

National Social Assistance Programme

Introduction

The National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP) which came into effect from 15th August, 1995, is a 100 % Centrally Sponsored Programme. It has three components namely, National Old Age Pension Scheme (NOAPS), National Family Benefit Scheme (NFBS) and National Maternity Benefit Scheme (NMBS). The NMBS has since been transferred to the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare w.e.f. 1-4-2001. The NSAP aims at providing social security in case of old age, death of primary breadwinner and



National Old Age Pension Scheme benefits the old and the destitute

maternity. The main objectives and features of the two schemes, NOAPS and NFBS are given below:

Objectives

The Programme aims at ensuring a minimum national standard of social assistance in addition to the benefit that States are already providing. The Central assistance is not to displace expenditure by States on social protection schemes. However, the States/UTs are free to expand their own coverage of social assistance whenever they wish to do so.

Eligibility and Admissibility Criteria for National Old Age Pension Scheme (NOAPS)

Under the Scheme, Central assistance is available as per the following criteria:

- Age of the applicant (male or female) is 65 years or above.
- The applicant is destitute in the sense of having little or no regular means of subsistence from his/her own sources of income or through support from family members or other sources. In order to determine destitution, the criteria if any, currently in force in the States/UTs may also be followed.

- The amount of Old Age Pension is Rs. 75/-per month per beneficiary for the purpose of claiming Central assistance.

National Family Benefit Scheme (NFBS)

Central assistance under the Scheme is available on the following conditions:-

- The death of such primary breadwinner occurs while he or she is more than 18 years and less than 65 years of age.
- The primary breadwinner shall be a member whose earnings contribute substantially to the household income.
- The bereaved household qualifies as one below the poverty line according to the criteria prescribed by the Government of India.
- The amount of benefit is Rs. 10,000/- in the case of death of primary breadwinner due to natural or accidental cause and is paid to the member of the household of the deceased who, after local inquiry, is determined to be the head of the household.

Role of Panchayats/Municipalities

The Gram Panchayats/Municipalities are expected to play an active role in the

identification of beneficiaries under the two schemes. The State Government may communicate targets for NOAPS and NFBS to the Gram Panchayats/Municipalities so that identification can take place in the Gram Sabhas by the Gram Panchayats and in neighbourhood mohalla committees by the Municipalities in line with these targets. Central assistance under NOAPS and NFBS should preferably be disbursed in public meetings, such as Gram Sabha meetings in the rural areas, and neighbourhood/mohalla committees in urban areas. The Panchayats/Municipalities are responsible for disseminating information about NSAP and its monitoring.

Release of Grants

The grants are released directly to the Districts. As per the procedure for release of central assistance, the first instalment is released in the beginning of the financial year, on adhoc basis, to those districts who have claimed second instalment in the previous year. In case of districts who do not claim second instalment of the previous year, the first instalment in the next year is released upon their fulfilling all the conditions that would have made them eligible for release of second instalment in the previous year. The second instalment is released at the request of the districts, subject to utilization of 60% of the available funds which include opening balance for the year and the amount received during the year. The proposal should be accompanied

by Audit Report and Utilisation Certificate for the previous year. Deductions are also made in the admissible grant for the districts, if the proposals are received after 31st December every year, and also if the opening balance exceeds 15% of the allocation for the districts during the previous year.

Budget Allocation 2001-2002 and Physical Achievements

During the year 2001-2002, the amount allocated under NSAP is Rs.635 crores. The Scheme-wise budgetary allocation, the amount released by the Ministry to the Districts and achievement reported upto 31/01/2002 are as under:-

| Scheme | Financial (Rs. in Crores) | | Physical (Beneficiaries in lakhs) | |
|---|-------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------|
| | Budgetary Allocation | Release made | Target Based on BE | Achievement |
| NOAPS | 465.00 | 371.39 | 49.68 | 46.34 |
| NFBS | 167.90 | 128.07 | 1.61 | 1.14 |
| Direction and Administration | 2.10 | 0.28 (upto Nov.01) | | |
| Total | 635.00 | 499.74 | 51.29 | 47.48 |

Further details of physical and financial progress under the two Schemes are given in the Annexure XIII and XIV.