

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
TOURISM AND CULTURE
LOK SABHA**

STARRED QUESTION NO:16
ANSWERED ON:21.07.2003
ARTISTS LIVING IN POVERTY
SRIPRAKASH JAISWAL

Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the renowned Sehanai Maestro Ustad Bishmillah Khan is presently living under pathetic conditions;
- (b) whether the Government have undertaken any study/survey to compile statistics of those famed artists who are forced to live in penury; and
- (c) if so, the details thereof and the steps taken/likely to be taken by the Government to provide assistance to such artists to lift their standard of living and to enable them to live their life with dignity?

Answer

MINISTER OF TOURISM & CULTURE (SHRI JAGMOHAN)

(a) to (c) : A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

ANNEXURE-A

DETAILS OF ASSISTANCE PROVIDED TO ARTISTS LIVING IN POVERTY UNDER THE PENSION SCHEME AND THE A AND FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMMES OF THE SANGEET NATAK AKADEMI.

A. Sangeet Natak Akademi Awards and Fellowships -

Though its various schemes, namely Financial Assistance to Fellows and Awardees of the Sangeet Natak Akademi, medi-claim insurance policy for the Fellows and Awardees of the Akademi and other promotional schemes, the Akademi provides a variety of financial assistance to eminent artists. From time to time the Akademi also provides financial support for medical treatment etc. from the Chairman's Discretionary Grant fund.

Ustad Bishmillah Khan is a great musician and has been honored by the SNA with the Akademi Award (1956) as well as the Akademi Fellowship (1994). The Akademi, through its scheme of Awards and Fellowships to artists, gives purse money of Rs.40,000/-. While the Fellowship is restricted to 30 living artists at any given point of time, the number of Awards is 25.

The General Council of the SNA in its meeting held on 25th March, 2003 has recommended that each Akademi Ratna (Akademi Fellow) may be given a monthly honorarium of Rs. 10,000/- per month for life with an inbuilt escalation of 10% after every three years in lieu of the Rs. 40,000/- purse money being paid to them on being elected as fellow of the Sangeet Natak Akademi. The recommendations of the General Council can be implemented only after scrutiny of the available resources and a comprehensive impact analysis.

The Akademi has also introduced a scheme of medi-claim policy for all its Awardees and Fellows. The scheme is being operated through M/s Oriental Insurance Company, New Delhi. The Awardees and Fellows who are covered under the scheme can claim expenses incurred by them for treatment taken in a hospital up to a maximum of Rs. 1,00,000/- per annum. Further, as per the provisions of the scheme the beneficiaries can claim reimbursement incurred by them towards medical treatment taken by them, directly from the Insurance Company.

B. Financial Assistance to persons distinguished in letters, art and such other walks of life who may be in indigent circumstances and their dependents.

Under this Scheme a monthly pension amounting to Rs. 2000/- per month is paid to artists who have made significant contribution in their fields and are over 58 years of age. The necessary precondition for availing benefit under this Scheme is that the personal income of the applicant (including income of the spouse) must not exceed Rs. 2000/- per month.