

Omar led Govt left 150000 destitutes high and dry

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Early Times Report

Srinagar, May 5: Much to the disappointment of destitute and downtrodden, there are more than one lakh and fifty thousand cases of widows and disabled seeking pension, pending with the government since years.

The data available reveals that under Integrated Social Security Scheme (ISSS), there are 29, 439 cases of old age persons waiting to be heard for the government assistance. Similarly, there are 13051 cases of widows pending with the government. Under this scheme, reports informed that there are 12926 cases of handicapped people pending and gathering dust with the state authorities. The total number of the cases under ISSS is 55416. The previous regime in the state has gone on record saying that social Welfare Minister, an amount of Rs 40.60 crore is required to be paid to the applicants and the matter has been taken up with Government of India and the State Planning Department. Sources, however divulged that the government did little to pursue the issue of widows and old age persons with the GOI and hence the destitute continue to suffer in the state.

Official sources have disclosed that under other schemes, there are 98, 963 cases of old age persons, widows and handicapped people pending. "Since years, the files are pending with the planning department sans any latest development. It would take much time to clear the pending files," one of the officials of the social welfare department said, adding that applicants in most of the cases have even died.

The data reveals that the government in a traditional manner took the matter regarding clearance of 98963 pending cases under National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP) with Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India vide letter No. SWD/PIg/227/2014 dated 18-02-2015 but surprisingly the follow up wasn't done.

"Jammu and Kashmir is perhaps the only state wherein the cases of government assistance to the destitute is nil and such a great number of cases are pending since years," sources said, adding that GOI cannot be blamed for everything as lacunas are very much within the system of governance in Jammu and Kashmir.

Meanwhile, several widows and handicapped told this newspaper that they are hopeful that their woes would end in the new government and their cries that didn't reach the power corridors in the past would be heard this time.

Blazingly, even at present when the prices of commodities in the market sky rocket, the widows and handicapped persons are getting Rs 400 per month social security pension whereas, the rate under ISSS for other categories is Rs 200 per month.

