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Title: Need to relax the conditions of eligibility for Indira Gandhi National Disability Pension Scheme.

SHRI SUVENDU ADHIKARI (TAMLUK): I would like to share the information that a flagship social welfare programme of Govt. of India namely National Social Assistance Programme was started by the Union Ministry of Rural Development with a noble mission in pursuit of article 41 of our Constitution. Indira Gandhi National Disability Pension Scheme is one of 'five major components of National Social Assistance Programme' and as per present criteria, a person, to become a beneficiary under this social scheme, must belong to a BPL family and has to be within the age group of 18 to 64 years with severe or multiple disabilities having 80 per cent or more disabilities or combination of two or more disabilities. If all these criteria are fulfilled, a beneficiary will be given an assistance of Rs. 300 per month. But, I would like to emphasize that whenever a social assistance programme is formulated, it must have a great vision to provide relief to maximum number of distressed people, more precisely all the distressed people in our society. But in my view the present Disability Pension Scheme is not capable of covering all the distressed if the present criteria are not changed suitably. After all, pension is given to the disabled persons because they cannot earn their livelihood independently. But the present amount given as pension is not sufficient for them. Besides, the persons with less than 80 per cent disabilities also find their lives in uncertainties without social support and it is not that a person, if he/she is not of minimum 18 years, does not need such support.

I, therefore, earnestly request Hon'ble Union Minister of Rural Development to withdraw the age bar and fix the minimum disability percentage as 10 per cent instead of present 80 per cent for a person to become eligible for the scheme. I would further request for enhancing the amount of pension being linked to inflation index.