

Chapter-VIII
Human Resource Management
and Monitoring

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Human resource management and monitoring are important for ensuring smooth implementation of a scheme. It also ensures that system for scrutiny of applications, timely sanction and remittance of pension, etc., has been put in place and is functioning properly.

8.1 Staff position

To execute functions envisaged in the Himachal Pradesh Social Security Pension Rules, 2010 and NSAP (revised) guidelines, 2014 such as verification and processing of pension applications, inspections of beneficiaries, monitoring, etc., requisite staff strength is essential. Category-wise sanctioned strength and persons-in-position in respect of DWOs / TWOs and ministerial staff in the State is detailed below:

Table-8.1: Position of Staff Strength and Persons-in-Position

(In numbers)

Category of staff	Sanctioned Strength	Persons-in-Position	Shortfall
DWO	13	11	02 (15)
TWO	91	83	08 (09)
Ministerial staff ¹	192	117	75 (39)
Total	296	211	85 (29)

Source: Information supplied by the Department. Note: Figures in the parenthesis denotes percentage

It can be seen from the above that there was shortage of manpower in each category, hampering smooth implementation of social security pension schemes in the State as basic checks could not be exercised which resulted in receipt of incomplete application forms without requisite certificates, delays in processing of applications, variation in age of beneficiaries with actual records, selection of underage beneficiaries, disbursement of pension to expired beneficiaries, selection of non-BPL pensioners under NSAP schemes, extension of benefits to ineligible beneficiaries, etc.

DWO Mandi stated that adequate and trained staff as per number of pension cases should be deployed for smooth implementation of social security pension schemes.

8.2 e-Kalyan user manual and capacity building

e-Kalyan software had been developed by NIC for sanction and disbursement of social security pensions in Himachal Pradesh. The software is used by the departmental functionaries for processing of pension applications. For the purpose of using the software for the intended purpose, departmental functionaries should be aware of its utilities and functionalities and were required to be trained through user manual or special training for capacity building.

Audit noticed that training in respect of utilities and functionalities of the e-Kalyan software had not been imparted to the departmental functionaries for capacity building. Further, no user manual in this regard had been supplied to the departmental functionaries by the NIC for better understanding of the software utilities. In the absence of user manual and training to the user group, optimum utilization of the software was not ensured by the Department.

¹ Superintendent (Gr.-I), Superintendent (Gr.-II), Sr. Assistant, Statistical Assistant, Clerk, Steno, and Computer Operator

The DWOs concerned admitted the facts and stated that no special training for handling the pension work or functioning of e-Kalyan had been imparted to the concerned officials.

DWO (HQs) confirmed the facts and stated that the new web-based e-Kalyan software is an upgraded version of previous software with new features and officials are familiar with its workflow. It was further stated that the software is in developing phase, and user manual and training would be imparted through NIC for better understanding of the software, after the same will be completely developed. The reply is not acceptable as supply of user manual and training to the user group in the development phase would have helped them in understanding functionalities of the software for better implementation of the schemes and suggestions / comments of the user group would have been helpful in developing the software for its optimum utilization.

8.3 State and District Level Committees

As per para 6.1.2 of the NSAP guidelines (revised), 2014 State Level Committee headed by Chief Secretary and other members² was to be constituted. The Committee would be responsible for implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the programme and matters concerned therewith and to report to the GoI. State level committee should meet at least twice a year. Further as per para 3.6.1 of the guidelines, for effective implementation, review and evaluation of the schemes, district level committees are to be constituted by the State Government.

Audit observed that State level committee had not been constituted by the Department for NSAP. However, for monitoring of various schemes including social security pension schemes a State Level Committee (DISHA³) had been constituted by the Department of Rural Development under the Chairmanship of the Chief Minister. It was further noticed that district level welfare committees had been constituted at district levels for monitoring of all welfare schemes. However, record relating to follow up action taken on the recommendations of the committee had not been maintained by the Department, in the absence of which extent of effective monitoring could not be ascertained in Audit.

The Deputy Director (ESOMSA) stated that monitoring of social security pension schemes under NSAP and State schemes was being done through DISHA committee and District Level Welfare committees.

8.4 Vigilance and Monitoring Committees

Para 6.8 of the NSAP guidelines (revised), 2014 conceptualises Vigilance and Monitoring Committees at the State and District levels as a forum to review implementation of the programme.

Scrutiny of record showed that State and district level Vigilance and Monitoring committees as a forum to review implementation of NSAP programme had not been constituted. In the absence of Vigilance and Monitoring committees as envisaged, review of the NSAP programme was not ensured by the State Government.

² Secretaries of concerned departments (Finance, Rural Development, Panchayati Raj, Municipal Affairs, Social Welfare, Health, Revenue, Women & Child Development, etc.), two representatives of Bank / Post Office, Deputy Commissioners of four districts in rotation, four independent experts and representatives of Non-Government Organizations (NGOs)

³ District Development, Coordination and Monitoring Committee

The Deputy Director (ESOMSA) stated that monitoring of social security pension schemes was being done through DISHA committee and District Level Welfare committees. Reply is not acceptable as in the absence of vigilance and monitoring committees, effective review of the programme was not ensured.

8.5 Social Audit

Rule 6.10.1 and 6.10.2 of NSAP guideline states that social audit by the gram sabha / ward committees is essential in implementation and monitoring of the schemes. Social Audit under NSAP should be held at least once in every six months.

Test-check of selected DWOs showed that social audit mechanism for social security pensions schemes had not been established, as required under guidelines. In the absence of social audit, monitoring of the schemes at grass root level was not ensured by the Department.

Deputy Director (ESOMSA) stated that instructions for conduct of social audit had been issued to all DWOs. Test-checked DWOs stated that social audit had not been conducted however verification of pensioners was being done by the departmental authorities and gram sabha meetings were being attended by the departmental functionaries. The fact however remains that monitoring of schemes through representation of grass root level functionaries was not ensured in the absence of social audit. Secretaries of test-checked GPs also confirmed that social audit of pension schemes was not being done.

8.6 Grievance redressal mechanism

Para 6.9 of NSAP guidelines provides that the State Government should put in place a grievance redressal system at various levels and designate an officer for redressal of grievances. Timelines for dealing with grievances should be fixed and the complainant must be given a receipt, indicating timelines for redressal. The departmental functionaries must keep record of complaints received, action taken and outcome. The complainant must be informed in writing about the action taken.

Scrutiny of records of the Director, ESOMSA and test checked DWOs revealed that grievance redressal mechanism in respect of social security pension schemes had not been established. Details indicating receipt, disposal, and level of grievances had not been maintained at Directorate or DWO level. It was also noticed that the Department had not fixed any timelines for redressal of grievances related to social security pension schemes. In the absence of any mechanism, redressal of public grievances in a timely manner could not be ascertained in Audit.

In Mandi, a dedicated helpline number mechanism for redressal of complaints related to welfare schemes had been put in place; however, record in this regard had not been maintained.

The Deputy Director (ESOMSA) stated that grievances received through e-Samadhan, CM Sewa Sankalp, and Jan Manch programmes were being redressed accordingly. Complaints received by the DWOs / TOWs were being redressed as per rules by them. Reply is not acceptable as redressal mechanism with clear timelines and maintenance of related record had not been established. DWOs concerned admitted the facts.

Summary–

- *There was shortage of manpower in each category, hampering smooth functioning of social security pension schemes in the State.*
- *Training in respect of utilities and functionalities of the e-Kalyan software and user manual had not been provided to the officials dealing with implementation of social security pension schemes.*
- *Grievance redressal and social audit mechanism had not been established.*
- *Monitoring in the Department is ineffective due to which deficiencies like delay in sanctioning the pension, sanctioning / payment of duplicate pension, sanction of pension to ineligible persons, non-verification of pension disbursement, allotment of duplicate ID numbers, etc., were noticed in the implementation of the scheme.*

Recommendations - The State Government may consider:

- *To provide training to staff about utilities / functionalities of the e-Kalyan for effective implementation of social security pension schemes.*
- *Establishment of grievance redressal, monitoring, and social audit mechanism as envisaged in the guidelines.*