

Regarding need to increase the assistance amount under National Social Assistance Programme Scheme-Laid

SHRI MUKESHKUMAR CHANDRAKAANT DALAL (SURAT): The National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP) is a centrally sponsored scheme that caters to the needs of 3.09 crore BPL beneficiaries. Currently, under this scheme, eligible elderly individuals, widows, and persons with disabilities living below the poverty line receive a monthly pension ranging from ₹200 to ₹500. Since the inception of this programme, its process and system have undergone several changes. However, the last increase in the assistance amount was made in 2012. Apart from central assistance, states and union territories provide additional financial aid ranging from ₹50 to ₹3,200 per beneficiary per month under the NSAP pension schemes. In many states, beneficiaries receive a monthly pension of ₹1,000, but this amount remains inadequate for sustenance, raising serious concerns. Dr. Mihir Shah Committee (2012), Sumit Bose Committee (2016), NITI Aayog (2020), and the Rural Development Department's evaluation study (2021) have also recommended an increase in pension amounts. I urge the Government to increase the assistance amount under all NSAP schemes and raise the pension to ₹2,000 per month, ensuring that the poor and elderly sections of society receive adequate financial support for a dignified life.