

Regarding the woes of the Employees` Pension Scheme

SHRI SHAHU SHAHAJI CHHATRAPATI (KOLHAPUR): Madam Chairperson, I would like to bring to your notice the woes of the Employees' Pension Scheme, 1995 (EPS-95).

There are 75 lakh pensioners associated with the EPS-95 scheme. They reside in every corner of India. Just a few days back, there was an ongoing agitation at Jantar Mantar. I visited that place. Having seen and heard the distressing plight of the pensioners, I would like to bring to your notice a serious situation.

The present members of this Fund are employees of the Central and State Government sector and private sector undertakings. The members enrolled are approximately 30 crores. The statistics state that the corpus in the pension fund has increased from Rs. 3,93,000 crores in 2017-18 to Rs. 7,80,000 crores in 2022-23.

Madam Chairperson, will the Government be pleased to state, whether the Government is aware of the inflation and rising cost, and the minimum pension needed to survive in 2024? I would also like to know whether the Government is aware of the Directive Principles of State Policy of the Constitution of India which places the responsibility on it to help the elderly to lead a respectable life.

Madam Chairperson, the pension is not protected against inflation. Furthermore, it has not increased by a single rupee in the last ten years. The price of a household gas cylinder is itself Rs. 1,200. So, in such circumstances, how do the pensioners, who are drawing an average of Rs. 1,451, continue to live? I do not understand this. It is shocking to note the Government's indifference to the crumbling lives of the pensioners who are naturally of old age.

Article 41 of the Constitution provides for old-age pension schemes and therefore, it not only covers the elderly pensioners, but also, the sick and the disabled.