

National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP)

August 9, 2023 • vajiramandravi.com



What's in today's article?

- **Why in News?**
- **What is the NSAP?**
- **News Summary Regarding CAG's Audit of the NSAP**

Why in News?

- The Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD) diverted funds from the National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP) for publicising some of its other schemes.
- This was highlighted by the Comptroller and Auditor General of India's (CAG) performance audit of the NSAP from 2017-18 to 2020-21, tabled in the Lok Sabha recently.

What is the NSAP?

- **Introduction:**

- It was launched in **1995** as a **Centrally Sponsored Scheme** of the MoRD, Government of India.
- **It provides financial assistance** [to Below Poverty Line (BPL) individuals] to the elderly, widows and persons with disabilities and bereaved families on death of primary breadwinner, in the form of **social pensions**.
- It represents a significant step towards the fulfillment of the **Directive Principles in Article 41 of the Indian Constitution**.
- **Article 41** directs the State to provide public assistance to its citizens in case of unemployment, old age, sickness, disablement, etc., within the limit of its economic capacity and development.

- **Components of NSAP:**

- **At its inception**, NSAP had three components namely National Old Age Pension Scheme (NOAPS), National Family Benefit Scheme (NFBS) and National Maternity Benefit Scheme (NMBS).
- The National Maternity Benefit Scheme (NMBS) was subsequently transferred to the **Ministry of Health and Family Welfare** in 2001.
- **Presently**, NSAP comprises of five schemes:
 - Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme (IGNOAPS),
 - Indira Gandhi National Widow Pension Scheme (IGNWPS launched in 2009),
 - Indira Gandhi National Disability Pension Scheme (IGNDPS launched in 2009),
 - National Family Benefit Scheme (NFBS) and
 - Annapurna (launched in 2000).

- **Eligibility and scale of assistance:**

- **IGNOAPS:** The eligible age for IGNOAPS is 60 years. The pension is Rs 200 per month for persons between 60 – 79 years. For persons who are 80 years and above the pension is Rs 500/ – pm.
- **IGNWPS:** The eligible age is 40 years and the pension is Rs 300 pm. After attaining the age of 80 years, the beneficiary will get Rs 500/ – pm.
- **IGNDPS:** The eligible age for the pensioner is 18 years and above and the disability level has to be 80% (Dwarfs are eligible). The amount is Rs 300 pm and after attaining the age of 80 years Rs 500/ – pm.
- **NFBS:** Rs 20000/ – will be given as a lump sum assistance to the bereaved household in the event of death of the bread – winner.
- **Annapurna Scheme:** 10 kgs of food grains (wheat or rice) is given per month per beneficiary. The scheme provides food security for those eligible old aged persons who are not covered by the IGNOAPS.

- **Performance of the NSAP:**

- According to the CAG report, **about 4.65 crore beneficiaries** availed the old age, widow, disability pensions and family benefit annually during 2017-21.
- **The Centre released Rs 8,608 crore per annum** on an average during 2017-21.
- **In addition**, states and UTs have also allocated Rs 27,393 crore per year on an average during the said period for pension and family benefit.

News Summary Regarding CAG's Audit of the NSAP:

- **The MoRD in 2017** decided to campaign through hoardings in states and UTs for giving due publicity to all programmes/schemes of the ministry.
 - The funds for the said campaign were stated to be available under **National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme** and were approved by the competent authority to be incurred under the same head.
 - However, **the audit observed** that funds were actually incurred from social security welfare-NSAP schemes.
 - Hence, **planned IEC (Information, Education and Communication) activities under NSAP** were not undertaken as envisaged and funds of Rs 2.83 crore were diverted for campaigning in respect of other schemes of the ministry.
 - **The MoRD**, in its reply, said the matter had been taken up with the IEC division of the department.
 - The CAG also reported **diversion of Rs 57.45 crore across six states/UTs** – Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, J&K, Odisha, Goa and Bihar.
 - **For instance**, in Rajasthan, NFBS funds were diverted for payment of insurance premium to LIC for BPL and Aastha Card holders under Pannadhay Jeevan Amrit Yojana (Aam Aadmi Beema Yojana).
-

Q1) What are Centrally Sponsored Schemes?

Centrally Sponsored Schemes are schemes that are implemented by state governments of India but are largely funded by the Central Government with a defined State Government share. Some examples are MGNREGA, PM Gram Sadak Yojana, etc.

Q2) What is DPSP in the Constitution of India?

Part IV of the Constitution of India (Article 36–51) contains the Directive Principles of State Policy (DPSP). These are not enforceable by any court, but the principles laid down therein are considered 'Fundamental' in the governance of the country.

Source: [CAG: Govt diverted funds of pension schemes for publicity of other schemes](https://www.vajiramandravi.com/current-affairs/national-social-assistance-programme-nsap/)

Source: <https://www.vajiramandravi.com/current-affairs/national-social-assistance-programme-nsap/>

© Vajiram & Ravi. For personal use only.