

SOCIAL SECURITY OF CASUAL WORKERS IN INDIAN RAILWAYS:
WHETHER NATIONAL PENSION SCHEME IS THE WAY FORWARD?

Sneha Singh*

ABSTRACT

Indian Railways introduced the Defined Contribution Pension Scheme- National Pension Scheme and mandatorily applied the scheme for its regular employees from the year 2004. But the gigantic structure of Indian Railways requires employment of casual workers who work in different capacities and departments of the Railways for a fixed period of time and on consolidated pay. They are employed through contractors and are not entitled to any kind of social security benefits unlike the regular employees of the Indian Railways. With about four lakh contractual workers, involved and working at different tiers, Indian Railways is the largest employer of such kind in the nation. This paper will analyse whether the National Pension Scheme, as a generic pension scheme, can be extended to the contractual workers or casual labourers working for the Indian Railways. In the first part of the paper, the employment scenario in Indian Railways is assessed as to the nature of appointment and then in the subsequent part the nature of benefits ensuring social security enjoyed by the regular employees in comparison to the casual/contractual employees is elaborated upon. The features of the National Pension Scheme is laid down to understand the generic features of the social security attribute which can be made available to the casual/ contractual employees in an already complex mechanism. The paper concludes by suggesting ways of implementation of the National Pension Scheme by the Indian Railways without a burden on the coffers of the employers and making the process transparent with least interference of the contractors.

* Research Assistant, CRSGPP, WBNUJS, Kolkata. E-mail- snehasinghllb@gmail.com

1. INTRODUCTION

Casualisation is a phenomenon and the employment of casual labour increases relatively with the size of the enterprise. The bigger the enterprise the higher is the number of intake of casual labourers. With the expansion of Indian Railways as the transporter of the nation and with the gigantic increase in its infrastructure, the intake of casual labourers has also increased. Work and responsibilities are frequently outsourced and through independent contractors the influx of casual labourers has increased. But these casual labourers, often lured by the contractors with the promise of a job in Railways, are not treated equally to the regular employees. There are many parameters of difference and inequality but the absence of social security through retirement benefits is obvious and unique.

This paper studies and examines this nature of employment in Indian Railways and the scope of the newly introduced National Pension Scheme, which was mandatorily applied to the employees appointed in Railways on or after 01.01.2004 so as to assess whether it can be a generic pension scheme which can be made applicable to the casual labourers in Indian Railways without burdening the department while securing the retirement of such labourers.

2. EMPLOYMENT IN INDIAN RAILWAYS

Indian Railways has over the years gained enormous strength and size both in terms of infrastructure and as a service provider of the nation. The organisation is structured and organised with tiers of employees and this pattern of employment has established an inversely proportional relation between income and the generation of income. Effective labour policies and structural dissemination of responsibilities have generated trust amongst

the employees of the Railways and so has the assurance of a safeguarded future with the pensioner benefits given to the railway employees. With such prospects, Indian Railways has the capacity of generating more and more employment and contributing a higher percentage to the GDP of the nation.¹ The transporter of the nation employs maximum percentage of the population and has the record of ensuring optimum social security benefits — housing, medical benefits, education and pension. Railways pension scheme has always been honoured and has encouraged many other government departments to take a cue. However, there is a kind of employment which is under the aegis of the Railways and substantially sized but they receive bare minimum when it comes to social security benefits.

In the Indian Railways, there are about 14 Lakh regular employees and about four Lakh casual workers.² Regular employees in this context mean and include all the employees employed in the department of the Central Government through the Railway Recruitment Board or other associated agencies. Some of the employees are also employed by the Union Public Service Commission. Types of work and cadre create a systematically generated demarcation in the employees and ‘groups’ are created. Therefore, all the Railway employees are systematically organised and work as per the structure in individual capacity and responsibility towards the employer.

¹ Prof. H. R. Uma and Shruthi B. R., *An Analysis of Indian Railways’ Contribution towards Employment Generation*, International Journal of advanced Research in Management and Social Sciences, Available at <http://www.academia.edu/6757990/AN_ANALYSIS_OF_INDIAN_RAILWAYS_CONTRIBUTION_TOWARDS_EMPLOYMENT_GENERATION> Last accessed on 10.04.2016.

² Chapter IV- Employee Relations as laid down in the Establishment records of the Indian Railways. Available at <http://www.indianrailways.gov.in/railwayboard/uploads/codesmanual/ADMIN_FINANCE/AdminFinanceCh4_Data.htm> last accessed on 07.04.2016.

Contractual appointments can be of three kinds in the government department- firstly, appointments of routine nature like housekeeping, maintenance, data entry,³ etc.; secondly, contractual appointments⁴ for certain posts wherein certain specific skills are required and, thus, suitable persons are selected upon negotiations for salary; thirdly, the appointments of retired government employees considered useful due to their expertise garnered during their period of service. Though there is no unanimity in such contractual appointments, in the absence of specific legislations, departments under the Central Government has formulated their guidelines and rules to address the issues of informal employment and the rights of the employees and liabilities of the employer accruing thereto.⁵ Indian Railways is one of the institutions which has the maximum number of contractual employees.

In Indian Railways, the total strength of contractual workers is around 400,000.⁶ Contractual workers/employees refer to those workers/employees who work on a temporary basis in any organisation or institution for a consolidated amount of remuneration.⁷ In the context of Indian Railways, these contract workers are usually engaged to clean the trains, platforms and railway tracks and do other odd maintenance jobs. These workers work as per

³ Such kinds of jobs are usually outsourced to agencies which depute people to do the task. These labourers are controlled by the contractors and at any given time there are numerous contractors working for the Railways.

⁴ This was introduced in the Indian Railways by the Sixth Pay Commission.

⁵ Bishwanath Goldar and Suresh Chand Aggarwal, *Employment of Casual Workers in Organised Manufacturing in India: Analysis of trends and the Impact of Labour Reforms*, The Indian Journal of Labour Economics, Volume 57, Number 3, July- September, 2014, pp. 283-302

⁶ The exact figure of contract workers was not available on the website concerned and this is quoted from the statements of K. N. Sharma, National Vice-president of a national trade union wing in the country. As per Mr. Sharma, this is a conservative figure and the real figure may be higher than mentioned herein. Sindhu Menon, *Railway Workers Bear the Brunt of India's Labour Reforms*, Equal Times dated 20 February, 2015, available at <<http://www.equaltimes.org/railwayworkersbearthebruntof?lang=en>> last accessed on 10.04.2016. Related Links:

<<https://data.gov.in/dataset-group-name/labour-and-employment>><http://www.indianrailways.gov.in/railwayboard/uploads/codesmanual/ADMIN_FINANCE/AdminFinanceCh4_Data.htm> Last accessed on 10.04.2016.

⁷ See <http://www.livemint.com/Industry/D2PEAR2RL7eZTX47kjp7UM/Meet-one-of-the-biggest-user-of-temp-and-contract-workers-i.html> Last Accessed on 26.01.2017.

the conditions provided for in terms of their contract with the contractors and have no medical allowance or health insurance policies.⁸

The Indian Railway Establishment Manual defines Casual labour as labour whose employment is intermittent, sporadic or extends over short period or continued from one work to another. Labour of this kind is normally recruited from the nearest available source and they are not ordinarily transferable. The conditions applicable to the permanent and temporary staff do not apply to casual labour.⁹ Casual labour are usually appointed to either supplement the regular staff in work of seasonal or sporadic nature or execute railway projects such as track renewals, construction of building, maintenance, etc., and are referred as '*Project Casual Labour*.' Their status is often regulated by the terms and conditions decided by the Railway Board.

As per the available statistics,¹⁰ more than 20% of the total number of regular employees are causal workers and they are covered under the Employees Provident Fund (EPF)¹¹ or the Employees State Insurance (ESI) schemes. In such situations, the Indian Railways is geared up to increase its quotient of outsourcing the jobs to private agencies which would lead to an upsurge in the contractual workers. The dealing between the casual labour and the Railways are pre-negotiated by the contractors and the benefits funnel down to

⁸ As per the Railway Labour Tribunal, the period of maximum service for earning temporary status for casual labour employed other than in projects should be fixed at four months.

⁹ Indian Railway Establishment Manual, Volume II, Chapter XX Casual Labour, Rule 2001- 2007.

¹⁰ *Supra* N.1

¹¹ Employees' Provident Fund and Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1952 and the Schemes have contribution from the employer. Employees enjoy social security benefits in the form of unattachable and unwithdrawable financial back up for which the employees and employers contribute equally throughout the period of employment.

these labourers. Their participation is limited and nominal except for the fulfilment of work delegated or allocated.

3. SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFITS IN INDIAN RAILWAYS

a. TO THE REGULAR RAILWAY EMPLOYEES:

Regular railway employees are entitled to many benefits and the social insurance is one of the major highlights of the job luring a large number of youth to the department to seek employment. The Railways has an independent remuneration policy on the lines of the remuneration policy of the Central Government. Salary and other remuneration in the Railways are at par with the Central Government employees and frequently revised as per the recommendations of the respective pay commissions. Bonus¹² and pension are paid based on the cost of living index and calculated on consideration of the economic factors which would affect any 'aam admi.' The service rule of the employees of the Indian Railways is governed by the Establishment Manual and the rules thereto.¹³

Nevertheless, some other important laws which are applicable to the employees of the Indian Railways and also cover the interest of the casual workers or labourers- The Industrial Disputes Act, 1947,¹⁴ The Workmen's Compensation Act, 1923¹⁵ (now known as the

¹² Indian Railways provides for Productivity-linked Bonus every year and is not covered by the provisions of the Payment of Bonus Act, 1956.

¹³ Post 1951, restructuring of the Railways paved the way for the formulation of the establishment rules and the standard code of conduct of the employees were since contained in the Establishment Manual.

¹⁴ It is a comprehensive law which provides for the investigation and settlement of industrial disputes. This law extends and is applicable to all Railway workmen other than those who are employed in supervisory capacity and drawing wages exceeding Rs. 1,600 per month.

¹⁵ This statute is also applicable to all Railway employees inclusive of the contract labourers employed for the purpose of carrying out railway work. However, it is not applicable to those employed in administrative capacity or in the divisional/subdivisional offices. Compensation is provided for personal injury caused to the workman resulting in total or partial disablement for a period exceeding three days by an accident arising out of or in the

Employees' Compensation Act), The Minimum Wages Act, 1948¹⁶ and The Factories Act, 1948.¹⁷ The retirement-cum-death benefits are also elaborated in the Establishment Rules for the railway employees. Every railway employee appointed after 16th November, 1957 is eligible for retirement benefits as per the rules and have the right to elect their pension/retirement benefits or to continue being governed by the State Railway Contributory Provident Fund Rules.

Indian Railways provides for social security of the employees considering the fact that the income of the working class population in India is slender to eliminate any possibility of savings for emergency or to provide substantial financial support. These benefits can be categorically emphasised as – Provident Fund,¹⁸ Death-cum Retirement gratuity, Group Insurance Amount, Deposit-linked Insurance Amount, Leave Encashment, compensation, pension, family pension, Ex-gratia grant, etcetera. Pension out of these benefits is the most lucrative and looked forward option of the employees as it secures their life after superannuation as well as the lives of their dependants.¹⁹

course of his employment. There are certain exemptions for payment of compensation and the Railways cannot be made liable, for example, as and when such injury is caused due to wilful disobedience, disregard to safety procedures or if the employee was under the influence of drink or drugs to be unable to assess the consequences.

¹⁶ This act in the Railway Administration is applicable to the casual workmen in employment. The employer is held responsible for the payment of wages and any contractor is responsible to the person he employs. As per the rules framed under the Act, wage periods should be fixed for the payment of wages at intervals not exceeding one month or any other larger period as prescribed; wages should be paid on a working day and in case wages are to be paid to the person discharged from employment it should be paid not later than the second day of such discharge and the retrenchment compensation, if any, is to be paid as per the provisions of the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947. This Act also provides for rest in a week and extra wages for overtime, i.e., more than the scheduled or fixed work hours.

¹⁷ This statute is applicable to the employees working in the Railway workshops and production units. It does not extend to those in the Loco Sheds and Carriage and Wagon departments (they have been specifically exempted). The obligations of the '*Occupier*' of a factory are elaborated – cleanliness of the factory, disposal of wastes and effluents, maintenance of ventilation, provision for drinking water, weekly holidays, overtime allowance, prevention of accidents, etcetera.

¹⁸ Amount standing in credit of the railway employee is payable on his termination of service or to his nominee on his/her death while in service.

¹⁹ Pension ensures a smooth transition in the lifestyle of the employees without fall in the basic living standards maintained while in service after superannuation. The Railways in its Establishment Manual has rules for recognition of the dependants who will be entitled to the pension benefits.

Free medical treatment is provided to the railway employees and their dependants through hospitals and healthcare units equipped with latest technology and facilities for specialised treatment as and when necessary. Railway employees' children are provided quality education through schools and grants of scholarship. Railway reimburses cost incurred by the employees to educate their wards till graduation level (in case the wards are pursuing professional degree courses, the amounts of grants/scholarships are increased to facilitate to the maximum extent possible).

Additionally, the railway employees are provided for workers' safety measure, training for upgradation, payment for overtime, national holiday allowances, recreation facilities, accommodation (housing facility), privilege travel passes, access to cooperative societies and general facilities at subsidised rates, appointment of next of kin on compassionate grounds in the service as per suitability and pension to the employee and his/her dependants (spouse till death; unmarried daughter till death or till her marriage and son till he attains the age of 21 years). The Railway Minister's Welfare and Relief Fund provides for financial assistance to the railway employees in case of sickness, premature death, and natural calamity hit or handicapped employees.

b. TO THE CASUAL WORKERS:

Casual labourers, unlike the regular railway employees, are not eligible for any entitlement and privileges other than those statutorily admissible under various statutes, such as the Minimum Wages Act, 1948,²⁰ the Workmen's compensation Act, 1923 (the

²⁰ This piece of legislation secures minimum wages in those categories where the wages of the employees are low and thereby prevents exploitation of unorganised labour. The procedure is to regulate the hours of work and the payment of wages in terms of the payment of overtime, promptness in pay and specific deductions.

Employees' Compensation Act), etc., or those specifically sanctioned by the Board from time to time.

Railways preliminary concern about the rights of contract workers was expressed by the formulation of the Rule of Contract. The Rule of Contract²¹ provides for certain, however, fewer, social security benefits to such workers. The Contractor is bound by the rules and it is mandatory for him/her to apply the provisions of the Employees' Provident Fund and Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1952²² on the workers appointed through contract. In case, the contractor fails and any claim is raised against the Railways, the latter has a right to be indemnified against such claims. There is a machinery working in the Railways, which establishes the communication channels with recognised unions and conducts meetings to address the concerns of the Railway employees for claims or wages or pension, as the case may be. Matters are resolved by quarterly meetings or representations as and when necessary before the appropriate tribunal.

The Railway Labour Tribunal acts as the negotiating machinery between the contractual or casual labourers and the Railways and lays down certain guidelines. However, these negotiations are often limited to the contractor and the Railways and the end results as benefits never seep down to the rescue of these labourers. Nevertheless, there are guidelines, which are often strictly followed by the contractor to avoid liability. One of the guidelines is that casual labour should not be appointed for regular open line work and should be paid as

²¹ Indian Railways, *Standard Rules of Contract*, July 2014 available at <http://www.indianrailways.gov.in/railwayboard/uploads/directorate/civil_engg/General_Conditions_of_Contract_July_2014_22_07_14.pdf> last accessed on 10.04.2016.

²² Para 30 & 36-B of the Employees Provident Fund Scheme, 1952; Para 3 & 4 of Employees' Pension Scheme, 1995; and Para 7 & 8 of Employees Deposit-linked Insurance Scheme, 1976 as modified or specified in the Contract.

per the local rates, where local rates are not available, at the rate of 1/30th of the minimum of scale of pay plus dearness allowance thereon. This principle is also applied to the casual labourers governed by the Minimum Wages Act, 1948.

There exists an inequality in wages²³ between the casual workers and regular employees despite their share of involvement which presents a negative correlation coefficient in the economy. There can be transformation through labour reforms which in itself would need overhauling steps from the administration. However, in the Indian Railways the Productivity-linked Bonus Scheme is applicable to casual labourers having temporary status.²⁴ This scheme was introduced in 1979 to provide substantial motivation towards achieving higher productivity by way of increased output by the employees and improved quality of service.²⁵

4. NATIONAL PENSION SCHEME- SCOPE OF APPLICABILITY TO THE CASUAL LABOUR IN THE INDIAN RAILWAYS:

Pension in the Railways is allocated through schemes. These schemes, depending on their nature and ratio of contribution, can be categorised as defined contribution scheme, defined benefit pension scheme or contributory pension scheme. The most recently introduced scheme is the National Pension Scheme. This scheme is a defined contribution

²³ Such inequality is depended on numerous grounds- nature of work, education of the workers, involvement and enterprise requirements, and etcetera.

²⁴ This scheme is applicable only when the casual labourer has been substituted with not less than 120 days of continuous service and casual labours on daily wages employed in projects and have completed 180 days of continuous service.

²⁵ This scheme is also applicable to all the Railways employees.

based pension scheme²⁶ introduced by the Government of India in 2004 with the intent to provide old-age income, reasonable returns in the long run depending on the market rates and to extend security through pension to all the citizens. It is applicable to all the employees of the Central Government, including Central autonomous bodies. But the Armed Forces are expressly excluded from the scheme. It was in the exercise of the Government's executive power that the scheme was adopted and the principle of accumulation of the savings of the subscriber against a unique number during his/her tenure of service and the amount is given to the person when he/she superannuates. Departmental transfers or an interstate movement of the employees under the scope and purview of this scheme does not affect the savings in any manner whatsoever because the unique and portable account number can be transferred and inter-sector shifting is allowed for the beneficial use of the subscriber.

The pension scheme, preceding the National Pension Scheme, was applicable to the employees of the Indian Railways appointed before 01.01.2004 and was a Defined Benefit Pension System based on the last drawn pay of the employee unlike the National Pension Scheme, which is a cumulative contribution of the employer and the employee to the building of pension wealth, which is payable on superannuation in annuity or by a lump sum withdrawal. In the defined benefits scheme, the employer usually promises or at least intends to promise the payment of a specific amount of benefit on retirement. Such an amount would be a fixed weekly or an annual amount of pension or an amount depending upon the number of years spent by the particular employee in service.²⁷ This gradually led way to the system of pay and service combined pension- a trend before the introduction of National Pension

²⁶ Contributions from the subscribers are collected over a period of time in an account number specifically maintained for the subscriber and this particular amount is available to the subscriber on superannuation as pension.

²⁷ H. Sadhak, *Does Not India need a Default Option in the New Pension System?*, Economic and Political Weekly, Vol. 44, No. 46 (November 14- 20, 2009), pp. 59, 61-68 available at <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25663791> accessed on 04.03.2016.

Scheme wherein the fraction or percentage of pay taken (often the amount drawn as salary) was multiplied by the number of years completed in service. The benefit to be paid was fixed despite the fact that the amount last drawn as pay remains uncertain.

General Provident Fund also provided for the pension of these Central government employees prior to the National Pension Scheme. After the completion of one year of continuous service, it was compulsory for the employee to enrol himself/herself with the fund scheme and a General Provident Fund account number was allotted. The provident fund amount was directly deducted from the pay bill of the employee and the minimum subscription ranged from 6% to 12% of the basic pay of the employee. The maximum amount would not exceed the amount paid to the employee and depended on the employer to allow adjustment of the amount. There was provision of nomination of a person from his/her family as per the prescribed format and a process of cancellation of the same with the employer. The General Provident Fund amount could be withdrawn by the employee in certain pre-specified conditions. Some of these conditions are:

1. Payment of expenses incurred in relation to treatment of prolonged illness of the applicant or illness of any dependant of the employee;
2. Payment if overseas passage for education or health of the employee or his/her dependant;
3. Payment of obligatory expenses appropriate to the employee's status or customary usage incurred in marriages, funerals or other ceremonial acts by the employee or by his/her dependants.

There was also a provision for non-refundable advance which could be withdrawn from the General Provident Fund account. But such an advance was sanctioned by the employer only after the employee completed 15 years of continuous service or within 10 years before the date of retirement of the employee, whichever was earlier. The final withdrawal of the amount could be done on either retirement or death of the employee.

But the switch from a defined benefit pension scheme to a defined contribution pension scheme is not usually straightforward or smooth. The transition phase discloses the nuances which differ from each department and enterprise depending on its structure and economic distribution. National Pension Scheme restructured the pension system and collated procedures for a more regulated and organised disbursement of the pension amount. As per the National Pension Scheme, employees are provided with a unique number and a Central Record Keeping Agency along with fund managers prescribes schemes to the employees depending on the income instruments and equities. This allows the employees their freedom of choice and implementation of the schemes for maximum output at the desired age of retirement. Every individual who joins the scheme is provided with a unique Permanent Retirement Account Number. This scheme is applicable to all the Central Government services except for the Armed Forces from 1st January 2004. The pension scheme is also formulated as an investment opportunity for the employees. The employees will be allotted a portable account with easy accessibility through internet, choice of funds, service providers, freedom to switch from one plan to another, flexibility to change the amount and frequency of contribution, transparent regulation and monitoring, effective grievance management and low cost of operations . These key features would attract and ensure allegiance to the scheme. The scheme is two-tiered and while Tier I of the contribution to the scheme is compulsory for every central government employee joining service on or after 01.01.2004, Tier II is optional

and can be paid at the discretion of the government servants.²⁸ The amount deposited in Tier I is in a 'frozen state,' i.e., it cannot be withdrawn and that deposited in Tier II is kept in a separate account and can be withdrawn by the employee as and when he/she deems fit and proper. In the system, a government servant can exit from service at or after the age of 60 years from the Tier I of the scheme and it will then be mandatory for him/her to invest 40% of the total amount of pension accumulated over years to purchase an annuity. Such an annuity has to be from Insurance Regulatory Development Authority regulated Life Insurance Companies and ensure the security of the employee and his/her dependants for lifetime. The remaining amount would be given to the employee and he/she would be free to use the same in the manner he/she thinks proper. Voluntary retirement does not in any way affect the membership of the employee in the scheme but the percentage to be spent in the purchase of annuity would be mandated at 80% of the total accumulated pension wealth.

But the National Pension scheme²⁹ is not applicable to the contractual workers or the casual workers associated with the Indian Railways. Neither was the scope of provident fund or the earlier pension scheme applicable.

5. CONCLUSION:

Casual labourers in the Indian Railways are entrusted with the herculean task of sorts but the benefit for them when circulated through the contractors diffuses in the process of discharge in between the intermediate and ultimate tiers. The contractual labourers, as the unorganised sector, cannot be included in the mainstream but their social security should be

²⁸ In the scheme of two tiers, in Tier I the government servant makes a contribution of 10% of his basic pay in the salary plus the dearness allowance. This will be deducted from his salary bill every month and the government will make a contribution of equal sum of money for the employees who are government employees.

²⁹ The scheme is for the Railway employees, specifically for those appointed on or after 01.01.2004.

considered seriously. To start with, the retirement benefits can be ensured through the newly introduced pension scheme. Structured and organised, in terms of liability and regulation, National Pension Scheme, as the defined contribution scheme, can be smoothly extended to the casual labourers in Indian Railways to provide them the sense of social security in the form of retirement benefits,³⁰ unlike the General Provident Fund and the defined benefit scheme. It can be considered as a good supplement for the society which is looking forward to provisions for retirement benefits to those who actually contribute as a major stakeholder in the workforce in the enterprise.

But the transition from a defined benefit pension scheme to a defined benefit contribution scheme is not a very well understood and well adapted concept in India in the background that pension is considered with an expectation of the rank and the file. In the practical scenario where the contributions are to be made by the employer, the Indian Railways will be burdened with an extra responsibility to ensure retirement benefits of the casual labourers and the burden will in practical application and hypothesis shift from the independent contractors to the Railways which will be an additional responsibility to be taken care of. However, if the Railway introduces the scheme through the contractors as a standard condition of work and incorporates the same in the rule of contracts, the casual labourers' life post-retirement will be significantly secured despite the burden of sharing the responsibility

³⁰ On similar lines of thought, the Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA) has voluntarily made the scheme available to all citizens. This is an opportunity to avail the benefits of the National Pension Scheme from 1st May 2009. This will provide an avenue to citizens to save for their old age and reduce dependency on others. The scope is extended to all sections of the society. To bring the corporate entities within the ambit of the scheme, the PFRDA has initiated the "*NPS- Corporate Sector Model*". The Public Sector Undertakings are within the scope of this corporate model and this pension scheme can be availed by the employees.

of ensuring such security. However, it will burden the employer with a mammoth responsibility of providing for a large chunk of employers despite their casual employment.

The Railways can regulate that the payments made as contributions to the social security scheme reach the ultimate beneficiary through the transparent mechanisms of the National Pension Scheme. The scope of interference of the contractors will be reduced with least deprivation of the casual labourers. Their account numbers and details of National Pension Scheme as account holders will be available with the principal employers and the regulator for unbiased disbursement of their rightly earned finances. Therefore, it can be rightly concluded that the Scheme is a way forward to ensure social security in terms of retirement benefits of the casual labourers employed with the Indian Railways.