission is to extend the reach and quality of publicly managed old age income security programs through consistent and ever-improving standards of compliance and benefit delivery in a manner that wins the approval and confidence of Indians in our methods, fairness, honesty and integrity, thereby contributing to the economic and social wellbeing of Indians.