

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
HOME AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1705
ANSWERED ON:08.08.2006
FREEDOM FIGHTER PENSIONERS
Gaddigoudar Shri P.C.;Harsha Kumar Shri G.V.

Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether there has been any report that the persons receiving freedom fighters pension under the Sainik Samman Pension Scheme were infants when the country gained independence;
- (b) if so, the details thereof, State-wise;
- (c) whether any investigation has been conducted by the Government in this regard;
- (d) if so, the outcome of the investigation and action taken by the Government against such persons, State-wise; and
- (e) the action taken by the government against officials who have been found involved in sanctioning the pension without proper verification?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI MANIKRAO HODLYA GAVIT)

(a) to (e): A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (A) TO (E) OF LOK SABHA UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1705 DUE FOR ANSWER ON 08.08.2006.

(a) to (e): The Central Scheme per se does not prescribe any minimum age for being eligible for Central Samman pension. No age-wise statistics of Samman pensioners are maintained.

Receipt of complaints/information from various sources alleging bogus/fraudulent pensions is a continuous process. Each such matter is examined with reference to the applicable provisions of the Central Scheme, in consultation with the concerned State Government. On examination, wherever it is established that the claim does not meet the eligibility criteria and the evidentiary requirements of the Central Scheme, the pension is suspended/cancelled, after following due process. Such matters are dealt with individually.

The Hyderabad Liberation Movement (HLM) is (inter alia) a movement recognized under the Central Scheme for the purpose of grant of Samman pension, with movement-specific relaxed eligibility and evidentiary requirements.

In claims pertaining to the C.H. Rajeshwara Rao Committee-recommended HLM cases, which had been referred to State Governments for verification in 1998, an age of 15 years as in March 1947 was prescribed (in June 1998) as a matter of reasonable administrative appropriateness.

As per information at the end of the Central Government, in 2006-2007 (to date), 3 pensions have been suspended and show-cause notices issued for cancellation on receipt of subsequent State Government/District Collector-cum-Magistrate's reports to the effect that, contrary to their earlier verification, the ages of the pensioners were less than 15 years as in March 1947. Simultaneously, pensions of 10 pensioners who had given wrong/false certificates when the said 3 pensions were initially sanctioned have also been suspended and show-cause notices for cancellation also issued to them. The Government of Andhra Pradesh has also been requested to institute criminal proceedings against the guilty.

As per information received from the end of the State Government of Andhra Pradesh, in the State Government's Vigilance enquiries (instituted in 2005-2006) it has been indicated that infants have been sanctioned pension; however, the State Government has not mentioned the exact number.

As reported by the State Government, on receipt of certain allegations /complaints from the public, 7364 cases of freedom fighters for sanction of pension under the Central Scheme in respect of Karimnagar, Nalgonda, Warangal and Khammam Districts were referred to the Director General (Vigilance & Enforcement). After enquiry, the Director General (Vigilance & Enforcement) has submitted his report to the Government of Andhra Pradesh. In that report, it is noticed that several irregularities have taken place in sanction of pension to freedom fighters in the said four Districts. The Director General has made certain recommendations to the Government of Andhra Pradesh, which are as follows:

- (i) to constitute special teams for 100% verification;

(ii) to address the Government of India for cancellation of pensions in which irregularities have been noticed;

(iii) to initiate action against the concerned officials;

(iv) to explore the possibility of involving services of Mandal Literary Officer/Mandal Education Officer/ Head Master of the Village to assist the applicants in processing their proposals for sanction of pension and to avoid brokers; and

(v) to reconsider the issue of taking the entry of age as per 1995 voters list as conclusive evidence.

In the Vigilance report, initiation of action against certain officials, viz. District Revenue Officer, Revenue Divisional Officer, Mandal Revenue Officer, Mandal Education Officer, etc., has been recommended for their lapses in supervision, negligence in attesting the EPIC 1995 and negligence in attesting the Voter List of 1995, etc.

The State Government has reported that after receipt of the C.I.D. report also (on an enquiry referred to the Crime Branch, Criminal Investigation Department (C.I.D.), Government of Andhra Pradesh, in 2005-2006), a decision will be taken in the matter by them.