

# **Chapter-I**

## **Introduction**



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The Directive Principles of the State Policy in the Constitution of India enjoin upon the State to undertake welfare measures within its means, targeting the poor and destitute in particular. Article 41 of the Constitution of India directs the State to provide public assistance to its citizens in case of unemployment, old age, sickness and disablement within the limit of the State's economic capacity. 'Social Security' is covered under entry No. 23 and 24 of the concurrent list under the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution of India.

#### **1.1 Overview of Social Security Pension Schemes in Himachal Pradesh**

Government of India (GoI) launched (August 1995) the National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP) as a fully funded Centrally Sponsored Scheme targeting the destitutes. In the year 2007 and 2009, the programme was expanded to cover all eligible persons Below Poverty Line (BPL) and more vulnerable groups such as widows and disabled persons. NSAP includes five sub-schemes as its components. Of these, three are pension schemes (i) Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme (IGNOAPS), (ii) Indira Gandhi National Widow Pension Scheme (IGNWPS), and (iii) Indira Gandhi National Disability Pension Scheme (IGNDPS). The other two sub-schemes (i) National Family Benefit Scheme<sup>1</sup> and (ii) Annapurna scheme<sup>2</sup> are not pension schemes.

Two State sponsored social security pension schemes namely Old Age Pension and Disability Relief Allowance were being implemented in the State since November 1971. Subsequently, in April 1986, April 1994 and April 2017 three more social security pension schemes namely Widow / Divorced / Single Women Pension Scheme, Rehabilitation Allowance to Lepers and Pension for Transgender were launched in Himachal Pradesh.

Thus, Himachal Pradesh is implementing eight social security pension schemes (GoI schemes: three and State schemes: five). These schemes are being implemented by the Empowerment of Scheduled Castes, Other Backward Classes, Minorities Affairs and the Specially Abled (ESOMSA) Directorate. According to the State Government, these schemes have been onboarded on (Direct Benefit Transfer) DBT platform for delivery of benefits.

#### **1.2 Organizational set up**

At the Central level, Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD) exercises overall control over implementation of the NSAP. The responsibility of implementation of all pension schemes including those under NSAP in the State is vested with the Empowerment of Scheduled Castes, Other Backward Classes, Minorities Affairs and the Specially Abled (ESOMSA) Directorate. The ESOMSA Directorate functions under the overall administrative control of the Additional Chief Secretary (Social Justice and Empowerment) to the Government of Himachal Pradesh. The Director, ESOMSA is assisted by two Joint Directors, one Assistant Controller (Finance & Accounts) and one (District Welfare Officer) DWO at the Directorate level and 12 DWOs at district level. DWOs at district level implement various schemes with the help of (Tehsil Welfare

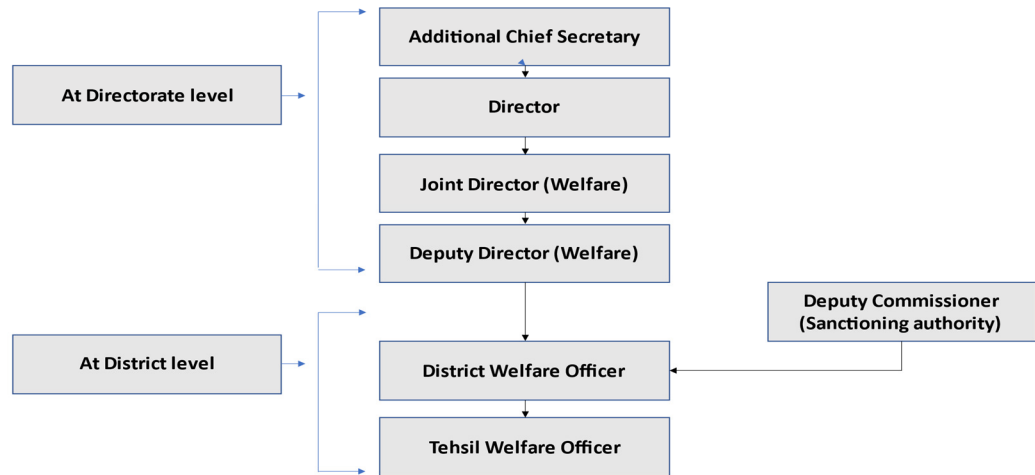
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<sup>1</sup> A one-time assistance to the bereaved family in the event of death of the breadwinner.

<sup>2</sup> Food security to the eligible old aged persons who remained uncovered under IGNOAPS.

Officers) TWOs, who function at tehsil level. Organizational structure of the Directorate is shown below:

## Organizational Structure



### 1.3 Eligibility criteria for Social Security Pension Schemes

Eligibility criteria for various pension schemes as of March 2021, as per NSAP guidelines, 2014 (revised) and Himachal Pradesh Social Security Pension Rules, 2010, and scale of assistance as of March 2021 are given in **Table-1.1** below:

**Table-1.1: Eligibility criteria and scale of assistance under various social security pension schemes in Himachal Pradesh as of March 2021**

Scheme	Eligibility	Scale of assistance as of March 2021
Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme (IGNOAPS)	Category – BPL Eligible age – 60 years and above (Persons with age more than 80 years are eligible for enhanced pension)	60 – 69 years -- ₹ 850 (GoI share - ₹ 200) 70 – 79 years -- ₹ 1500 (GoI share - ₹ 200) 80 years and above -- ₹ 1500 (GoI share - ₹ 500)
Indira Gandhi National Widow Pension Scheme (IGNWPS)	Category – BPL Eligible age – 40 years and above	₹ 1000 (GoI share - ₹ 300) 80 years and above -- ₹ 1500 (GoI share - ₹ 500)
Indira Gandhi National Disability Pension Scheme (IGNDPS)	Category – BPL Eligible age – 18 years and above Disability - severe disability i.e. 80 per cent or more as per section 56 (4) of Persons with Disability Act, 1995	₹ 1500 (GoI share - ₹ 300) 80 years and above -- ₹ 1500 (GoI share - ₹ 500)
Old Age Pension Scheme (State scheme)	Eligible age – 60 years and above Income criteria – family income should not be more than ₹ 35,000 per annum (Persons with age more than 70 years are eligible for enhanced pension irrespective of income criteria)	60 – 69 years -- ₹ 850 70 years and above -- ₹ 1500

Pension Scheme for Widow / Divorced / Single Women (State scheme)	Eligible age – 45 years for single women and no age bar for widow / divorced women Income criteria – family income should not be more than ₹ 35,000 per annum	₹ 1000 70 years and above -- ₹ 1500
Disability Relief Allowance (State scheme)	Income criteria – family income should not be more than ₹ 35,000 per annum Disability – 40 per cent and above (Persons with more than 70 per cent disability are eligible for enhanced pension irrespective of income criteria)	40 to 69 per cent disability -- ₹ 1000 70 per cent or above disability -- ₹ 1500
Rehabilitation Allowance to Lepers (State scheme)	Eligible age – No age bar Income criteria – No income criteria	₹ 850
Pension for Transgender (State scheme)	Eligible age – No age bar Income criteria – No income criteria (Medical certificate required from State / district level medical board)	₹ 850

Scale of assistance under various social security pension schemes since inception is detailed in **Appendix-1**. Targets of coverage under various schemes are fixed by the State Government every year on the basis of number of applicants pending for sanction of pension in the previous quarter and availability of funds. Scheme-wise target and coverage of beneficiaries under above mentioned eight schemes as of March 2021 is detailed in **Table-1.2** below:

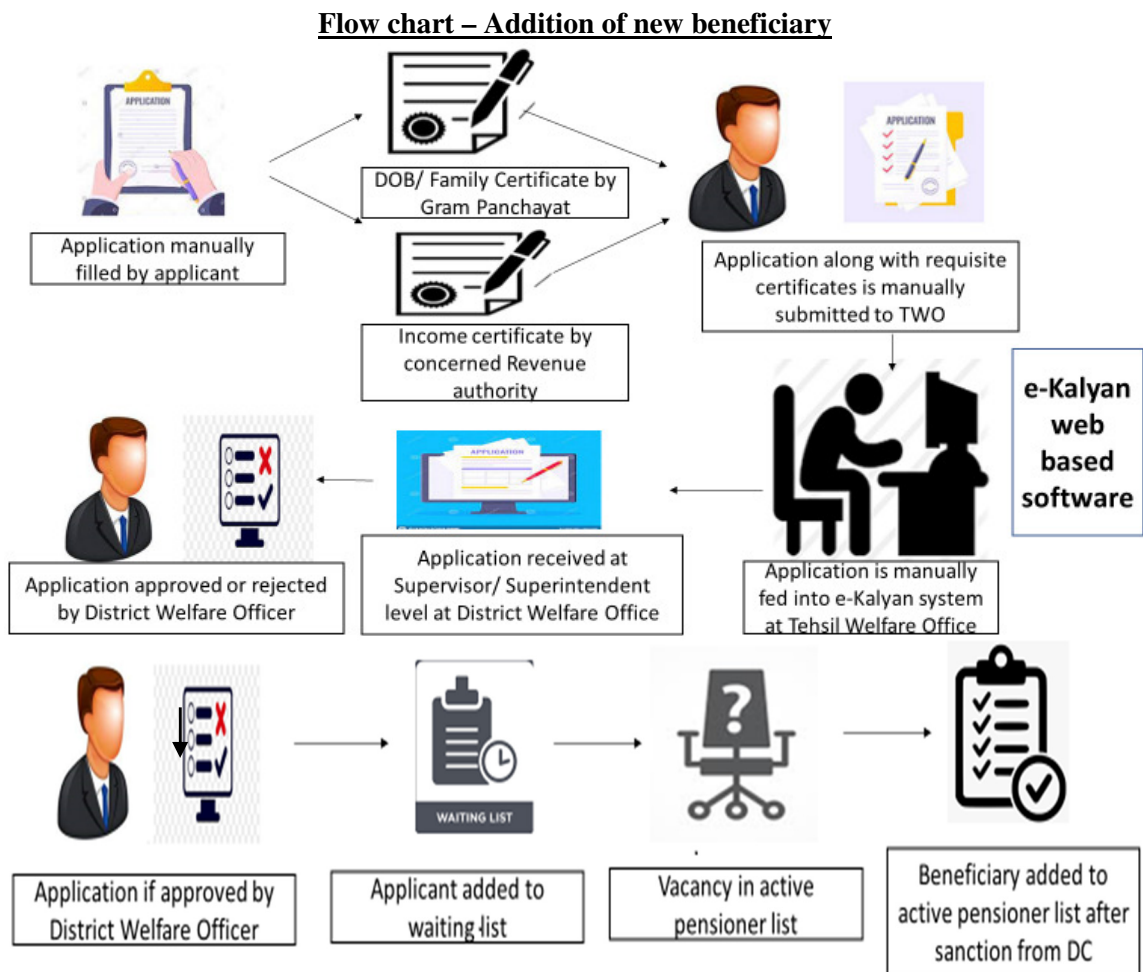
**Table-1.2: Scheme-wise target and coverage of beneficiaries under social security pension schemes in Himachal Pradesh as of March 2021**

Name of scheme	Target	Coverage for the quarter January-March 2021 (Active beneficiaries)
Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme	100722	98601
Indira Gandhi National Widow Pension Scheme	24008	23715
Indira Gandhi National Disability Pension Scheme	1118	1080
Old age pension scheme	290194	285588
Pension Scheme for Widow / Divorced / Single Women	96903	95970
Disability Relief Allowance	63027	62499
Rehabilitation Allowance to Lepers	1482	1001
Pension for Transgender	150	03
<b>Total:</b>	<b>577604</b>	<b>568457</b>

#### 1.4 Identification of beneficiaries

The beneficiaries are identified by the gram panchayats (GPs) / municipalities in gram / ward sabha meetings and applications of the prospective beneficiaries are submitted / sent to the Tehsil Welfare Officer (TWO) / District Welfare Officer (DWO) for processing. The applications are verified by departmental functionaries in offices of the TWO / DWO to check for eligibility. After verification of documents, the details of eligible applicants are uploaded on a software / system called **e-Kalyan**. The software was developed by

National Informatics Centre (NIC) and made functional in October 2008 as a client-server software (hosted on individual computer(s) of each DWO without access to network). In October 2020, the e-Kalyan software was modified into an integrated web-based application (application is hosted on the internet; user access is provided to departmental functionaries at various levels in Tehsil and District Welfare Offices). Once the applicant details are entered into e-Kalyan, applicant is added to waiting list after scrutiny and approval by DWO. Upon creation of vacancy, the applicant is added to active pensioner list. The software is programmed to fix priority of the applicants automatically on the basis of criteria fixed by State Government (**Appendix-2**). The Social Security Pension is sanctioned by the concerned Deputy Commissioner (DC) and other designated officer to specific areas. The process of identification, approval and sanction of social security pension is depicted below:



### 1.5 Process and Mode of Disbursement

After sanction of pension, the pension is disbursed to the beneficiaries on quarterly basis (on half yearly basis in tribal areas of the State). The pension is disbursed directly into postal / bank savings accounts of the beneficiaries. The State Government has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on 1 June 2017 with the Department of Posts according to which disbursement of social security pension is to be made into the postal savings account of the beneficiaries. Further, postal authorities are to ensure doorstep delivery of pension to all pensioners aged 80 years and above or with disability above 70 per cent. Also, the field functionaries of the postal department shall upon physical verification or otherwise inform department about remarriage of widow beneficiaries,

death of pensioner, shifting of beneficiary to other place, etc. For these services, commission of 1.5 *per cent* of the actual pension disbursed is paid to the postal authorities. No such arrangement has been made with the banking system.

Payment through Public Financial Management System (PFMS) had been started for schemes under NSAP only, from October 2020 onwards.

In respect of NSAP schemes, list of beneficiaries extracted from the e-Kalyan is converted manually into compatible mode with PFMS and payment is pushed into the accounts of the beneficiaries from scheme wise nodal bank accounts of the Directorate through PFMS after validation of account numbers of beneficiaries. However, there is no linkage between NSAP portal with e-Kalyan and disbursement module of social security pension schemes and acknowledgment push (confirmation of depositing of benefit in beneficiary account) in the e-Kalyan is not automated.

For State schemes, funds are drawn from treasury by preparation of bills through IFMS and are credited in the bank account of the DWO. Thereafter funds are sent to the PO / Banks through cheque by the DWO for credit into the accounts of the beneficiaries as per list extracted from the e-Kalyan. However, there is no automation of interface between e-Kalyan, IFMS and accounts of the beneficiaries. Also, no acknowledgement regarding confirmation of transfer of benefits to eligible beneficiary accounts is automatically pushed back to e-Kalyan. The process of disbursement of pension (NSAP: 22 *per cent* and State schemes; 78 *per cent*) is depicted below:

