

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT
DEPARTMENT OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2030
TO BE ANSWERED ON 20/12/2023

NATIONAL SOCIAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME

2030 SHRI AYODHYA RAMI REDDY ALLA:

Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government plan to ensure that the National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP) remains responsive to the changing socio-economic landscape, with mechanisms in place for periodic reviews and updates to align with evolving needs, if so, the details thereof; and
- (b) the details of strategies in place to effectively target and reach marginalized and vulnerable populations, ensuring that the benefits of the National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP) are equitably distributed across diverse socio-economic groups?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT
(SADHVI NIRANJAN JYOTI)

(a) and (b) National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP) is a social security programme for the most vulnerable persons of our society living Below Poverty Line (BPL), both in rural and urban areas, irrespective of social categories. The State/ UT-wise cap of beneficiaries have been fixed based on the criteria of population and poverty ratio in the States/ UTs.

Under the programme, the old aged, widows, and disabled persons belonging to BPL and fulfilling eligibility criteria prescribed in the NSAP guidelines, are provided financial assistance, in the form of pension, ranging from Rs.200/- to Rs.500/- p.m. and in the case of death of the breadwinner of such family, a lump sum assistance of Rs.20,000/- is given to the bereaved family. The programme caters around 3 crore BPL beneficiaries at present.

States/UTs are also encouraged to provide top-ups over and above the central assistance. Presently, States/UTs are adding top-ups ranging from Rs.50 to Rs. 3200 per month per beneficiary under the pension schemes of NSAP. As a result, NSAP pensioners are getting monthly pension of, on an average, Rs.1000 in several States/ UTs. Further, States / UTs have the option to give assistance from their own resources in case there are more deserving persons. As per available information, States/ UTs are covering around 5 crore additional beneficiaries through State run pension schemes.

NSAP schemes have been reviewed and revamped from time to time to make it responsive to the changing socio-economic landscape and align it with the evolving needs. After the NSAP schemes came into effect on 15th August, 1995, it was revised in 2000, 2007, 2009, 2011 and 2012.

While considering the continuation of NSAP schemes for the 15th Finance Commission cycle (2021-26), the proposal of scaling up the schemes (both horizontally and vertically) was considered by the Government. However, considering the available financial space, the Government has approved continuation of NSAP schemes in its present form.

With a view to ensure that NSAP schemes are uniformly and effectively implemented across the country, the present Govt. has taken several initiatives viz. digitization of beneficiaries data to eliminate inclusion/exclusion errors, development of NSAP-Pension Payment System (NSAP-PPS) to facilitate end to end transaction from originating point to disbursement point, transfer of benefits in Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT)/Aadhaar Payment Bridge (APB) mode, seeding of authenticated Aadhaar data of beneficiaries, fund disbursement through Public Financial Management System (PFMS), piloting social audit, etc.
