GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA
ABSTRACT

Social Security Pensions – Aasara Pensions – Social Safety Net Strategy - Implementation of Aasara Social Security Pension Scheme for Persons who are Old & infirm, Widows, Differently Abled, Weavers, Toddy Tappers & with HIV-AIDS in the State - Orders - issued.

PANCHAYAT RAJ & RURAL DEVELOPMENT (RD.I) DEPARTMENT

G.O. Ms.No.17 Dated:05-11-2014

Read the following:-

1. G.O.Ms.No.82, PR&RD (RD.II) Dept., dated 25.03.2006.
2. G.O.Ms.No.83, PR&RD (RD.II) Dept., dated 27.03.2006.
3. G.O.Ms.No.89, PR&RD (RD.II) Dept., dated 29.03.2006.
4. G.O.Ms.No.454, PR&RD (RD.II) Dept., dated 14.11.2008.
5. Lr. No. 05/SERP.SSP/2014, dated 12.07.2014 from the Chief Executive Officer, SERP, Telangana State, Hyderabad.
6. Memo No. 634/Mandals/A1/2014 dated 10.10.2014 of Panchayat Raj & Rural Development (RD.I) Department

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Government of Telangana as a part of its social safety net strategy, hereby, introduces the Aasara pensions with a view to ensure secure life with dignity for all the poor. This scheme is meant to protect the most vulnerable sections of society in particular the old and infirm; people with HIV-AIDS, widows, incapacitated weavers and toddy tappers, who have lost their means of livelihood with growing age, in order to support their day to day minimum needs required to lead a life of dignity and social security.

2. In the past, social security pensions provided were meager and, barely sufficient to cover the basic minimum requirements of the needy. With a view to combat the ever-increasing cost of living and inflation, the Government, hereby, introduces a new scheme called **Aasara pensions**, which will provide substantial financial benefits to all the above categories, particularly those who are most needy.

3. Government with a view to identify eligible beneficiaries, conducted a comprehensive one day Samagra Kutumba Survey (SKS) of households in the State of Telangana on August 19, 2014. The data collected during the Survey is expected to form the basis of identifying the poor and vulnerable who are truly eligible for the social safety net protection, through the AASARA Pensions. Towards this purpose, instructions have already been issued vide Memo 6th cited above to commence a detailed process of identification of the poor and vulnerable. To this endeavor, District Collectors will have to strategize the identification of the most poor and vulnerable by broadly assessing exclusion and inclusion criterion. Past experiences have shown that large number of ineligible beneficiaries have managed to appropriate the benefits meant for the poor and vulnerable leading to neglect of the needy and deserving despite their being eligible for pension. Schemes implemented as social security nets are meant for protecting the poor and vulnerable by providing a means to live a life of dignity and alleviating immediate distress. There is therefore a need for utmost care to be taken to ensure that no eligible poor or vulnerable are left out in the process. District Collectors will need to correlate the data with census data of the persons who are old and infirm, with disabilities and widows for their respective district to broadly identify the number of beneficiaries under each category. Similarly, care must be taken to ensure that artisans handicapped by loss of livelihoods due to ageing are also covered adequately as opposed to granting benefits based on the community.

4. Government after careful examination of the proposal are hereby issue the comprehensive guidelines for Aasara pensions in supercession of all order issued in the past on the subject as under:

I. Name of the Programme-

The new social safety net scheme proposed by the government shall be called **Aasara** Pension Scheme and shall be effective from October 1, 2014.

II. Pension Amount

Government hereby fix the pension amount per month for the following categories of pensioners as detailed below:

SN	Category	Monthly Pension Amount (Rs.)
1	Old Age	1000
2	Widow	1000
3	Disabled	1500
4	Weavers	1000
5	Toddy Tappers	1000
6	Persons with HIV-AIDS	1000

III. Eligibility Criteria

A. Age

S.no	Type of Pension	Eligibility	Requirements during Verification
1	Old Age	Age 65 years and above.	• *Age should be as per age criteria given above* • *Should be established clearly by documentary evidence such as birth certificate, electoral roll, Aadhaar card or any document which shows the proof of age.* • *If no document is available for the proof of age, the verification officer must be able to arrive through a rational assessment of the age by corroborating with other factors such as age of children, grandchildren's marriage etc.* • *In case of indeterminate persons, they shall be referred to Medical Board for assessment of age through tests such as ossification and recorded documentation of the same.*

2	Weavers	Age 50 years and above.	
3	Widow	1. Age 18 years and above. 2. Death certificate of her husband. 3. Every year updation on re-marriage for young widows (up to 45 Years)	• *For widow pensions, the death certificate of the spouse is a must to be eligible.* • *Where the death certificate is not available a local enquiry may be made following which the death certificate as per the birth and death registration act will have to be obtained in the next three months. In case of remarriage, the Village Secretaries must certify every year that the individual has not remarried.*
4	Toddy Tappers	Age 50 years and above.	• *For Toddy tapper pensions the verification should be confirmed whether the beneficiary is a registered member in the Co-Operative Society of Toddy Tappers.*
5	Pension to persons with HIV-AIDS (ART pension)	Who are undergoing Anti Retroviral Therapy (ART).	• *Medical certificate from the concerned hospital that the applicant is a person with HIV-AIDS* • *List of names can also be obtained from the ART Centre duly certified by the authority heading the center*
6	Differently Abled (persons with disabilities)	1. Irrespective of age. 2. Disabled persons having a minimum of 40% disability under SADAREM assessment. 3. In case of Hearing Impaired, the minimum disability should be 51% (as per G.O.Ms No. 31 dt. 01-12-2009). (In case of a minor child, the pension shall be disbursed to the mother/father of the disabled child)	• *For disability pensions, persons with a SADAREM certificate showing the degree of disability 40% and above are eligible.* • *In case of Hearing impaired, the minimum disability should be 51%.*

B. **Socio - economic criteria:** Aasara pensions are meant only for disadvantaged families who, in old age or upon being widowed have no earning member in the family. Earning members in the families are expected by law to look after their parents. Similarly, persons with disabilities are severely stymied by their levels of handicap that renders them to be ineffective and excluded by society and family; therefore, they need financial support. Accordingly, there is a need for exclusion and inclusion criterion to be taken in to consideration for the grant of social security pensions under the Aasara Scheme. The persons belonging to the households fulfilling one or more of the following conditions listed below **shall not be eligible for Social Security Pensions:**

i. Having land more than 3.0 acres wet / irrigated dry or 7.5 acres dry.
ii. Having children who are Government / Public sector / Private sector employment / Out-sourced / contract;
iii. Having children who are Doctors, Contractors, Professionals and Self employed;
iv. Having large business Enterprise (oil mills, rice mills, petrol pumps, rig owners, shop owners etc.);
v. Already receiving Government pensions or freedom fighter pensions;
vi. Owners of light and/or heavy automobiles (four wheelers and big vehicles.)
vii. Any other criterion in which the verification officer may assess by the manner of lifestyle, occupation and possession of assets rendering the household as ineligible.

C. The households under the following socio-economic criteria and falling in the above age group must be considered for inclusion and hence, eligible for a pension, provided **they are not in the exclusion list**:

i. *Primitive and Vulnerable Tribal Groups;*
ii. *Women headed households with no able bodied earning members;*
iii. *Households having persons with disabilities;*
iv. *In respect of all pensions except disabled and widows, only one member (preferably the women) per household shall be eligible for a pension;*
v. *Landless agriculture laborers, rural artisans/craftsmen (such as potters, tanners, weavers, blacksmiths, carpenters), slum dwellers, persons earning their livelihood on daily basis in the informal sector like porters, coolies, rickshaw pullers, hand cart pullers, fruit / flower sellers, snake charmers, rag pickers, cobblers, destitute's and other similar categories irrespective of rural or urban areas;*
vi. *Homeless, houseless households residing in temporary informal establishments or huts especially in urban areas;*
vii. *Households headed by widows or terminally ill persons/disabled persons /persons aged 65 years or more with no assured means of subsistence or societal support and able bodied earning member.*

Care should be taken not to miss out on any eligible person from the poorest of poor households like those who are living in thatched / plastic roof huts, landless and asset less poor living on daily wages and subsistence levels.

IV. **Requirements for the Sanction of a Pension:** Each pensioner will have to submit the following documents for sanction of a pension:

i. The applicant should be eligible as per the guidelines given above in para II
ii. Photograph
iii. Aadhaar number – (If Aadhaar number is not available they shall secure one in the next three months)
iv. Savings Bank account number and IFSC code either from a bank or local post office
v. Age certificate
vi. Death certificate in case of widows. (Where death certificate is not available the Panchayat Secretary shall conduct a detailed enquiry and submit a report. However, the death certificate shall be obtained in the next three months and uploaded in the online system.
vii. SADAREM Certificate in case of persons with disabilities 40% or above and 51% in respect of the hearing impaired

V. **Identification of eligible pensioners:** verification of the applications will be done by the Gram Panchayat or the respective municipal/Deputy Commissioner of the GHMC.

i. The Gram Panchayat Secretary / Village Revenue Officer in the rural area and Bill Collector in Urban area will receive applications;
ii. The Gram Panchayat Secretary in rural areas and the Bill Collector in the Urban areas will be entrusted with the task of verifying these applications and certifying them;
iii. The designated Mandal Parishad Development Officer / Municipal Commissioner/ Deputy/Zonal Commissioner Officer shall scrutinize the verified applications to assess their eligibility and sanction them a pension based on the guidelines given time to time by the Government.
iv. While identifying beneficiaries as listed in para C above, the data as per the household survey, the census population figures & percentages for old age, widows and handicapped shall be kept in mind for each Panchayat, mandal, and municipality, besides ensuring equity among the various social categories such as SC, ST, BC and OC communities.
v. Wrongful identification and certification of beneficiaries if identified in the social audit or surprise verification of beneficiaries will be severely dealt with and disciplinary action initiated on all concerned besides recovery of the amount paid. These shall include wrongful certificates issued under SADAREM in respect of persons with disabilities.

VI. **Sanction of pensions and Issue of Pension Card**: After verification reports have been submitted by the verification officers, the MPDOs in rural areas, Tahsildars (Hyderabad district) / Municipal Commissioners in urban areas and Dy. Commissioners in GHMC areas shall:

i. Broadly assess the recommendation reports and correlate the same with the SKS survey data (exclusion and inclusion criterion) and the census figures assessed and allocated for each mandal by the District Collector for old age, widows and handicapped persons for the mandal.

ii. MPDO's shall ensure that the poorest of the poor are identified from amongst the verified list covering all social categories such as the SC, ST, BC and OC communities and are strictly covered in that order. Adequate care should be taken that no eligible beneficiary is left out.

iii. After satisfying the above criterion, the MPDO/ Municipal Commissioner/ Deputy Commissioner of the GHMC concerned shall enter the data in the Aasara software, specially designed for this purpose and submit the same online to the District Collector for according administrative sanction (all process will be completed online).

iv. After final approval by the District Collector, MPDO's shall ensure that Aasara Pension cards are distributed for the relevant category by affixing the photo of the beneficiary. Necessary arrangements shall be made to ensure that the details are printed on the card through the Aasara Software.

v. The GPs should necessarily maintain an A Register and a B Register, specifying the existing pensioners and those who are eligible but have not been considered for a pension. As and when there is a vacancy and a person can be accommodated, the person who is accommodated first should be considered based on the following criteria- oldest among those listed, SC/ST, landless with a preference to women, especially deserted women in all categories. The same should also be available online to ensure that the eligibility process has been scrupulously followed.

VII. **Aadhaar Seeding**: All payment's for pensions shall be disbursed only biometrically subject to the following:

i. Where Aadhaar number is available for a beneficiary, they shall be immediately seeded for enabling biometric authentication based payment through the Aadhaar Enabled Payment System (AEPS);

ii. Where beneficiaries do not have an Aadhaar number they shall secure one with the help of the local administration and furnish the Aadhaar number by 31-01- 2015. From 1st February, 2015 payments can be effected only through biometric authentication;

iii. The disbursement of pensions shall be made through biometric authentication using Aadhaar number. For this purpose, either the best finger detection (BFD) or IRIS authentication may be used to effect payments;

iv. In rare cases such as those who are bedridden, or upper extremities are affected badly, the pensions shall be disbursed by Gram Panchayat secretary /Bill Collector using his own biometrics, however this shall be done only in rare cases and all such cases should be cleared by a competent higher authority;

VIII. **Release of Amounts for disbursal of pensions:** MPDO's will have to forward the details of all beneficiaries selected, online to SERP for release of the amount to the Districts for disbursement as follows:

i. Centralized acquittances' along with proceedings shall be generated in the software at the state level and placed in the web for seeking approval on the proceedings by the District Collector through the Project Director, DRDA;

ii. The Project Director, DRDA shall take the approval of the District Collector on physical file and upload the file in the Aasara Software;

iii. Fund Transfer Request shall be generated by SERP and the Fund Transfer Order generated automatically will transfer the funds electronically to the Disbursing Agencies from the SSP State Nodal Account operated by the Chief Executive Officer, SERP;

iv. The MPDOs / Tahsildars (Hyderabad district) shall download the acquittances from the logins provided to them and take printouts to handover to the Disbursing Agencies;

v. The pensions shall be disbursed at GP / disbursing point level by the Customer Service Provider (CSP) in the areas covered by the disbursing agencies;

vi. The signed acquittances shall be returned to the MPDO / Tahsildars (Hyderabad district) by the Disbursing Agencies;.

vii. In cases where there is a change of pensioner status such as death of a pensioner, widow who is remarried and change in disability status, the same shall be reported by the Customer Service Provider (CSP)/ Branch Post Master (BPM)/Gram Panchayat Secretary (GPS) every month. The MPDO shall be responsible for deleting these names on an immediate basis;

IX. **Disbursal of Pensions**: Each pensioner shall have a bank account into which the amount shall be remitted.

i. In larger municipalities where ATM facilities are abundant, the pensions may be remitted in the bank accounts of the beneficiaries to enable them to draw using ATM cards;.

ii. In rural areas where banks exist, the pension can be deposited in the local banks or the post offices and shall be disbursed through biometric authentication either using the best finger detection or the iris scan. For this purpose, each pensioner will have to be registered in the biometric device for disbursal through biometric authentication;

iii. As far as possible, the disbursement of pensions should be done in a public place such as the school building or the Gram Panchayat Building;

X. **Disbursement Cycle**: The monthly disbursement cycle of Social Security pensions shall be followed as given below without fail, so that the poor receive the pension amount on a fixed day every month.

i.

Activity	Schedule Date
Disbursement of pensions	1st to 7th of every month
Sharing of disbursement data through bio-metric / IRIS authentication to SSP server by the pension Disbursing Agencies	Direct hitting on real time basis
Return of the signed acquaintance's by the pension Disbursing Agencies to the MPDO / Municipal Commissioners	9th
Remittance of the undisbursed amount from Pension Disbursing Agency (PDA) directly to State Nodal Account (SNA)	9th
Generation of acquittances for the subsequent month	16th to 21st
Approval of proceedings by District Collector	22nd / 23rd
Request for Fund Transfer by Project Director, DRDA on securing the approval of the District Collector	Same day (22nd / 23rd)
Approval of Fund Transfer Request (FTR) by the SERP after securing the approval of District Collector	23rd /24th
Funds for disbursement of pensions to be reached to the concerned PDAs from the SNA	25th

XI. **Acquittances are mandatory for disbursement:** Each disbursement with cash or through biometric authentication shall be disbursed only on the relevant acquittances being maintained. In other words, the signature/ thumb impression of the beneficiary shall have to be taken against the name upon disbursal of the amount/ biometric authentication of the amount. The MPDO's and Municipal/ Deputy Commissioner's shall ensure that all acquittances duly signed / thumb impressions affixed by the concerned beneficiaries are checked and acknowledged. The aquittance records shall be maintained for audit/social audit and inspections.

XII. **Social Audit:** 100% social audit shall be done of the pensions disbursed by the Gram Panchayat Secretary/Bill Collector and independently in Urban/GHMC areas by SSAAT. Social audit of SSP shall be done in all villages along with MGNREGS in rural areas. Wrongful certification of ineligible beneficiaries shall be severely dealt with on all involved in the verification process besides recovery of the amount.

XIII. **Administration of Pensions:** The CEO, SERP, Telangana, Hyderabad and all the District Collectors shall take full responsibility to implement the Aasara Pensions Scheme online. Care shall be taken that strict protocol is maintained in effecting changes in the database or in the procedures except through the instructions issued by the Government. Necessary network security of the data shall be ensured. Only authorized change requests after approval of the competent authority shall be permitted. The Software provider shall only effect changes where there written change requests by the authorized officers only. Detailed MIS reports shall be put up on the pension website and made universally accessible to all. Administrative cost not exceeding 3% can be met towards the expenditure incurred such as service charges to disbursing agencies, conduct of social audit and maintenance of the software, hardware etc. for the implementation of the Aasara Pension scheme.

5. This order is issued with the concurrence of Finance Department vide their U.O.No.158/EBS-VIII/14, dt.1/11/2014.

6. A Copy of this order is available on the Internet and can be accessed at the address http://goir.telangana.gov.in/

(BY ORDER AND IN THE NAME OF THE GOVERNOR OF TELANGANA)

J. RAYMOND PETER
PRINCIPAL SECRETARY TO GOVERNMENT

To
The Chief Executive Officer, SERP, Telangana, Hyderabad.
The District Collectors of all Districts.
The Commissioner GHMC,
The Project Director DRDA,
The Project Officers ITDA,
The Principal Secretary, SC Development Department
The Principal Secretary, Women Development, Child Welfare & Sr. Citizen Dept.
The Principal Secretary, Industries & Commerce Department
The Principal Secretary, Municipal Admn & Urban Development Department
The Principal Secretary, PR & RWS, PR & RD Department
The Commissioner, Scheduled Castes Development Department
The Commissioner, Disabled Welfare Department
The Commissioner, Handlooms & textiles Department
The Commissioner and Director Municipal Administration

The Commissioner, Rural Development, Telangana, Hyderabad
The Commissioner, Panchayat Raj, Telangana, Hyderabad
The Commissioner, I & PR, Telangana,. Hyderabad
All MPDO's in the State
All Municipal Commissioner
The Director, SSAAT, Hyderabad
Copy to
The PS to Chief Secretary
The PS to Principal Secretary to CM
The PS To Additional Secretary to CM
The PS to Minister, RD and RWS
The PS to Minister, Industries
The PS to Minister
The Deputy Director General, NIC Hyderabad
Mr. Ravi Marri Project Director TCS

//FORWARDED::BY ORDER//

SECTION OFFICER