INTRODUCTION

1. The National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP) was included in the Central Budget for 1995-96. The details of the Programme have been worked out by a Committee under the Chairmanship of Secretary (Rural Development) in consultation with the representatives of State Governments. The Prime Minister, in his broadcast to the Nation on 28th July, 1995, has announced that the Programme will come into effect from 15th August, 1995.

2. This Guideline sets out the features of the NSAP, procedures for its implementation, the regulation and release of Central assistance to States and other matters relevant to the NSAP.

MAIN FEATURES AND OBJECTIVES OF THE PROGRAMME

3. The NSAP will include, for the time being, three benefits as its components, viz.,
   (i) National Old Age Pension Scheme (NOAPS)
   (ii) National Family Benefit Scheme (NFBS)
   (iii) National Maternity Benefit Scheme (NMBS).


5. NSAP is a social assistance programme for poor households and represents a significant step towards the fulfillment of the Directive Principles in Articles 41 and 42 of the Constitution recognizing the concurrent responsibility of the Central and State governments in the matter.

6. The NSAP is a Centrally Sponsored Programme under which 100 per cent Central assistance is extended to the States/UTs to provide the benefits in accordance with the norms, guidelines and conditions laid down by the Central Government.

7. In providing social assistance benefits to poor households in the case of old age, death of the breadwinner and maternity, the NSAP aims at ensuring minimum national standards, in addition to the benefits that the States are currently providing or might provide in future. The intention in providing 100 per cent Central assistance is to ensure that social protection to the beneficiaries everywhere in the country is uniformly available without interruption. Accordingly, it should be ensured that Central assistance does not displace States’ own expenditure in this respect and that the States/UTs may expand their own coverage of social assistance independently, wherever they wish to do so.

8. The NSAP provides opportunities for linking the social assistance package to schemes for poverty alleviation and the provision of basic needs. Specifically, old age pensions can be linked to medical care and other benefits for the old and the poor. Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP)/Nehru Rozgar Yojana (NRY) assistance may be provided in addition to family benefits for the families of poor households on the loss of breadwinner. Maternity assistance can be linked to maternal and child care and provision of better diet to pregnant mothers.

9. The NSAP shall be implemented by the Panchayats and Municipalities in the delivery of social assistance so as to make it responsive and cost-effective. In the process, the Panchayats and the Municipalities will be strengthened and it may be
possible for them to mobilize local resources for supplementing benefits from the Government. Panchayats and Municipalities will be encouraged to involve voluntary agencies to the extent possible in taking these benefits to the poor households for whom they are intended. The responsibility for implementation shall, however, rest on the Panchayats and the Municipalities.

10. The NSAP will be implemented in the States/UTs in accordance with the General Conditions applicable to all the components of the NSAP as well as the Specific Conditions applicable to each component. These are set out below:

**GENERAL CONDITIONS**

11. The scales of benefit under the NSAP would be as below:

   i. National Old Age Pension Scheme (NOAPS): Rs.75/- per month per beneficiary.
   
   ii. National Family Benefit Scheme (NFBS): Rs.10,000/- in case of death of the primary breadwinner to the bereaved household.
   
   iii. National Maternity Benefit Scheme (NMBS): Rs.500/- per pregnancy up to the first two live births.

12. Any scheme of social security operated in the State/UT with the Central funds provided for the National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP) will carry the name of the appropriate component of the NSAP such as, the National Old Age Pension Scheme, the National Family Benefit Scheme and the National Maternity Benefit Scheme.

13. The State/UT Governments will:

   i. Ensure wide and continuous publicity to the benefits under the NSAP and the procedures for claiming them through posters, brochures, media and other means. They shall ensure that application forms are widely available in local languages. Procedure for verification of applications should be prompt and simple. Sanctions should be expeditious. Delays and malpractices should be eliminated in disbursement. Adequate accounting arrangements should be instituted to enable proper post-audit. Every effort should be made through these means to ensure that only eligible persons obtain the benefits.

   ii. Subject to these and other guidelines issued by the Government of India from time to time, suitable procedures may be instituted for the implementation of the Programme and Government of India kept informed. They may also comply with any modifications that Government of India may indicate, based on review. In the procedures so instituted, the nodal authority for the NSAP as well as the sanctioning authority for each scheme under the NSAP at the District level will also be prescribed.

   iii. Intimate to the Government of India the number of beneficiaries under each component of the NSAP, district-wise. In order to facilitate smooth flow of funds to the implementing agencies and to ensure prompt disbursal of benefits under NSAP, the State/UT Governments would arrange for
opening of separate accounts at the District level for the release of funds by the Central Government under the NSAP, for the district.

iv. Constitute State level and District level Committees for the purposes laid down in these guidelines in the implementation of the NSAP.

The State Level Committee will be headed by the Chief Secretary and will include

1. concerned Secretaries such as Finance, Rural Development, Municipal Affairs, Health and Welfare;
2. a nominee of the Union Ministry of Rural Development; and
3. a nominee of the Ministry of Urban Development; and
4. independent experts and representatives of NGOs.

This Committee will be responsible for monitoring and evaluation of the Programme and matters concerned therewith and to report to the Government of India.

The District Level Committee (DLC) will be headed by the Collector and will include:

a. concerned Members of Parliament;

b. about one-third of the Members of the State Legislative Assembly from the district, as far as possible representing all political parties;

c. Chairperson of the Zilla Parishad and/or of its relevant Standing Committee;

d. Heads of the relevant Departments at the District level;

e. representatives from among chairpersons of Panchayat Samitis and Municipalities; and

f. independent experts and representatives of NGOs. The District Level Committee will be responsible for monitoring and evaluating the Programme and for matters concerned therewith.

14. The District Collector or any other officer given the nodal responsibility of implementing the NSAP at the District level, will be responsible for:

i. efficient implementation of the NSAP in accordance with these guidelines and the procedures instituted;

ii. giving wide publicity to the NSAP and its procedures;

iii. for convening meetings regularly of the District level Committee.

iv. for monitoring and compiling information about the implementation of the scheme and furnishing it to the prescribed authorities;

The District Collector/Sanctioning Authority, in turn, will be responsible for arranging the payment of the benefit to the beneficiaries. Disbursement of this benefit to individual beneficiaries may take place preferably in the gram Sabhas / neighbourhood committees as the case may be.
15. The Panchayats/Municipalities will be responsible for implementing the schemes in their respective areas of operation and for:
   i. Disseminating information about the NSAP and the procedures for obtaining benefits under it. In this task, they should encourage and involve the cooperation of voluntary organisations.
   ii. The Gram Panchayat/ Municipalities are expected to play an active role in the identification of beneficiaries under the three schemes. The State Government may thus communicate targets for NOAPS, NFBS and NMBS to the Gram Panchayats / Municipalities so that identification can take place in the gram Sabhas by the gram panchayats and in neighbourhood /mohalla committee by the Municipalities in line with these targets. Further, central assistance under NOAPS, NFBS and NMBS may also be preferable disbursed in public meetings, such as gram sabha meetings in the rural areas and neighbourhood /mohalla committees in urban areas.
   iii. Monitoring and following up delays, if any, in sanctions and disbursement.

16. All benefit payments should preferably be payable to the bank account of the beneficiary in the Post office Savings Bank or in a commercial bank or through Postal Money Order. However, in the case of NOAP and NMBS cash disbursement may be permitted provided the payment is made in public meetings preferably of Gram Sabha in village and in neighbourhood/ mohalla committees.

**NATIONAL OLD AGE PENSION SCHEME**

Specific conditions:

17. Central assistance under the NSAP will be available for old age pensions provided strictly according to the conditions in Paragraph 18 below. No other criteria will be valid.

18. For purposes of claiming Central assistance, the following criteria shall apply:-
   i. The age of the applicant (male or female) shall be 65 years or higher.
   ii. The applicant must be a destitute in the sense of having little or no regular means of subsistence from his/her own sources of income or through financial support from family members or other sources. In order to determine destitution, the criteria, if any, currently in force in the States/UTs Governments may also be followed. The Government of India reserve the right to review these criteria and suggest appropriate revised criteria.
   iii. The amount of the old age pension will be Rs.75 per month for purposes of claiming Central assistance.
iv. The ceiling on the total number of old age pensions for purposes of claiming Central assistance will be as specified for the States/UTs in Table I.

v. The benefit under NOAPS should be disbursed, in not less than two installments in a year and if possible the benefit may be disbursed in more installments as per directions of the State Government.

19. Village Panchayats and relevant Municipalities shall report every case of the death of a pensioner immediately after its occurrence to the appropriate sanctioning authority. The sanctioning authority shall ensure that payments are stopped thereafter.

20. The sanctioning authority shall have the right to stop/recover payments of any pension sanctioned on the basis of false or mistaken information about eligibility.

**NATIONAL FAMILY BENEFIT SCHEME**

Specific Conditions:

21. Central assistance will be available for a lumpsum family benefit for households below the poverty line on the death of the primary breadwinner in the bereaved family subject to the conditions in Paragraph 22 below:

22. For purposes of determining Central assistance the following criteria shall apply:
   i. The 'primary breadwinner' will be the member of the household -male or female- whose earnings contribute substantially to the total household income.
   ii. The death of such a primary breadwinner should have occurred whilst he or she is in the age group of 18 to 64 years i.e. more than 18 years of age and less than 65 years of age.
   iii. The bereaved household qualifies as one below the poverty line according to the criterion prescribed by the Government of India.
   iv. The Central assistance under the scheme will be Rs.10,000/- in the case of death of the primary bread-winner.
   v. The ceiling on the total number of family benefits for purposes of claiming Central assistance will be as calculated for the States/UTs in Table I.

23. The family benefit will be paid to such surviving member of the household of the deceased who, after due local inquiry, is determined to be the head of the household. For the purpose of the Scheme, the term ‘household’ would include spouse, minor children, unmarried daughters and dependent parents. In case of death of an unmarried adult, the term "household" would include minor brothers/sisters.

24. The sanctioning authority shall have the right to recover payments made on the basis of false or mistaken information about eligibility.

**NATIONAL MATERNITY BENEFIT SCHEME**

Specific Conditions:
25. The maternity benefit will provide a lumpsum cash assistance to women of households below the poverty line subject to the conditions in Paragraph 26 below.

26. For purposes of determining central assistance, the following criteria shall apply:-
   i. The maternity benefit will be restricted to pregnant women for up to the first two live births provided they are of 19 years of age and above.
   ii. The beneficiary should belong to a household below the poverty line according to the criteria prescribed by the Government of India.
   iii. The ceiling on the amount of the benefit for purposes of claiming Central assistance will be Rs.500.
   iv. The ceiling on the total number of maternity benefits for purposes of claiming Central assistance will be as specified for the States/UTs in Table I.

27. The maternity benefit will be disbursed in one installment 12-8 weeks prior to the delivery. However, the benefit can be made even after the delivery of child subject to the sanctioning authority being satisfied about the genuineness of the case. It is desirable that the child receives one dose of oral polio and BCG vaccination at birth and the first dose of DPT and polio in the sixth week.

28. The sanctioning authority shall have the right to stop/recover payments made on the basis of false or mistaken information about eligibility.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

29. The State/UT Committee constituted as per Para 13(iv) shall institute adequate and appropriate arrangements for monitoring and evaluation of the NSAP. For this purpose, they can utilise the District Level Committees, Government evaluation agencies and independent academic and other institutions.

30. An Advisory Committee will be established at the all India level to assist the Ministry of Rural Development in the monitoring and evaluation of the NSAP and to advise on matters related to its effective implementation.

31. The State/UT Governments shall furnish to the Department of Rural Development in the Ministry of Rural Development, which is the nodal agency at the Centre, monthly and annual progress reports as per format prescribed in Annexure II.

CENTRAL ASSISTANCE UNDER THE NSAP

32. Central assistance to States/UTs under the NSAP will be determined in the following manner:
   i. Table I indicates for each State/UT, the Qualifying financial Entitlement (QFE) for Central assistance in respect of each of the three benefits. The QFE is the product of the financial ceiling for the benefit and the corresponding numerical ceilings in Table I. The numerical ceilings for each State in respect of each of the benefits have been worked out on the basis of the basic parameters furnished in Table 2. The parameters are
liable to be updated from time to time. The method of computation has been explained in the Annexure-I.

ii. However, the numerical ceiling and the Qualifying Financial Entitlement mentioned above provide only an upper limit and in so doing the physical and financial target for the long run. Actual physical targets and allocation of funds from year to year for the State Governments will however be based on the budget allocation for NSAP in the current year.

iii. State/UT Governments will be expected to maintain the level of their own current expenditure on social protection programmes and ensure that Central assistance under the NSAP is in addition to the State budgetary outlays for the current year or 1993-94, whichever is more, on such programmes. This consideration will be taken into account in determining the level of Central assistance. For this purpose, social protection outlays will be taken to include outlays on all social assistance pensions (such as for the old, agricultural labourers, widows, deserted women and the physically handicapped), survivor family benefits, maternity assistance, maternal and child care and child nutrition.

33. The procedure for the release of Central assistance will be as follows:

a. First installment will be released in the beginning of the financial year on ad-hoc basis to those districts who have claimed second installment in the previous year.

b. In case of districts who have not claimed second installment of the previous year, first installment will be released upon their fulfilling all the conditions that would have made them eligible for release of second installment in the previous year i.e. the district should send proposal for release of funds after utilisation of 60% available funds along with Audit Report and Utilisation Certificate in the prescribed proforma through State Govt. in Annexure III.

c. The second installment for the districts will be released on the requests of districts through State Government as per Performa given in Annexure III on fulfillment of the following conditions:
   - 60% of the total available funds i.e. opening balance for the year and the amount received should be utilised at the time of applying for the second installment.
   - The opening balance in the district i.e. the aggregate of balance with DRDA should not exceed 20% of the district allocation during the previous year. In case the opening balance exceeds this limit, the Central share of the excess will be deducted at the time of release of second installment.
   - Submission of Audit Report (for each scheme of NSAP separately) for the previous years.
   - Submission of utilisation certificate for the previous year in the prescribed proforma (Annexure IV). Expenditure, available funds and balance as shown in Audit Report & Utilisation Certificate should match.
d. The quantum of second installment will be dependent on the time of reporting of utilisation. Depending on the receipt of complete proposal for second installment, the quantum will be governed as follows:

Proposal received in:-

December – 50% of allocated funds
January - 40% of allocated funds
February - 30% of allocated funds
March - 20% of allocated funds

Proposal received after 15th March will not be entertained.

ANNEXURE I

1. The numerical ceiling and the Qualifying Financial Entitlement given in Table I provide only for upper limit and in so doing the physical and financial target for the long run. Actual physical targets and allocation of funds from year to year for the State/UT Governments will however be based on the budget allocation for NSAP in the current year.

2. The following examples indicate how the numerical ceiling and the QFE are worked out. The data used relate to an ‘average’ State and are based on Census (1991), SRS(1992) and the latest available poverty estimates. The basic parameters assumed in the illustrative examples for an ‘average’ State are the following:- (I) Population (1998) ; 46949100 (ii) Poverty ratio in total population ; 24.2 per cent (iii) Proportion of 65+ age group in total population 3.9 per cent (iv) Proportion of 18-64 age group in total population 55.6% (v) Age specific mortality in the 18-64 age group 0.0058 (i.e. 5.8 per 1000) (vi) Crude Birth Rate 0.0281 (i.e. 28.1 per 1000) (vii) Proportion of first two live births in total births : 54 per cent.

3. The scales of benefits are : (I) Rs.75 per month (i.e. Rs.900 per annum) for old age pensions (ii) Family benefit of Rs.10,000 for poor households on the death of the primary breadwinner (iii) Maternity Benefit of Rs.500 for women in poor households up to the first two live births.

**Numerical Ceilings and Qualifying Financial Entitlements:**

1. It is assumed that 50 per cent of the population below the poverty line in the age group 65 + will qualify for old age pensions under the destitution criteria laid down. Accordingly, the numerical ceiling for old age pensions in the ‘average’ State chosen in the example will be : Population x Poverty Ratio x Proportion of 65 + age group in total population x 0.5 = 46949100 x 0.242 x 0.039 x 0.05 =
221552 or 221200 (to the nearest hundred). The QFE is Rs.900 x the numerical ceiling = 900 x 221600 = 1994.40 lakhs.

2. For the ‘average’ State, the number of deaths in the 18-64 age group in households below the poverty line can be estimated as: population x Poverty Ratio x Proportion of 18-64 age group in total population x Age specific mortality in 18-64 age group = 46949100 x 0.242 x 0.556 x 0.0058 = 36.639 or 36600. Half the number of such deaths are assumed to relate to the primary breadwinner. The numerical ceiling works out to be: 0.5 x 33600 = 18300. The QFE will accordingly be: Rs.10000 x 18300 = Rs.1830 lakh.

3. The numerical ceiling for maternal benefits will be: Population x Poverty Ratio x Crude Birth Rate x Proportion of first two births in total live births =46949100 x 0.242 x 0.0281 x 0.540 = 172402 or 172500 (to the nearest hundred). The QFE will be Rs.500 x 172500 = Rs.862.50 lakhs.

Table 1: NSAP: Numerical Ceiling and Qualifying Financial Entitlement for States/UTs based on population

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Note: The numerical ceilings have been worked out with reference to the basic parameters for each State given in Table 2 following the procedure explained in the Annexure. The figures are to the nearest hundred. The Qualifying Financial Entitlement is the numerical ceiling multiplied by the financial ceiling for the relevant benefit.
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ANNEXURE III

Proforma for release of funds under NSAP

1. Name of the Scheme
2. Name of the district/State
3. (i) Physical Target for the district during year
   (ii) Physical Target achieved during
4. Financial Allocation during the year
5. Opening balance as on 1.4._______
6. Funds released during the year
7. Total funds available
8. Funds utilised up-to-date
9. Percentage of utilisation
10. Balance as on __________
11. Enclose a copy of utilisation certificate for the previous year

12. Enclose a copy of Audit Report for the previous year

It is certified that:

i. Conditions on which funds were sanctioned have been fulfilled and that the funds reported above has been actually utilised for the purpose for which it was sanctioned.

ii. There is no committed liability of previous year.

iii. Panchayats are involved in the identification of the beneficiary.

Signature
Chief Executive Officer, Zilla Panchayat
Collector/ District Magistrate

Note:

1. The figures shown in Audit Report should tally with the figures as in utilisation certificate and the same should be furnished separately for the three schemes of NSAP. A separate proposal should be furnished separately for each scheme of NSAP.

2. A district should apply for release of second installment after utilisation of 60% funds.

ANNEXURE IV

UTILISATION CERTIFICATE – NSAP

1. District/ District Rural Development Agency/Zilla Parishad -------------------------

2. Utilisation Certificate for the year-----------------------------------------

3. Unspent balance from previous year --------------------------------------

4. Grants received during the year-------------------------------------------

   Letter No.                    Date                       Central Govt.

   i.  
   ii. 
   iii. 

5. Miscellaneous receipts of the Agency, if any under NSAP
Total funds available

Certified that a sum of Rs.________ lakhs (Rs.____________) was received by the District / District Rural Development Agency / Zilla Parishad ______________ as grants-in-aid during ______________ from Government of India vide Ministry’s letter No. & Dated given above under ________________

Further a sum of Rs.________ (Rs.________________ only) being unspent balance of the previous year____________ was allowed to be brought forward for utilisation during the current year _________. The miscellaneous receipts of the district Agency during the year were Rs._______ lakhs.

It is also certified that out of the above mentioned total funds of Rs.________ (Rupees ________) sum of Rs.________ (Rupees______________) has been utilised by District / DRDA / ZP for the purpose for which it was sanctioned. It is further certified that the unspent balance of Rs.__________________________ (Rupees________________________) remaining at the end of the year will be utilised for the programme next year.

Certified that I have satisfied myself that the conditions on which grant-in-aid was sanctioned have been duly fulfilled are being fulfilled and that I have exercised the reasonable checks to see that the money has been actually utilised for the purpose for which it was sanctioned.

Dated : ______________

District Collector/ CEO, ZP/
District Social Welfare Officer