

Chapter 5
Implementation of Welfare
Schemes

5 Implementation of Welfare Schemes

The Department had notified (August 2007) eight welfare schemes, related to payment of pension, family pension, orphan pension, disability pension, maternity benefits, funeral assistance, medical assistance and marriage assistance, along with the notification of the Rules. The Board had, thereafter, further notified (between March 2011 and December 2021) another fourteen welfare schemes³¹. Audit selected 10 out of these 22 welfare schemes, for analysing their implementation, during FYs 2017-18 to 2021-22. In addition, Audit conducted a survey of 400 beneficiaries³², to ascertain the impact of the benefits provided to them.

5.1 Assistance on the death or disability of workers

In the event of the natural death of a registered worker, the dependent of the worker was entitled to receive the benefit of a lump sum amount of ₹ thirty thousand, from November 2015 to June 2017, under the Jharkhand Building Workers Death/Disability Assistance (JBWDDA) Scheme. This amount was enhanced to ₹ one lakh, from July 2017 onwards.

Besides, the beneficiary's spouse was eligible for a family pension of ₹ five hundred per month (revised from July 2017) and the dependent/nominee was entitled to receive a lump sum amount of ₹ ten thousand, as funeral assistance (notified in March 2018).

The dependents of the beneficiaries are required to submit three separate applications for availing the three kinds of assistance *viz.*, death assistance (DA), funeral assistance (FA) and family pension (FP). Death and funeral assistance are to be sanctioned by the Labour Superintendent at the district level, whereas family pension is to be sanctioned by the Deputy Labour Commissioner at the Commissionerate level.

5.1.1 Non-alignment of the amount of assistance with MWS&AP

The MWS&AP stipulates that the State Welfare Board should provide a minimum coverage of ₹ four lakh, in case of accidental death, and ₹ two lakh, in the event of natural death, to the dependents of the deceased beneficiary.

³¹ (1) Bicycle assistance (2) labour toolkit assistance (3) sewing machine assistance (4) meritorious children scholarship (5) medical reimbursement (6) *Aam Admi Bima Yojana*, (7) employment training scheme, (8) child labour education assistance (9) *Saraswati Yojana* for education of girls, (10) death assistance (11) labour safety kit assistance (12) *Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Suraksha Bima Yojana* (13) *Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana* (14) *Saree/cloth* for shirt and pants distribution.

³² Ten beneficiaries of each selected scheme, from each of the four test-checked districts.

MWS&AP had also recommended coverage of workers between the age of 18 and 50 years, under the *Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana*³³ (PMJJBY), and *Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana*³⁴ (PMSBY) as an alternate measure, with 50 per cent of the premium being borne by the Central Government.

The sanctioned cases of death assistance, during FYs 2017-18 to 2021-22, in the test-checked districts, are detailed in **Table 5.1**.

Table 5.1: Sanctioned cases of death assistance, during FYs 2017-18 to 2021-22

Sl. No.	Financial Year	Ranchi	Bokaro	Dhanbad	East Singhbhum	Total
1	2017-18	11	Nil	58	Nil	69
2	2018-19	35	Nil	87	10	132
3	2019-20	10	Nil	29	18	57
4	2020-21	57	69	63	46	235
5	2021-22	83	115	147	56	401
Total		196	184	384	130	894

(Source: Data provided by the district offices)

Audit scrutiny revealed that the Board had directed (April 2016) the responsible authorities to transfer a lump sum amount³⁵ of ₹ 5,202, directly into the bank accounts of the beneficiaries, for paying their regular annual premium³⁶ and approved (April 2017) ₹ 15.65 crore³⁷ for the purpose. The Board had further released ₹ 29.23 crore³⁸, during FYs 2017-18 to 2020-21, to different authorities, for payment of renewal of premium, or for direct transfer of the premium amount into the bank accounts of the beneficiaries. However, no premium was paid to the Insurance Company³⁹, by the Board, on behalf of beneficiaries, during FYs 2019-20 to 2021-22. The Board also did not have data of the beneficiaries into whose bank accounts the premium amount had been transferred directly.

Further, the Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) of India intimated (May 2020) the Board that it would not renew any policy in respect of which *Aadhaar* seeded data had not been received and premium up to June 2019 had not been

³³ With coverage of ₹ two lakh, on death due to any reason, at the premium of ₹ 330 per annum.

³⁴ With coverage of ₹ two lakh, on accidental death, at the premium of ₹ 12 per annum.

³⁵ A lump sum amount of ₹ 201 for PMSBY and ₹ 5,001 for PMJJBY.

³⁶ After convergence (June 2017) of the *Aam Admi Bima Yojana* (AABY) with PMJJBY, members in the age group of 18 to 50 years, were to be covered under PMJJBY, while members in the age group of 51 to 59 years, were to continue in the AABY. In addition, members in the age group of 18 to 50 years, were to be covered under PMSBY also.

³⁷ ₹ 15 crore for 29,994 beneficiaries for PMJJBY and ₹ 65 lakh for 32,000 beneficiaries for PMSBY.

³⁸ Including the unspent balance of ₹ 9.05 crore, as on 31 March 2017.

³⁹ The Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) of India was running AABY and PMJJBY on its own. For PMSBY, LIC had a tie-up with the New India Assurance Company (NIAC).

paid, under the converged PMJJBY and the *Aam Aadmi Bima Yojana* (AABY) scheme⁴⁰. LIC further intimated that it would not commence any new policy, under the converged PMJJBY and AABY, with effect from July 2019. LIC also requested the Board to furnish the bank account details, into which the unutilised premium amount of ₹ 4.24 crore, could be refunded. As the bank account details were not provided by the Board to LIC, the amount had not been refunded to the Board (as of March 2023). As such, no beneficiary was covered under any insurance scheme, as of March 2022.

In two⁴¹, out of the four test-checked districts, it was seen that the Labour Superintendents had paid (between April 2017 and August 2018) premium of ₹ 120.86⁴² lakh, to LIC, for coverage of 78,123 beneficiaries⁴³, under different insurance schemes, but had not submitted the required data⁴⁴ of these beneficiaries. In the absence of the required data, the beneficiaries could not get insured. Further, the two districts had not transferred the premium amount as well, into the bank accounts of any of the beneficiaries, to enable them to pay the premium on their own. This had led to the beneficiaries being deprived of getting insurance coverage.

Thus, without insurance coverage of the beneficiaries, the Board had paid only death assistance of ₹ one lakh each to the dependents of the beneficiaries under JBWDDA Scheme since FY 2019-20, though they were eligible to receive ₹ two lakh, in case of natural death, or ₹ four lakh, in case of accidental death from LIC as stipulated in the Scheme. Besides, the amount of assistance for natural/accidental death under the JBWDDA Scheme, framed by the Board, has also not been aligned, as recommended under the MWS&AP.

5.1.2 Non-payment of post-death benefits to dependents of beneficiaries

Audit noticed that spouses are eligible for post-death benefits for the other two schemes also, while dependents, other than the spouse, are eligible for only one of the other two schemes.

Details of death assistance (DA) and funeral assistance (FA) provided to dependents, during FYs 2017-18 to 2021-22, in the four test-checked districts, are shown in **Table 5.2**.

⁴⁰ Under the convergence scheme, the Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Labour and Employment, GoI, decided to merge the beneficiaries of AABY (for age group of 18 to 50 years) with PMJJBY. However, beneficiaries in the age group of 51 to 59 years, were allowed to continue in the existing format of AABY.

⁴¹ Bokaro and Dhanbad

⁴² Dhanbad: ₹ 78,59,450 and Bokaro: ₹ 42,26,320.

⁴³ Dhanbad: 52,306 and Bokaro: 25,817

⁴⁴ Beneficiary details with *Aadhaar* numbers, bank account details and mobile numbers.

Table 5.2: Number of beneficiaries to whom DA and FA sanctioned and paid

District	Assistance	Number of beneficiaries sanctioned					Total		
		2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	Paid	Minimum eligible ⁴⁵	Not paid
Ranchi	Death assistance	11	35	10	57	83	196	222	26
	Funeral assistance	22	28	25	52	83	210		12
Dhanbad	Death assistance	58	87	29	63	147	384	437	53
	Funeral assistance	64	108	40	78	69	359		78
Bokaro	Death assistance	0	0	0	69	115	184	245	61
	Funeral assistance	24	28	8	70	97	227		18
East Singhbhum	Death assistance	0	10	18	46	56	130	192	62
	Funeral assistance	21	33	36	39	54	183		9
Sub total	Death assistance						894	1,096	202
	Funeral assistance						979		117

(Source: Data provided by the respective sanctioning authorities)

It can be seen from **Table 5.2** that death assistance and funeral assistance had been paid, to the dependents of 894 and 979 beneficiaries, during FYs 2017-18 to 2021-22, respectively. Thus, the dependents of the remaining 319, out of the minimum 1,096 eligible beneficiaries, had remained deprived of death assistance (202) and funeral assistance (117).

Audit further analysed the applications of 778 out of 894 beneficiaries paid death assistance in the test-checked districts, and noticed that spouses of 672 deceased beneficiaries were eligible for family pension. However, family pension had been sanctioned to only 217 spouses of eligible beneficiaries. Thus, the remaining 455 spouses, though eligible for pension, had also remained deprived of the benefit.

During joint physical verification, the spouses of eight⁴⁶ deceased workers requested the Board officials, accompanying Audit for joint verification, to start their family pension.

It was further noticed in Audit that the applications for availing benefits had not been diarised in the district offices after they were received from the dependents of the beneficiaries. Also, there was no system in place to ascertain that the applications for all the three benefits were received simultaneously and processed in a synchronised manner, so that the dependents could avail all the admissible benefits on the demise of the registered workers.

Thus, absence of a system for proper documentation of receipt of the submitted applications led to eligible beneficiaries being deprived of grant of all the three benefits. Moreover, the Board had also not ensured provision of all post-death benefits, to the dependents of the deceased workers.

⁴⁵ Total of the maximum number of beneficiaries, paid assistance, under any of the two schemes in a FY, during the period 2017-22 (2017-18: 131; 2018-19: 204; 2019-20: 109; 2020-21: 251; and 2021-22: 401)

⁴⁶ Parxxx Dxxi, Fxcxu Bxuxi, Vxxkxax Kxmrx, Sxbxaxh Mxhxo, and Axtx Kxmrx, from the Silli block, Ranchi; and Kaxxj Fxxxa, Mxxxxh Praxxx Baxxxwxx and Md. Mxxkxax xlax, from the Baliapur block, Dhanbad.

5.1.3 Delays in payment of assistance

As per the MWS&AP (issued in October 2018), post-death assistance is to be provided within 60 days of the demise of the worker.

Test-check of 778 applications of death assistance, in the four test-checked districts, revealed delays in provision of benefits, during FYs 2017-18 to 2021-22, as shown in **Table 5.3**.

Table 5.3: Delays in payment of assistance

Sl. No.	District	Total applications	Total cases delayed (per cent)	Spells of delay (per cent of total cases delayed)				
				More than three years	Two to three years	One to two years	Six months to one year	61 days to six months
1	Dhanbad	384	381 (99%)	18	94	135	98	36
2	Bokaro	184	170 (92%)	11	31	41	51	36
3	Ranchi	80	78 (98%)	2	16	41	14	5
4	East Singhbhum	130	130 (100%)	0	6	20	75	29
Total		778	759 (97%)	31 (4)	147 (20)	237 (31)	238 (31)	106 (14)

(Source: Data provided by the concerned Labour Superintendents)

Table 5.3 shows that there had been delays in 97 per cent of the cases, including 55 per cent of cases, where the delay had been more than one year.

Thus, the Board had not ensured payment of assistance to the dependents of the deceased workers within 60 days, as required in the MWS&AP.

5.1.4 Payments to ineligible beneficiaries

Audit scrutiny of 320 applications, (80 from each test-checked district), to verify the eligibility of beneficiaries for post-death benefits, revealed the following:

(a) Payment of death assistance to non-dependents

Death Assistance was to be paid to the dependents of the deceased registered workers. Further, as per Section 2 (d) of the Workmen' Compensation Act, 1923, 'dependent'⁴⁷ does not include nephew/niece/daughter-in-law, brother and sister (above 18 years of age).

Audit noticed that, in 11 cases, death assistance of ₹ 10.30 lakh (**Appendix 5.1**), had been paid to brothers/sisters (above 18 years of age), as well as nephews and nieces of the deceased workers. Further, death assistance, amounting to ₹ five lakh, had been paid to third parties, on the basis of affidavits, without

⁴⁷ (i) a widow, a minor legitimate or adopted son, an unmarried legitimate or adopted daughter or a widowed mother (ii) if wholly dependent on the earnings of the workman at the time of his death, a son or a daughter who has attained the age of 18 years and who is infirm (iii) if wholly or in part dependant on the earnings of the workman at the time of his death- (a) a widower (b) a parent other than a widowed mother (c) a minor illegitimate son, an unmarried illegitimate daughter or a daughter legitimate or illegitimate or adopted if married and a minor or if widowed and minor (d) a minor brother or an unmarried sister or a widowed sister, if a minor (e) a widowed daughter-in-law (f) a minor child of a pre-deceased son (g) a minor child of a pre-deceased daughter where no parent of the child is alive or (h) a paternal grandparent if no parent of the workman is alive.

obtaining any authoritative documents, like lineage certificates or legal heirs' certificates.

(b) Payment of death assistance to ineligible beneficiaries

Section 16 (1), read with Section 24 (1) (b), of the BOCW Act, requires every registered worker to contribute to the Fund annually, at the specified rate. Further, Section 17 stipulates that non-payment of contribution, for a continuous period of one year, would lead to cessation as a beneficiary, until restored by the Secretary of the Board, being satisfied that the suspension of contribution was due to reasonable ground and the worker is ready to pay the arrears.

Audit noticed that:

- Dependents of 17 workers (**Appendix 5.2**), who had not contributed for a continuous period of one year, had been paid death assistance of ₹ 17 lakh.
- Sixteen applications (**Appendix 5.2**) were not found supported by payment receipts of registration fees, as required under Section 3(3) of the BOCW Act. However, these beneficiaries had been paid death assistance of ₹ 16 lakh.
- Dependents of a worker⁴⁸, who had been registered when he was below the age of 18 years, and another worker⁴⁹, who had died after the age of 60 years, had been paid ₹ two lakh.
- The bank passbooks of two dependents⁵⁰, who had been paid death assistance of ₹ two lakh, showed that they were Public Sector Undertaking (PSU)/ Government employees (**Appendix 5.2**). Further, the applications for availing the benefits revealed that the applicants were widowers of the registered workers. A widower is considered as a dependent under Section 2 (d) of the Workmen' Compensation Act, 1923, only when he is wholly or partly dependent on the earnings of the worker. The benefits were allowed to these applicants as dependents, despite the fact that they were Government/PSU employees, without ascertaining their financial dependency on the registered workers.

Thus, ineligible dependents, of 37 beneficiaries, had been paid death assistance of ₹ 37 lakh.

While accepting the facts, the Department stated (October 2023) that: (i) the proposal for rationalisation of amounts of post death benefits, with those contained under the MWS&AP, and unification of schemes, would be placed before the Board and the SAC (ii) Secretary, BOCW Board, has also issued directions to the sanctioning authorities for timely disbursal of all post death benefits and for ensuring its payment only after verification of eligibility of the

⁴⁸ Dhanbad: Reg No-3x24/12.

⁴⁹ Dhanbad: Reg No-COW1xM001x27x546.

⁵⁰ Dhanbad: Reg No- BLP-2x56/14 and NIS-4xx5/16.

applicants in all respects and (iii) in addition, directions have been issued to examine the applications, wherein ineligibility has been pointed out by Audit.

Recommendation 9: The Board may ensure that the minimum coverage, as recommended under the MWS&AP, is provided to registered workers against accidental/natural death. The Board may also ensure that payments of post-death benefits, not less than the amount and within the time frame, as recommended under the MWS&AP, are made to the dependents of the registered workers.

5.2 Pension Coverage

Section 22 (1) (b) of the BOCW Act, read with Rule 282 of the Jharkhand Rules, envisages that pension shall be paid to beneficiaries, who have been working as building workers, for not less than three years, from the succeeding month of completion of the age of sixty years. Besides, Rules 284, 289 and 290 of the Jharkhand Rules, provide for disability pension to the beneficiaries, family pension to the spouses and orphan pension to the dependents, respectively.

Audit scrutiny of records in the four test-checked districts revealed the following:

5.2.1 Poor coverage of pensioners under normal pension

The number of registered workers, who had completed 60 years, of age, as on 31 March of the years 2018 to 2022, and the year-wise normal⁵¹ pensions sanctioned, are shown in **Table 5.4**.

Table 5.4: Coverage of pensionable workers under normal pension

Financial Year	Ranchi		Dhanbad		Bokaro		East Singhbhum		Total		
	No. of workers who had completed 60 years	No. of sanctioned pensions	No. of workers who had completed 60 years	No. of sanctioned pensions	No. of workers who had completed 60	No. of sanctioned pensions	No. of workers who had completed 60 years	No. of sanctioned pensions	No. of workers who had completed 60	No. of sanctioned pensions	Percentage of sanctioned pensions
2017-18	797	13	683	4	717	2	1,133	9	3,330	28	1
2018-19	278	10	230	14	322	2	315	4	1,145	30	3
2019-20	383	2	538	3	392	1	698	6	2,011	12	1
2020-21	507	5	466	5	446	9	726	21	2,145	40	2
2021-22	481	3	458	26	529	6	611	14	2,079	49	2
Total	2,446	33	2,375	52	2,406	20	3,483	54	10,710	159	1

(Source: Data provided by the district offices)

From **Table 5.4**, it is evident that during FYs 2017-18 to 2021-22, only one to three *per cent* of registered workers had been sanctioned pensions, on attaining the age of 60 years. Thus, the implementation of the pension scheme had been

⁵¹ Regular/normal pension (other than family pension/disability pension/orphan pension).

ineffective. Further, the Board had not undertaken any review of the reasons behind the negligible coverage of pensioners, during FYs 2017-18 to 2021-22.

Recommendation 10: The Board may review the implementation of the pension schemes, to ensure provision of pension coverage to all eligible beneficiaries.

5.2.2 Non-payment of pension

There were 440 cases⁵² of sanctioned pensions, in the four test-checked districts. Audit noticed that, though the first payments had generally been made immediately after sanction, subsequent payments were not being made regularly. It was also seen that, though the Life Certificates of pensioners were required to be submitted in November every year, through the concerned Labour Superintendents, for continuing the pensions, they had been submitted by only 54 (12.27 per cent), out of 440, pensioners.

Audit further noticed that the payments of pension, in 384 (87 per cent) out of 440 cases, had remained outstanding, for periods ranging from one month to more than three years, as on 31 March 2022, as detailed in **Table 5.5**.

Table 5.5: Non-payment of pensions, as on 31 March 2022

Name of District	Payments due for					
	More than three years	Two to three years	One to two years	Six months to one year	Three to six months	One to three months
Ranchi	16	15	54	28	0	13
Bokaro	0	0	4	0	16	0
Dhanbad	7	5	8	0	130	0
East Singhbhum	0	0	0	42	46	0
Total	23	20	66	70	192	13

(Source: Data provided by the respective District Labour Commissioners)

It can be seen from **Table 5.5** that, in 109 cases (25 per cent of 440), payments to pensioners had remained due for more than one year. This includes 23 cases, where payments had remained due for more than three years.

During the beneficiary survey, 11⁵³ out of 40 pensioners, of the Silli Block, in Ranchi district, complained about facing problems in obtaining life certificates, due to lack of knowledge about the issuing authorities or difficulties in obtaining the same from the district offices, that were located far away.

⁵² Normal pension: 159, Family pension: 276, Disability and orphan pension: 5.

⁵³ (1) Kxkxlx Dxxv (2) Sxdxix Mxhxtx (3) Nxxn Lxl Maxxo (4) Sxxrlx Dxxi (5) Rxxkxa Dxxi (6) Sxxnxotx Dxxv (7) Sxxixesxxwxr Mxhxtx (8) Pxxshxa Dxxv (9) Rxxkxanx Dxxv (10) Mxxhxxn Dxxi and (11) Ixxdxanxth Mxxhxo.

Further, during the COVID pandemic⁵⁴, GoI had directed⁵⁵ (July 2020) the Boards not to insist on physical presence of workers, ease out procedures and incentivise workers to cope with the pandemic. However, the Board had not ensured regular payment of pensions, even during the pandemic period.

5.2.3 Disability and orphan pension

Disability Pension (DP) is to be provided to beneficiaries who are permanently disabled due to paralysis, leprosy, T.B., accidents *etc.* It was initially payable at the rate of ₹ 500 per month (from March 2011), but was subsequently revised (April 2018) to ₹ 1,000 per month. In case of permanent partial disability, the concerned beneficiaries were eligible for monthly pension, to be calculated on loss of earning capacity, in proportion to the total pension, depending upon the percentage of disability. In addition, the beneficiary was also eligible for an *ex-gratia* payment of ₹ 10,000, depending upon the percentage of disability. Similarly, in the event of death of the beneficiary or the pensioner, his/her orphan children, below eighteen years of age, were eligible for payment, equal to the amount of family pension per month, as orphan pension, to be distributed equally among all the children. The rate of family pension, being ₹ 500 per month from July 2017, the orphan pension was also payable at the rate of ₹ 500 per month.

Audit scrutiny of records of the four test-checked districts revealed that:

- There were four cases⁵⁶ of disability pension and one case⁵⁷ of orphan pension, but, in none of the cases, had pension been paid regularly. As of March 2022, it had been paid only for 132 months, against the admissible 244 months, since the sanction of pension, in each case. Further, in one case⁵⁸, disability pension had been calculated considering disability of 100 *per cent*, instead of disability of 75 *per cent*, although this had been mentioned in the application for benefit. Further, in two cases⁵⁹, disability pension had not been paid at the revised rates (₹ 1,000 per month) for 8 months (April 2017 to November 2017) and, in one case⁶⁰, for seven months (April 2017 to October 2017).
- *Ex-gratia* amount of ₹ 30,000, had not been paid, in three⁶¹ out of the four identified cases, in the Ranchi district.

⁵⁴ March 2020 to January 2021 and March 2021 to July 2021.

⁵⁵ BOCW Advisory Guidelines, issued by the Department of Labour and Employment, GoI, to the Chief Secretary of each State (vide D.O No-Z-20012/09/2020-BOCW dated 14 July 2020).

⁵⁶ Ranchi: (1) Reg. No- RNxxx/SON/2016 (2) RNx15/TMR/2017 (3) RNx46/SON/2017 and Dhanbad: (4) COW17M000xxx3548.

⁵⁷ Dhanbad: GOV- 6x1/13.

⁵⁸ Dhanbad: COW17M000xxx3548.

⁵⁹ Ranchi: Rxx43/SON/2016 and (2) Rxx46/SONxx17.

⁶⁰ Ranchi: RNxx5/TMR2017.

⁶¹ Ranchi: RNxx3/SON 2016, Rxx15/TMR 2017, and RNxx6/SON 2017.

While accepting the facts, the Department stated (October 2023) that a proposal would be placed before the Board for constitution of a Committee to examine the issue of large number of workers not turning up with applications for availing pension and the method of sorting out the issue of submission of life certificates by the pensioners.

5.3 Maternity benefits

The Jharkhand Rules provide for *ex-gratia* payment of ₹ 1,500, to registered female beneficiaries, each for the first two children, to be paid during the period of maternity. The application for availing the benefit was required to be submitted along with the medical certificate, in original. The amount to be paid was revised, first in March 2011, to an amount equivalent to the wages of unskilled labour for six weeks and again revised (April 2018) to ₹ 15,000. The Labour Superintendents were the sanctioning authorities, in such cases.

In the four test-checked districts, 6,042 beneficiaries⁶² had been provided maternity benefits, during FYs 2017-18 to 2021-22. Audit scrutiny of 200 applications (50 from each test-checked district), revealed the following:

- One beneficiary⁶³ had been paid maternity benefits of ₹ 30,000, for two children, in May 2021 and in March 2022, respectively. The application, in respect of the first child, was found to have been certified by the Senior Resident (Gynaecology and Obstetrics Department), Patliputra Medical College and Hospital, Dhanbad, with the date of birth being mentioned as 27.09.2020. The application, in respect of the second child, was found to have been certified by the Medical Officer, Primary Health Centre, Tundi, Dhanbad, without mentioning the date of birth. However, as per the birth certificate attached with the application, the date of birth, of the second child was 30.01.2021. As such, the gap in the dates of birth between the two children, was only four months. Similarly, another beneficiary⁶⁴ had been provided ₹ 30,000, for two children, with a gap of only four months⁶⁵ between the stated dates of delivery of the two children. Thus, irregular payment of benefits could not be ruled out.
- Ten beneficiaries had been paid maternity benefits of ₹ 1.50 lakh (₹ 15,000 each) twice, for the same child. Twenty beneficiaries had been paid ₹ 1.34 lakh in excess, due to payment at revised rates, at later dates, instead of the payment being made at the rates applicable at the time of birth. Thus, 30 beneficiaries had been paid ₹ 2.84 lakh (**Appendix 5.3**) over and above their entitlements.

⁶² Ranchi: 868, Dhanbad: 1,901, Bokaro: 1,657 and East Singhbhum: 1,616.

⁶³ Dhanbad: Registration No-TUN -2xx1/19.

⁶⁴ Bokaro: Registration No-1016.

⁶⁵ 04.09.2020 and 02.01.2021, as per the birth certificates.

- On the other hand, five beneficiaries⁶⁶ had been paid less by ₹ 22,000, due to payments at pre-revised rates.
- Five beneficiaries⁶⁷ had been paid ₹ 48,000, without submission of any medical certificate issued by an authorised medical officer, as required under Rule 281 of the Jharkhand Rules.
- One beneficiary⁶⁸, registered on 01.08.2019, had been paid (March 2021) ₹ 15,000, for a child born on 09.11.2018, *i.e.* prior to the registration date, as per the report of the Labour Enforcement Officer, Baliapur, Dhanbad. However, the birth certificate, issued on 22.01.2019, indicated the date of birth as 09.11.2019, which was also mentioned in the application. As such, the benefit was paid on the basis of contradictory reports and documents.

Thus, benefits of ₹ 0.93 lakh⁶⁹ had been paid on the basis of doubtful documents or without obtaining the required documents and, hence, misappropriation of this amount, could not be ruled out. Besides, ₹ 2.84 lakh had been paid in excess of entitlements.

5.4 Financial Assistance to the children of workers, for education

Section 22 (1) (e) of the BOCW Act provides for financial assistance for education to the children of the beneficiaries. The Board had formulated (March 2011) a scheme in this regard, named the “*Medhavi Putra/Putri Chatravriti Yojana*” (Meritorious child scholarship scheme), for various classes of study.

Audit observed in the test-checked districts that, during FYs 2017-18 to 2021-22, a total of 35,943 children⁷⁰ had been disbursed scholarships totalling ₹ 20.80 crore for pursuing studies. Scrutiny of sanctioned⁷¹ applications in respect of 3,123 children⁷², revealed that ₹ 1.89 crore had been disbursed to them during FYs 2017-18 to 2021-22, of which only 16 children had received scholarships of ₹ 3.20 lakh for pursuing post-graduation courses and four children had received scholarship of ₹ two lakh for engineering courses in FY 2018-19. The remaining children had been sanctioned scholarship for pursuing studies up to graduation level, except Engineering courses.

Thus, the coverage of scholarships, for higher education, was minimal.

⁶⁶ (i) COW17F0xx3xx3643 (ii) COW17F00xxxx3640 (iii) RN-2xx4/SIL (iv) RN-8x3/SIL (v) RN-2xx1/SIL

⁶⁷ RN-xx3/TMR, RN-5xx/BUN, RN-xx8/SON, RN-6xx/TMR and RN-xx7/TMR

⁶⁸ Dhanbad: Registration No-BIP-7x8x-019.

⁶⁹ (₹ 0.15 lakh + ₹ 0.15 lakh + ₹ 0.48 lakh + ₹ 0.15 lakh)

⁷⁰ Ranchi: 2,834, Dhanbad: 15,437, Bokaro: 10,088 and East Singhbhum: 7,584.

⁷¹ Disbursed through 20 sanction letters

⁷² Provided scholarships through 20 sanction letters,

5.5 Other Welfare Schemes

Apart from death/disability assistance, pension/family pension, maternity benefits and scholarship scheme, as detailed in the preceding paragraphs, audit observations with regard to three⁷³ other welfare schemes, are discussed below:

5.5.1 Excess/ineligible payments

As per BOCW Rules, a registered worker is eligible for purchase of tool kits, related to the concerned trade of work, for which an *ex-gratia* amount of ₹ 2,500 was payable to the worker, on submission of receipt for purchase of tool kit, from August 2017 onwards. The amount was revised to ₹ 3,000, from December 2021 onwards. In addition, the workers are also eligible for purchase of safety kits (helmet, shoes *etc.*), for which an *ex-gratia* amount of ₹ 1,000, was payable from April 2016 onwards.

Audit noticed in the four test-checked districts that 51,673 and 77,438 beneficiaries, had been paid assistance for procuring tool kits and safety kits, respectively, during FYs 2017-18 to 2021-22. Test-check of 400 applications each, of tool kits and safety kits (100 applications, from each of the four test-checked districts), revealed that:

- Out of 400 beneficiaries, 77 (19 *per cent*) beneficiaries had been provided assistance for safety kits, in the test-checked districts. Of these, 68 beneficiaries had been provided assistance for safety kits twice, leading to inadmissible payment of ₹ 68,000. Further, out of 68 beneficiaries, 59 had availed the benefits from the same block and nine from different blocks. Apart from the above 68 beneficiaries, nine ineligible beneficiaries had been paid assistance of ₹ 9,000. Audit noticed that one beneficiary⁷⁴ had been paid assistance, despite being above sixty years of age at the time of availing the benefit, four beneficiaries⁷⁵, who were above 60 years of age, at the time of their registration and four beneficiaries⁷⁶, with ages below 18 years, though they were not entitled for the same.
- Further, out of 400 test-checked applications for the labour tool kit assistance scheme, Audit noticed that nine beneficiaries were provided tool kit assistance of ₹ 9,000 for procuring tool kits. Out of these, six beneficiaries⁷⁷ had been provided assistance of ₹ 15,000 for the benefits twice, two beneficiaries⁷⁸, who were above sixty years of age, at the time of

⁷³ (1) Labour Toolkit Scheme; (2) Bicycle Assistance Scheme; and (3) Construction workers Safety Kit Assistance Scheme.

⁷⁴ Ranchi: RN (SDR) 0xx1246

⁷⁵ (1) Reg No- COWxxM001xxx3576 (2) COW17F000xxx3571 (3) COW19M00xxxx3574 and (4) COW17Fxx03xx3571

⁷⁶ (1) Reg No-COW20Mxx016xx573 (2) COW20Mxx04xx3579 (3) COW17Mxx00xx3574 and (4) COW2xx00xx33xx73

⁷⁷ Bokaro: (1) Reg No-4xx5 (2) 2xx4 (3) 3xx4 and East Singhbhum: (4) 38x1 (5) 4xx4 and (6) 3xx3

⁷⁸ Reg No: COW17Fxx19xx3649 and COW17Mxx102xx6x0

availing the benefits, of ₹ 5,000 and one beneficiary⁷⁹, above 60 years of age at the time of registration, of ₹ 2,500. As such, three ineligible beneficiaries had been paid assistance of ₹ 7,500 and six beneficiaries had been paid ₹15,000, over and above their entitlements.

Thus, 74 beneficiaries had been provided benefits of ₹ 83,000, in excess of their entitlements as well as 12 ineligible beneficiaries had also been paid assistance of ₹ 16,500.

5.5.2 Bicycle Assistance Scheme (BAS)

The Board decided (January 2015) to make payment of ₹ 3,500 each, to female registered workers, aged between 18 and 45 years and to all male registered workers, of all age groups, for purchase of bicycles. The beneficiaries were required to provide purchase receipts within 15 days of receipt of the said cash benefit. This time period was subsequently revised (April 2018) to three months, with the rate of payment also being revised (December 2021) to ₹ 5,000.

Audit noticed, in the four test-checked districts, that 15,854 beneficiaries⁸⁰ had been paid cash benefits for purchase of bicycles, during FYs 2017-18 to 2021-22. Test-check of 200 applications (50 from each of the test-checked districts) revealed that:

- The 200 beneficiaries had been paid a total amount of ₹ 7 lakh between December 2018 and May 2020. However, none of them had submitted cash receipts, as of March 2022.
- Out of 200 beneficiaries, 14 female workers, who were above the age of 45 years, on the date of sanction, had been paid ₹ 49,000, and one male worker had been paid ₹ 3,500, despite being above 60 years of age, on the date of sanction (**Appendix 5.4**).

Thus, payment of benefits amounting to ₹ 7 lakh, was not supported by the required purchase receipts. This also included 15 ineligible beneficiaries who had been paid ₹ 0.53 lakh.

While accepting the facts, the Department stated (October 2023) that the Secretary, BOCW Board, has issued directions to all the sanctioning authorities in the State to allow payments of all types of benefits, only after thorough examination of applications, with respect to the eligibility criteria, set under each scheme. In addition, the sanctioning authorities have been directed to examine the cases of ineligible payments and take appropriate action thereon. Further, ₹ 3,500 paid to ineligible beneficiaries against the bicycle assistance scheme, has been recovered.

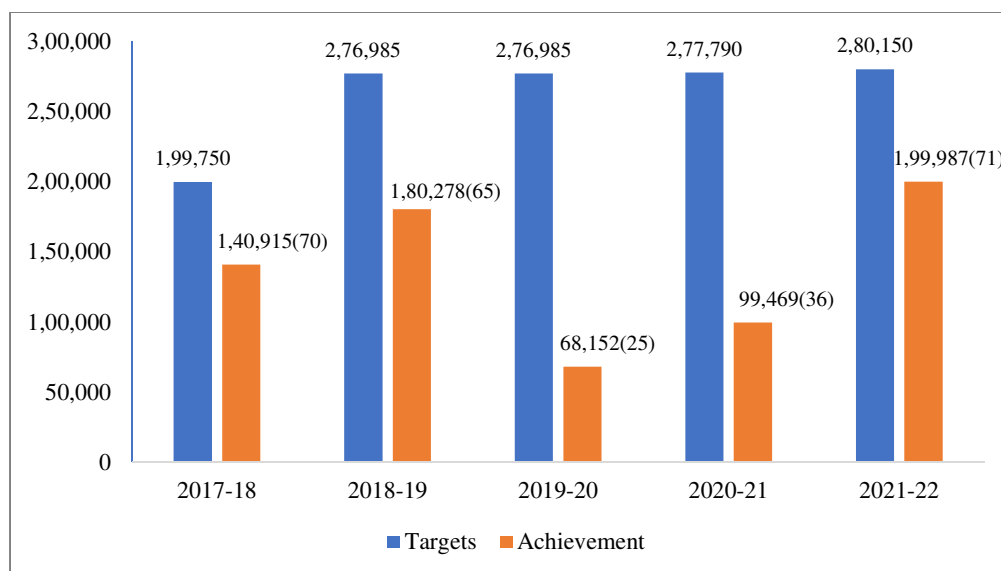
⁷⁹ COW20M0004x2x579

⁸⁰ Dhanbad: 5,905, East Singhbhum: 5,514, Bokaro: 2,290 and Ranchi: 2,145.

5.6 Shortfall in the coverage of beneficiaries

The Board had fixed targets, in regard to the number of beneficiaries to be covered each year, under different schemes. Details of the targets and coverage of beneficiaries, under 10 welfare schemes⁸¹, during FYs 2017-18 to 2021-22, is shown in **Chart 5.1**.

Chart 5.1: Targets and achievements



(Source: Data provided by the Board. Figures in brackets represent the percentage of achievement)

It can be seen from **Chart 5.1** that the achievements had ranged between 25 and 71 per cent, during FYs 2017-18 to 2021-22. The achievement drastically fell from 65 per cent in FY 2018-19 to 25 per cent in FY 2019-20. Despite being directed (June 2020) by the Department of Labour and Employment, GoI, to provide the benefits due, to all eligible construction workers, by optimally utilising cess funds, in the wake of COVID 19, the achievement during FY 2020-21 remained only 36 per cent.

Further audit analysis revealed that the Labour Superintendents (LSs) had issued cheques to banks along with the list of beneficiaries, for transfer of benefits into their bank accounts, through NEFT. However, scrutiny of the statements of bank accounts (operated by the LSs) revealed that there had been reverse credits⁸² of ₹ 163.61 lakh⁸³, pertaining to 2,268 beneficiaries⁸⁴, during FYs 2017-18 to 2021-22, in three⁸⁵ test-checked districts (except Ranchi). The

⁸¹ In which targets were provided to the field offices, by the Board, during FYs 2017-18 to 2021-22.

⁸² The amounts returned back to the account of the sanctioning authority, by the bank, instead of crediting them into the bank accounts of the beneficiaries, due to errors in the bank details of the beneficiaries.

⁸³ LS, Dhanbad: ₹ 38.82 lakh, LS, Bokaro: ₹ 48.31 lakh and DLC, Bokaro: ₹ 29.03 lakh, LS, East Singhbhum: ₹ 28.52 lakh, DLC, East Singhbhum: ₹ 18.93 lakh

⁸⁴ Dhanbad-570, Bokaro-86 and East Singhbhum-1,612

⁸⁵ Dhanbad, Bokaro and East Singhbhum

concerned sanctioning authorities had also entered the unpaid amounts as receipts in their cash books.

Further scrutiny of the Cash Book of the Labour Superintendent, Bokaro, revealed receipt back of three transactions (29.11.2017 and 26.05.2021) of ₹ 17.20 lakh, pertaining to different schemes⁸⁶, which could not be transferred, due to wrong bank accounts, wrong IFSC codes and other reasons. However, in a maximum number of cases, reasons for the failed transactions, or details of the relevant schemes, were not found mentioned in the Cash Book. Despite non-transfer of benefits, the Labour Superintendent concerned had not assessed details of the deprived beneficiaries, to ensure re-payment, in future.

Thus, the Board had not ensured payment of benefits to those beneficiaries, to whose bank accounts, benefits could not be transferred.

⁸⁶ Tool kits: ₹ 8.88 lakh, Bicycle: ₹ 3.22 lakh, Sewing machine: ₹ 5.10 lakh

