

Chapter 2

Re-engineering Process for implementation of Direct Benefit Transfer

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2.1 Non-preparation of documentation for IT system

DBT is a major reform initiative to re-engineer the existing cumbersome delivery processes using modern ICT. Technology is a critical component required to enable DBT in any scheme or program.

The schemes were in operation under manual mode. For adoption of the DBT framework including re-engineering of process and maintenance of audit trail it was important to follow a systematic approach for system development. This would require a consultative process for gathering user requirement, translating it into system requirement and design; and documenting the same for knowledge transfer and business continuity.

Audit carried out data analysis on beneficiaries' data for the period from 2017-18 to 2019-20 (extended up to July 2020) obtained from Social Justice and Empowerment Department using Microsoft Structured Query Language (MS SQL) and Computer Assisted Audit Techniques like, Tableau and Interactive Data Extraction and Analysis (IDEA).

Validation of the results of data analysis was done in the field offices i.e. in six District Social Welfare Offices viz. Ambala, Kaithal, Karnal, Kurukshetra, Panchkula and Yamunanagar with the available records. Using statistical sampling method, five *per cent* of cases were randomly selected for validation within each selected district offices.

The work of development of application for computerisation of disbursement of benefits under benefit schemes of Department of Social Justice and Empowerment was done through M/s National Informatics Centre (NIC). Audit observed that NIC did not prepare any User requirement specification (URS)/ System requirement specification (SRS) before taking up the development of the application.

When systems are developed in the absence of full documentation, it would not only make it difficult to maintain system in the longer term, but it would not be possible to review the system for deriving assurance that it works as intended.

Due to non-preparation of SRS, Audit could not assure itself, about mapping of complete business rules in the application and adequate system controls. Deficiencies like enrolment of deceased pensioners, payment of pension to deceased pensioners, enrolment of underage persons for Old Age Pension Scheme, same person enrolled under multiple schemes, multiple persons enrolled under single Aadhaar ID, Transfer of benefit to account of person other than the beneficiary were observed during audit (discussed in subsequent paragraphs) which indicate weak systemic control.

As the SRS/URS was not prepared, the efficacy of the DBT system was checked through targeted audit queries designed in line with audit objectives and data analysis. The analysis and verification was focused to identify whether the objectives of process re-engineering, duplication, accurate targeting and management of DBT were achieved. The findings of the analysis are discussed in detail in the chapters.

The financial implication of the shortcomings as analysed from the data provided by the Department was ₹ 237.31 crore as detailed in Table 2.1 below:

Table 2.1: Details of financial implication of shortcomings

(₹ in crore)

Para Ref.	Category/Sub Category	Old Age Samman Allowance	Pension to Widow and Destitute Women	Haryana Divyang Person Pension Scheme	Impact in money Value with respect of payment to ineligible beneficiaries
2.6.1	Transfer of Pension to the dead beneficiaries account under different social security schemes	80.12	13.76	3.66	97.54
2.6.3	Transfer of Social Security Pension to the dead beneficiaries' treated as normal pension account	1.63	0.56	0.14	2.33
2.9	Pension disbursed to multiple beneficiaries on same aadhaar Number	6.61	2.08	0.46	9.15
2.10	Undue benefit by providing benefits simultaneously under two schemes	0.21	-	-	0.21
2.11	Transfer of beneficiaries Pension to other persons' bank accounts	36.95	17.53	-	54.48
2.12	Payment to ineligible beneficiaries (transfer to beneficiaries before attaining the age of 60 years)	0.94	-	-	0.94
2.13	Disbursement of social security pension to retired Government employees and family pensioner	5.96	2.27	0.30	8.53
2.14	Disbursement of social security pension to untraceable beneficiaries	46.38	13.91	3.84	64.13
	Total				237.31

The issues/observations of IT application development without documentation and instances of irregular payment should be investigated and appropriate action should be taken.

2.2 Delay in disbursement of pension benefits

DBT was to ensure a better and timely delivery of benefits to the people by speeding up payments and enhancing financial inclusion¹. According to authority letter issued by the department to the disbursing banks/post offices, pension amount should be credited in beneficiaries' account on the date of issue of the authority letter. However, considering standing operating procedure for DBT payment the maximum total time for receiving payment response (success/failure) is T+4working days, where T is the day of the transaction when the payment file is received with authorisation to process payment by system for DBT and T₄ represents the maximum permissible time for submission of response file after process of payment (success/failure) to the originator of payment file.

Audit observed that:

(A) Payment status fields

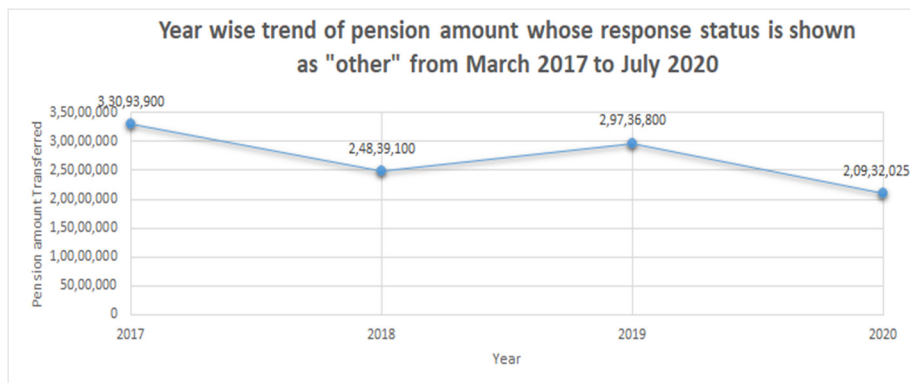
On analysis of data of beneficiaries provided by the department for the period between April 2017 and July 2020, it was noticed that pension of ₹ 19,803.12 crore (10,47,65,864 transactions) was transferred during the period to beneficiaries' account under social security schemes. In this database status of each transaction from destination bank was captured under the field 'payment status'. Seven types of values were captured under the field 'payment status' viz. 'Success', 'other', 'credit success', 'A/c Frozen', 'A/c Dormant', 'A/c does not exist', 'A/c Closure' and 'Response not received'.

Audit analysis revealed that:

- Out of ₹ 19,803.12 crore, only ₹ 16,695.71 crore (8,74,52,031 transactions) was successfully transferred to the beneficiaries' accounts (*Annexure -I*).
- Transaction status of ₹ 3,025.61 crore (1,68,80,027 transactions) has not been updated in database by the department. Disbursing agencies were required to upload the response on SJE pension portal. However, it was neither uploaded on portal nor monitored by the department.
- Pension of ₹ 81.80 crore (4,33,806 transactions) has not been transferred to the beneficiaries' account due to multiple reasons i.e. A/c frozen, A/c dormant, A/c does not exist, A/c closure and other. Further, it could not be ensured whether this amount was received back by the department or lying with disbursing banks/post offices.

¹ Financial inclusion means that department has access to useful services that meet their needs – transactions, payments and savings. – delivered in a responsible and sustainable way.

- There were transactions of ₹ 10.86 crore (58,872 transactions) where the status of credit/payment into beneficiaries' accounts was depicted under the head 'other' in the database. The current status of these transactions could not be ensured due to lack of reconciliation. The Department should take remedial action by reconciling to actual status of credit.



The department mentions in the monthly authority letter issued to the disbursing banks/post offices to credit the amount in beneficiaries' accounts on the same day of issue of authority letter and return the undisbursed amount to the department along with its details. No such exercise was done by the disbursing banks/post offices nor was this pursued by the department. It was also pertinent to mention that the department did not sign any Memorandum of Understanding with disbursing banks/post offices.

(B) Time taken for transactions

Pension of ₹ 7,852.23 crore was transferred in 4,22,06,476 transactions (*Annexure-II*) after maximum permissible time for submission of response file after process of payment (success/failure) to the originator of payment file i.e. after four days from authority letter to the banks/dispersing agency. The delay ranged between one day (i.e. day after T+4) to 444 days.

The delay in disbursement of benefit to the beneficiaries defeated the principal objective of DBT, while the lack of timely reconciliation and non enforcement of instructions for crediting the amount will have to be remedied for the system to work as intended.

2.3 Delay in passing intended benefits due to late enrolment of beneficiaries

Article 41 of the Constitution of India directs the State to provide public assistance to its citizens in the case of unemployment, old age, sickness and disablement as well as in other cases of undeserved want, within the limit of the State's economic capacity and development. Social security, invalid and old age pensions figure as Items 23 and 24 of the 7th Schedule of the Constitution of India in the Concurrent List. It is in compliance of these guiding principles that

the GoI introduced National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP) under the Ministry of Rural Development on Independence Day, 1995 as a fully funded Centrally Sponsored Scheme.

The NSAP at present includes five² sub-schemes as its components which includes the following three: **(a)** Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme (IGNOAPS) **(b)** Indira Gandhi National Widow Pension Scheme (IGNWPS) **(c)** Indira Gandhi National Disability Pension Scheme (IGNDPS).

Guidelines issued in respect of NSAP in October 2014 by the Ministry of Rural Development states that:

- (i) The States may ensure the deserving person's eligibility should be proactively identified by reaching out to their households. However, if an eligible person's name does not figure in the Below Poverty Line (BPL) list, he/she should not be left out from the eligible beneficiaries list.
- (ii) The assistance under the sub-schemes of NSAP is applicable for persons belonging to BPL category.
- (iii) The eligible age for IGNOAPS is 60 years.
- (iv) Field level workers/officials should be entrusted with the task of identifying beneficiaries and getting the forms filled up. Also support should be provided to get the requisite certificates from the authorities concerned.
- (v) For the identification of new beneficiaries of BPL, Gram Panchayats/Municipalities should be given the central role. Elected heads and representatives should be sensitized on the criteria and processes of NSAP.
- (vi) Also as per the directions of the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India in Writ Petition (Civil) number 196 of 2001, the deserving person's eligibility should be identified and included in the beneficiaries list.
- (vii) While individuals can file applications, it is incumbent on the authorized officials to reach out to potential beneficiaries on an 'out today' approach and get the application forms filled up and provide assistance to get the relevant records. Field level workers / officials should be entrusted with the task of identifying beneficiaries and getting the forms

² (i) Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme (IGNOAPS) (ii) Indira Gandhi National Widow Pension Scheme (IGNWPS) (iii) Indira Gandhi National Disability Pension Scheme (IGNDPS) (iv) National Family Benefit Scheme(NFBS) and (v) Annapurna Scheme. The benefit provided by the selected schemes of State to BPL beneficiaries includes the benefits provided under NSAP.

filled up. Also support should be provided to get the requisite certificates from the authorities concerned.

Audit noticed that 78,567³(district wise details given in *Annexure-III*) BPL beneficiaries were registered in scheme management system after attaining age of 60 years. The range of delay in enrolment of these BPL beneficiaries was between one year to 20 years as shown below:

Table 2.2: Details of range of delay in enrolment of beneficiaries

Delay range in years(after 60 years)	Number of beneficiaries
0-5	61,987
6-10	12,969
11-20	3,288
Grand Total	78,244

In the Old Age Samman Allowance scheme, audit observed that 78,244 (out of which 75,214 are shown as normal⁴ in status as on date) BPL beneficiaries were registered with delays ranging between one year to 20 years, whereas these beneficiaries should have been proactively identified by the department when beneficiary attained the age of 60 as required under the guidelines. The beneficiaries should be identified by reaching out to their households by the department.

There were 22,206 BPL beneficiaries in six selected districts who were given benefit with delay as per results of data analysis. The findings of data analysis was cross checked with 541⁵ cases (0-5 years : 426, 6-10 years: 91, 11-20 years: 21 cases, three cases for more than 20 years) in the six selected offices of DSWOs. The verification confirmed the results of data analysis in respect of all 541 cases. Besides, no household survey was done by any of the six DSWOs.

Reply from Social Justice and Empowerment Department was awaited (December 2021).

2.4 Delay in enrolment of beneficiaries violated the Right to Service Act provisions

The Haryana Right to Service Act (RTS Act), 2014 provides for the delivery of service to eligible person within the notified time limits for the pension schemes of the Social Justice and Empowerment Department. Under RTS Act, the time period for providing services has been revised (November 2016) from 120 days to 60 days from the date of application.

³ Apart from 78,244 mentioned in table, delay of 21-40 years in passing intended benefits to 323 beneficiaries (for periods beyond the inception of scheme) was also noticed.

⁴ Any person eligible to receive benefit under a scheme as on that date as per the database.

⁵ Ambala-100, Kaithal-100, Karnal-100, Kurukshetra-100, Panchkula-41 and Yamunanagar-100

Audit noticed that 2,84,471 beneficiaries were registered in scheme management system after the time limit prescribed in the Haryana RTS Act i.e. beyond 60 days. The range of delay in enrolment of beneficiaries was between one day to 963 days in the selected schemes viz. Old Age Samman Allowance, Pension to Widow, Destitute Women and Haryana Divyang Person Pension.

As per results of data analysis, there were 80,434 beneficiaries in six selected districts who were enrolled with delays. The results were cross verified with 600⁶ (delay ranging between: one day to 609 days) selected cases in the six selected offices of DSWOs. The validation confirmed the results of data analysis for all the 600 cases. The DSWOs confirmed the findings in their response.

Reply from Social Justice and Empowerment Department was awaited (December 2021).

2.5 Non-adherence to specific timelines for disbursement of social security pensions

Social security pension schemes are in the nature of income support schemes and every beneficiary under the scheme is entitled to receive pension on a monthly basis. As per the directions of the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India in Writ Petition (W.P.) number 196 of 2001, the State Governments were directed to make the payment in respect of IGNOAP to BPL beneficiaries by 7th of each month.

Audit noticed on analysis of data of beneficiaries that there was delay in issuing pension payment authority to disbursing agencies. The delay ranged between two and 262 days (calculated from 10th 7 of each of the month). It was also noticed that pension payment was not being done regularly in the said timeline under all the schemes including IGNOAP to BPL beneficiaries which was in violation of the directions of Hon'ble Supreme Court decision.

Non-ensuring of timelines stipulated for making payment of benefits would result in hardships to vulnerable section of society. Besides, the department instructs disbursing banks/post offices in the monthly authority letter to credit the amount in beneficiaries' accounts on the same day of issue of authority letter and return the undisbursed amount to department along with details.

⁶ Ambala-100, Kaithal-100, Karnal-100, Kurukshetra-100, Panchkula-100 and Yamunanagar-100

⁷ Three days considered for processing at Department level.

2.6 Transfer of Pension to the dead beneficiaries account

As per rule 9 (ii) of ‘Old Age Allowance Scheme 2005’, Scheme Rules, 2005 applicable with effect from 29 November 2005 vide Haryana Government notification dated 20 September 2006, allowance shall cease to be payable on the death of a beneficiary and if the beneficiary dies before receiving allowance for a particular period, the same shall lapse.

Further, as per the Govt. notification No. 459-SW(4)-2011 dated 10 June 2011, in case there is no withdrawal from the bank account for a continuous period of 60 days, such bank account will be rendered “inoperative” for the purpose of this Scheme by the Bank with no further credit of benefits under this Scheme into it. Such “inoperative” bank accounts will be reported by the Bank to the Department. In case the beneficiary applies for re-operationalization of the bank account within the next 90 days with justifiable reason, the bank account may be re-operationalized with the permission of the Director. If not, the bank account will be rendered “dead” for the purpose of this Scheme and the benefits credited into the bank account after the last withdrawal would be remitted back by the Bank to the Department with accrued interest.

The department instructs disbursing banks/post offices in the monthly authority letter to credit the amount in beneficiaries’ accounts on the same day of issue of authority letter and return the undisbursed amount to department along with its details. Department also stated that data of death cases was being fetched from Registrar General of India (RGI) portal and deceased beneficiaries were being identified by matching aadhaar number.

Analysis of data revealed the following:

2.6.1 Transfer of Pension to the dead beneficiaries account under different social security schemes

Pension amounting to ₹ 98.96⁸ crore was transferred to 91,436 number of dead beneficiaries’ account under selected schemes for period ranging from one month to 40 months as detailed below:

Table 2.3: Details of pension transferred to dead beneficiaries

Name of Scheme	Number of beneficiaries	Total amount transferred (₹in crore)
Old Age Samman Allowance	74,893	81.29
Pension to Widow and Destitute Women	12,990	13.97
Haryana Divyang Person Pension Scheme	3,553	3.70
Total	91,436	98.96

Data analysis revealed that there were 25,861 beneficiaries in the six selected districts where pension was transferred in the accounts after their demise. This

⁸ Includes ₹1.42 crore for 2580 beneficiaries discussed in Para 2.9 and 2.11 to 2.14.

was cross-verified with 569⁹ selected cases at the six selected offices of DSWOs. The validation exercise confirmed the results of data analysis. In 50 cases (seven Kaithal, six Panchkula and 37 in Yamunanagar) an amount of ₹ 9.04 lakh was recovered. In the remaining 519 cases, the concerned DSWOs have taken up the issue with the concerned banks and requested for transfer of the pension amount back to the department's account as confirmed by DSWOs in their response.

Disbursement of pension to beneficiaries already identified as deceased indicated that neither suitable controls/checks were put in the system to restrict these transactions nor the payments were monitored by the appropriate authorities. Department is also not using any Business Intelligence or reports to monitor the gaps identified by audit during data analysis.

Reply from Social Justice and Empowerment Department was awaited (December 2021).

2.6.2 Payment to beneficiaries enrolled after their death

During scrutiny, it was observed that 1,092 beneficiaries¹⁰ were enrolled under selected schemes after their death.

The pension of ₹ 23.27 lakh was transferred to 241 beneficiaries (out of 1,092 beneficiaries as seen from the data furnished) whose enrolment as beneficiary was done after their death under the selected schemes.

It is pertinent to mention that the status of these beneficiaries is also shown as 'dead' in database even as on date (July 2020). This indicated inadequate monitoring and system controls.

In six selected districts, there were 78 beneficiaries enrolled after their death (as per results of data analysis) where pension was transferred to the accounts. This was validated in seven¹¹ selected cases at the six selected offices of DSWOs. In three cases (one case in Kaithal and two in Yamunanagar) an amount of ₹ 0.21 lakh has been recovered. In the remaining four cases, the concerned DSWOs have stated to have taken up the issue with the concerned banks and requested for transfer of the pension amount back to the department's account.

Reply from Social Justice and Empowerment Department was awaited (December 2021).

⁹ Ambala-100, Kaithal-100, Karnal-100, Kurukshetra-100, Panchkula-69 and Yamunanagar-100

¹⁰ Old Age Samman Allowance-828 beneficiaries, Pension to Widow and Destitute Women-167 beneficiaries and Haryana Divyang Person Pension Scheme-97 beneficiaries.

¹¹ Ambala-1, Kaithal-1, Karnal-1, Kurukshetra-1, Panchkula-1 and Yamunanagar-2

2.6.3 Transfer of Social Security Pension to the dead beneficiaries' treated as normal pension account

Pension amounting to ₹ 2.34¹² crore was transferred to 618 beneficiaries' account under three schemes after their death till date (July 2020) as detailed below:

Table 2.4: Details of pension transferred to beneficiaries after death under three schemes

Pension Type	Number of Beneficiaries	Pension Amount transferred (in ₹)
Old Age Samman Allowance	419	1,63,59,650
Widow Pension	159	56,37,600
Disability Pension	40	14,39,650
Total	618	2,34,36,900

Further, the above accounts were shown as normal beneficiaries i.e. eligible beneficiaries for pension disbursement even as on date (July 2020).

As per results of data analysis, there were 188 beneficiaries in six selected districts in which pension was transferred to dead beneficiaries treated as normal. This was further validated through cross verification of 10¹³ cases in six selected offices of DSWOs. Out of the 10 cases, in one case (Karnal district) an amount of ₹ 0.34 lakh was recovered and in another case DSWO (Panchkula) stated that verification of beneficiary is under process. In the remaining 8 cases, DSWOs of Ambala, Kurukshetra, Kaithal, and Yamunanagar stated that deficiency occurred during the aadhaar validation process due to linking of wrong aadhaar numbers and thus these beneficiaries were declared as dead. However, after physically appearing of these beneficiaries previously declared dead and production of their aadhaar card, pension of these beneficiaries was re-started.

Reply from Social Justice and Empowerment Department was awaited (December 2021).

The reply indicates that procedure prescribed by Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) for seeding of Aadhaar was not followed. As Aadhaar seeding is supposed to be error-free, keying in of wrong Aadhaar numbers at the time of enrolment/migration of legacy data and rectification after their physically appearing casts doubts on the integrity of data as well as the process adopted. Department needs to investigate and fix responsibility.

During exit conference, Department of SJE stated that this problem is being faced in the case of legacy data. However, while processing new data department is ensuring this would not happen. Data on RGI portal is not available on real time basis. However, the department comes to know the detail

¹² Includes ₹ 0.01 crore for 12 beneficiaries discussed in Para 2.9, 2.11 and 2.14.

¹³ Ambala-3, Kaithal-2, Karnal-1, Kurukshetra-2, Panchkula-1 and Yamunanagar-1

of dead beneficiaries after lapse of three to four months. In this period pension continues to be released to these dead beneficiaries.

2.7 Non-updation of beneficiaries' income in the pension database

As per Haryana Government Notification, issued on 22 March 2012, maximum income limit for availing social security pension was increased from ₹ 50,000 per annum to ₹ 2,00,000 per annum. The person was eligible for the grant of Old Age Samman Allowance, if:

- (i) the person was of age 60 years or more;
- (ii) the person is domiciled and is a resident of Haryana State; and
- (iii) his/her income from all sources together with that of his/her spouse does not exceed ₹ 2,00,000 per annum.

Similarly, a woman of age 18 years and above was eligible for grant of Widow and Destitute Women pension under the Scheme if her own income from all sources was below ₹ 2,00,000 per annum.

Audit noticed that income field for 34,07,826 beneficiaries out of total number of 34,84,872 beneficiaries was left blank in two schemes i.e. Old Age Samman Allowance and Widow and Destitute Women Pension Scheme. Neither any mechanism was evolved to verify the annual income of the beneficiary at the time of enrolment nor periodic review of income of beneficiaries done to ensure the eligibility.

Thus, validation process of beneficiaries was largely non-existent. Further, non-capturing of income in the database resulted in incomplete and unreliable data.

During exit conference, the department stated that updation of income in pension database is being done in phased manner involving the platform using Parivar Pehchan Patra¹⁴ functionality. It was also suggested on behalf of State Government that verified income of beneficiaries may be updated in database. Also ACS (Finance) suggested that in the income field, department should shift from self-declaration mode to verified income mode.

¹⁴ Parivar Pehchan Patra (PPP) aims to build a comprehensive, reliable and accurate database of families residing in the State which can be further utilized by various line departments for welfare scheme delivery across the State. It shall contain details such as the family's structure, its residential details, social and economic details of each member of the family. A unique 8-digit ID is issued to each family registered in the PPP database. This ID can be used by the family members to apply for any services/schemes of the State linked to PPP.

2.8 Deficiency in digitization of master database of beneficiaries

Analysis of data of beneficiaries revealed that aadhaar number, which is unique for each person, for 1,15,329 beneficiaries was changed during the period April 2017 to July 2020 in which 1,01,980 beneficiaries are still getting pension as normal and the remaining 13,349 beneficiaries' status have been updated to Died/Aadhaar Disputed/Cancelled/Duplicate/Ineligible/Suspended or Untraceable.

As per Section 7 of the Aadhaar (Targeted delivery of Financial and other subsidies, benefits and services) Act, 2016, Aadhaar is used as means of authentication for availing services, benefits and subsidies.

The selected schemes namely (i) Old Age Pension Scheme, (ii) Pension to Widows and Destitute Women Pension Scheme and (iii) Disabled Persons Pension Scheme were in operation since 1964, 1980-81 and 1981-82 respectively. However, DBT was implemented by the Department from February 2015 while use and possession of Aadhaar was made mandatory with effect from 23 March 2017 for transfer of benefit through DBT in Haryana.

The Department entered Aadhaar numbers without ensuring correctness and there was no validation of the numbers entered with the Aadhaar database. Whenever beneficiary approached for correction in the Aadhaar number the same was corrected in the database.

Further, the change of Aadhaar was not reflected in the audit trail for 1,045 beneficiaries out of 1,15,329. In the absence of audit trail in respect of these beneficiaries, it could not be ascertained when or by which user of IP address these missing beneficiaries were enrolled from. Missing of audit trail is a serious issue and indicates that system is not tamper proof and creates doubt about the integrity of system. Missing of audit trail needs to be investigated and responsibility fixed.

The change of aadhaar number after enrolment of beneficiary and absence of audit trail indicates that validation/verification checks were not applied to authenticate beneficiaries with aadhaar at the time of enrolment. Thus, due to lack of verification checks, application is vulnerable to amendments to data that could lead to erroneous payments, wrong postings of transactions and ultimately qualified accounts.

In the selected districts it was observed during data analysis that Aadhaar of 23,772 beneficiaries were changed. This was cross verified with 499¹⁵ selected cases at the six selected offices of DSWOs. The DSWOs stated that action in these cases would be taken after verification.

¹⁵ Ambala-83, Kaithal-100, Karnal-100, Kurukshetra-100, Panchkula-16 and Yamunanagar-100

Audit revealed that the provision for the change of Aadhaar has also been provided at the social justice portal. The department should ensure where due to circumstances the Aadhaar number is required to be changed, it should be supported by stringent process and an audit trail.

2.9 Pension disbursed to multiple beneficiaries on same Aadhaar Number

As per Haryana Government Notifications No.203-SW(4)-2011 dated 19 April 2011 and 878-SW(4)-201 dated 5 September 2017, a person can avail the benefit of at most one pension/allowance, even if eligible under more than one social security schemes listed below:

- (i) Old Age Samman Allowance Scheme.
- (ii) The Haryana Pension to Widows and Destitute Women Scheme.
- (iii) The Haryana Divyang Pension Scheme.
- (iv) Dwarf Allowance Scheme.
- (v) Eunuch Allowance Scheme.
- (vi) Financial Assistance to Kashmiri Migrant Families.

Further, as per Haryana Government Notification No. 459-SW (4)-2011 dated 10 June 2011, if a person is detected to have more than one bank account under the Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) Scheme, all his bank accounts would be terminated. He would become ineligible to receive benefits under any Social Security Scheme of the State in future. Any benefits received under the Scheme by suppressing true information or making wrong claim would be recovered as arrears of land revenue with 12 *per cent* interest per annum.

Audit noticed that pension of ₹ 16.17 crore was transferred to 25,134 beneficiaries' with 12,314 Aadhaar IDs between April and October 2017 under Old Age Samman Allowance, Haryana Pension to Widows and Destitute Women and Haryana Divyang Pension schemes. In this regard, Audit observed that Pension of ₹ 9.32¹⁶ crore was disbursed to 14,641 beneficiaries (out of 25,134) though the status being updated as non-existing, cancelled, died, duplicate, untraceable, ineligible, etc. between the period from April to October 2017 and subsequently stopped after October 2017. The following significant issues were observed in the disbursement of ₹ 9.32 crore made:

¹⁶ It includes 274 beneficiaries to whom unauthorised pension of ₹ 0.17 crore was transferred as pointed out in Para 2.10, 2.11, 2.13 and 2.14.

- (A) Pension was disbursed to two or more beneficiaries under same or different schemes with *same* Aadhaar ID and different beneficiary pension IDs (*Annexure-IV*).
- (B) Department disbursed pension to 56 beneficiaries under above mentioned three schemes without¹⁷ any Aadhaar.
- (C) 6,593 beneficiary pension IDs were generated using 3,265 Aadhaar IDs (out of 12,314 Aadhaar IDs) and amount of ₹ 3.94 crore transferred to these beneficiaries. Out of these 6,593 beneficiary pension IDs, status of 3,328 pension IDs were updated as dead and remaining 3,265 beneficiary pension IDs were still getting pension. This resulted into disbursement of unauthorised pension of ₹ 1.96 crore to 3,328 beneficiaries whose status was declared as dead in database.
- (D) Pension amounting to ₹ 1.98 crore (during April to October 2017) was transferred to 3,052 beneficiaries pension IDs which were generated using 1,524 Aadhaar IDs. In these cases, beneficiary name and father's name were same for two or more beneficiaries with same Aadhaar. The risk of single beneficiary getting multiple benefits could not be ruled out in Audit.
- (E) Pension of ₹ 4.51 lakh was transferred to 68 beneficiaries pension IDs (pension IDs were generated using 34 Aadhaar IDs) where Aadhaar and bank account number were same for two different beneficiary pension IDs.

Department may consider having a Business Intelligence report highlighting such discrepancies and also develop IT controls to rule out these inconsistencies.

After October 2017, one or more accounts having same Aadhaar ID was closed by stating status as dead and status of other account as normal i.e. pension being disbursed till date. This implies that Aadhaar has not been used for uniqueness of beneficiary identity, controls do not exist to inhibit duplicity in IDs and verification process was compromised.

It was observed during data analysis, that there were 6,501 cases (beneficiaries) in six selected districts in which pension was disbursed to multiple beneficiaries with same Aadhaar. This was cross checked with 330¹⁸ cases at the six selected offices of DSWOs. All DSWOs stated that action in these cases would be taken after verification.

¹⁷ The Aadhaar number mentioned against each was 9999-9999-9999

¹⁸ Ambala-29, Kaithal-80, Karnal-83, Kurukshetra-65, Panchkula-4 and Yamunanagar-69

In view of the observations above, it could be seen that the input controls were weak resulting in incomplete, unauthorized/irrelevant and duplicate data entries in the pension database. Further, due to lack of documentation, the systemic controls envisaged by department were not available. Besides, deficiencies/discrepancies noted during audit showed that systematic controls were mostly absent.

Reply from Social Justice and Empowerment Department was awaited (December 2021).

2.10 Undue benefit by providing benefits simultaneously under two schemes

As per Haryana Government notification No.878-SW(4)-201 dated 05 September 2017 (in reference to Notification No.203-SW(4)-2011 dated 19 April 2011), the beneficiaries of Old Age Samman Allowance Scheme cannot avail the benefit of Ladli Social Security Allowance Scheme simultaneously, as the benefit of Ladli Social Security Allowance Scheme is applicable up to the age of 60 years and that of Old Age Samman Allowance Scheme after 60 years.

Analysis of data of beneficiaries revealed that pension of ₹ 42.81 lakh was transferred to 298 beneficiaries' under Old Age Samman Allowance and Ladli Social Security Allowance schemes simultaneously. This resulted in unjustified payment of ₹ 21.41¹⁹ lakh to 298 beneficiaries.

Audit also observed that for this purpose, new beneficiary IDs were assigned for other scheme by modifying beneficiary's account number, name or father's name but the Aadhaar number remained same.

In the selected districts, data analysis revealed that pension was transferred simultaneously under two schemes to 179 beneficiaries. This was cross-verified in nine²⁰ test checked cases at the six selected offices of DSWOs. The verification confirmed the results of data analysis. In one case in Kaithal district an amount of ₹ 0.52 lakh has been recovered. In the remaining 8 cases, DSWOs Ambala, Karnal, Kurukshetra and Yamunanagar intimated that recovery notices have been issued.

Reply from Social Justice and Empowerment Department was awaited (December 2021).

¹⁹ It includes 2 beneficiaries to whom unauthorised pension of ₹ 0.16 lakh was transferred as pointed out in Para 2.11 and 2.14.

²⁰ Ambala-2, Kaithal-1, Karnal-1, Kurukshetra-2, Panchkula-0 and Yamunanagar-3

2.11 Transfer of beneficiaries Pension to other persons' bank accounts under social security schemes

Rule 87 of the General Financial Rules, 2017 stipulates that transfer of benefits should be done directly to beneficiaries under various Government Schemes and Programmes using ICT. Necessary process re-engineering to minimise intermediary levels and to reduce delay in payments to intended beneficiaries with the objective of minimising pilferage and duplication should be done for all Government Schemes and Programmes.

Analysis of beneficiary data revealed that pension of ₹ 54.54²¹ crore for 9,305 beneficiaries (during April 2017 to July 2020) was transferred to bank account with different names in Old Age Samman Allowance and Widow and Destitute Pension as detailed below:

Table 2.5: Details of pension transferred to other persons' bank accounts

Pension	No. of Beneficiaries	Amount transferred during April 2017 to July 2020 (in ₹)
Old Age Samman Allowance	6,317	37,00,10,000
Widow and Destitute pension	2,988	17,53,81,400
Total	9,305	54,53,91,400

It is pertinent to mention that mobile number, bank account number and Aadhaar number have also not been linked to the correct beneficiaries.

This involves risk of embezzlement, and Department should investigate such cases and fix responsibility of the concerned officials.

2.12 Payment to ineligible beneficiaries

As per notification No. 458A-SW(4)-2011 dated 10 June 2011, a person is eligible for the grant of Old Age Samman Allowance, if, (i) the person is of age 60 years or more; and (ii) the person is domiciled and resident of Haryana State.

Also as per Haryana Government, Social Justice and Empowerment Department notification No. 459-SW(4)-2011 dated 10 June 2011, any benefits received under the Scheme by suppressing true information or making wrong claim would be recovered as arrears of land revenue with 12 *per cent* interest per annum.

Analysis of data revealed that 1,860 beneficiaries were enrolled under Old Age Samman Allowance scheme before attaining the eligibility age of 60 years and total pension amounting to ₹ 94.25²² lakh was transferred to these beneficiaries.

²¹ It includes 37 beneficiaries to whom unauthorised pension of ₹ 0.06 crore was transferred as pointed out in Para 2.12 to 2.14.

²² It includes 2 beneficiaries to whom unauthorised pension of ₹ 0.05 lakh was transferred as pointed out in Para 2.14.

This shows that desirable input controls at the time of enrolment i.e. validation and verification of the beneficiaries was inadequate and ineligible beneficiaries were getting enrolled.

Validation of 500²³ cases at the six selected district offices of DSWOs was done. The validation confirmed the results of data analysis. In respect to 58 cases of Karnal district, recovery process was initiated and ₹ 1.51 lakh in 22 cases recovered. In the remaining 442 cases, DSWOs Ambala, Kurukshetra, Kaithal, Panchkula and Yamunanagar stated that action would be taken after verification.

Reply from Social Justice and Empowerment Department was awaited (December 2021).

2.13 Disbursement of social security pension to retired Government employees and family pensioner

As per notification No. 458A-SW(4)-2011 dated 10 June 2011 and No. 308-SW(4)-2012 dated 22 March 2012, a person is not eligible for the grant of Old Age Samman Allowance, in case, the person is receiving pension from any Government or Local/Statutory Body or any organization substantially financed by any Government or Local/Statutory Body.

Also, a woman otherwise eligible for Haryana pension to widows and Destitute Women Scheme is ineligible in case she is employed by any Government or by any Local/Statutory Body or any organization substantially financed by any Government or Local/Statutory Body or who is drawing pensioner family pension therefrom as per notification No. 458B-SW(4)-2011 dated 10 June 2011.

It is pertinent to mention here that in the case of Haryana Divyang Pension Scheme, the eligibility criteria was for income to be less than minimum wages of unskilled labour.

Analysis of data of beneficiaries and data of pensioners (up to December 2018) from e-pension module of Integrated Financial Management System (IFMS) gathered from Office of the Director General, Treasuries and Accounts, Haryana and Centralized Pension Processing Cell (CPCC) SBI, Panchkula for the period April 2017 to July 2020 revealed that 1,475 beneficiaries enrolled under these three selected schemes viz. Old Age Samman Allowance scheme, Haryana Pension to Widows and Destitute Women Scheme and Haryana Divyang Pension scheme were retired employees of Government of Haryana or were family pensioners. Disbursement of social security pensions to these beneficiaries was violation of above-mentioned government instructions.

²³ Ambala-100, Kaithal-73, Karnal-100, Kurukshetra-100, Panchkula-29 and Yamunanagar-98

Further, it was observed that ₹ 8.60²⁴ crore was disbursed to these unauthorised persons, which was recoverable with interest.

Audit is of the opinion that if similar type of data from other agencies and department i.e. Central Government, Government Company, Boards, autonomous bodies, etc. were to be subjected to Business Intelligence, the numbers are likely to be higher.

Data analysis revealed that there were 485 cases in six selected districts in which pension was transferred to retired government employees and family pensioners. This was validated in 26²⁵ selected cases at the six selected offices of DSWOs. The validation confirmed the results of data analysis. In five cases of Kaithal district an amount of ₹ 6.11 lakh had been recovered (One case from selected sample and four in other cases). In the remaining 25 cases, DSWOs Ambala, Kurukshetra, Karnal, Kaithal, Panchkula and Yamunanagar intimated that after verification, pension has been stopped and recovery notices have been issued.

Reply from Social Justice and Empowerment Department was awaited (December 2021).

During exit conference, the department accepted the issue and stated that recovery would be made as well as demonstrative action would be considered.

2.14 Disbursement of social security pension to untraceable beneficiaries

As per Government notification No. 459-SW(4)-2011 dated 10 June 2011, in case there is no withdrawal from the bank account for a continuous period of 60 days, such bank account will be rendered “inoperative” for the purpose of this Scheme by the Bank with no further credit of benefits under this Scheme into it. Such “inoperative” bank accounts will be reported by the Bank to the Department. In case the beneficiary applies for re-operationalization of the bank account within the next 90 days with justifiable reason, the bank account may be re-operationalized with the permission of the Director. If not, the bank account will be rendered “dead” for the purpose of this Scheme and the benefits credited into the bank account after the last withdrawal would be remitted back to the Department with accrued interest by the Bank.

It was seen that pension amounting to ₹ 64.13 crore was transferred to 38,060 beneficiaries under three schemes viz. Old Age Samman Allowance, Pension to Widow, Destitute Women and Haryana Divyang Person Pension though the status was updated to ‘untraceable’ by the banks and these beneficiaries had not withdrawn the pension amount from their bank accounts even after continuous

²⁴ It includes 36 beneficiaries to whom unauthorised pension of ₹ 0.07 crore was transferred as pointed out in Para 2.14.

²⁵ Ambala-5, Kaithal-5, Karnal-6, Kurukshetra-4, Panchkula-1 and Yamunanagar-5

90 days of the payment. Further, this amount pertains to only 18 pension disbursing banks/post offices (out of 63 pension disbursing banks/post offices). Audit noticed that remaining 45 pension disbursing banks/post offices did not carry out any activity related to identification and declaring any beneficiary as 'untraceable'. Further, the activity relating to declaring any beneficiary as 'untraceable' by pension disbursing banks/post offices was also not being done regularly.

In 18 pension disbursing banks/post offices, ICICI bank and United Bank of India took action only once i.e. in January 2020. There was also delay in declaring an account 'inoperative' which ranged from 124 to 7,389 days.

As per authority letter, details of undisbursed amount were to be submitted by disbursing banks/post offices every month. However, no such exercise was done and Department had also not signed any Memorandum of Undertaking or Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with these disbursing banks/post offices to ensure compliance.

Reply from Social Justice and Empowerment Department was awaited (December 2021).

During exit conference, the department stated that ₹ 228 crore have been recovered from banks. However, the details of beneficiaries from whom the amount has been recovered was not mentioned.

2.15 Porting of incomplete legacy data

A legacy database is an old record that is inherited from the legacy records and also form a base for departmental decisions. The work of digitisation of legacy records was an important aspect to embed control over duplicate records and it should be ensured that the complete and correct information was captured in the system as the same would be used over a long period of time for disbursement of benefits to the intended beneficiaries.

In the absence of assurance about correct porting of legacy data audit could not ensure total recovery of old record. However, audit observed the following discrepancies:

2.15.1 Non porting of enrolment date in legacy data

Analysis of data of beneficiaries revealed that data of 21,99,374 beneficiaries ported was incomplete. The important mandatory field i.e. 'Enrolment date' was shown as 'Null' in the database for the legacy data that was digitized from the old legacy records. The entry/enrolment date is an important parameter to know when the beneficiary got enrolled for availing the benefit.

2.15.2 Incorrect age in legacy data

The selected three schemes are Centrally Sponsored Schemes and the expenditure incurred on these schemes by the State is reimbursed from the Central Government. The Central Government reimburses this expenditure in biannual instalments (twice an year). The eligibility criteria and the scale of assistance under the sub-schemes of NSAP are as follows:-

- Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme (IGNOAPS): The eligible age for IGNOAPS is 60 years. The pension is ₹ 200 p.m. for persons between 60 years and 79 years. For persons who are 80 years and above the pension is ₹ 500 per month.
- Indira Gandhi National Widow Pension Scheme (IGNWPS): The eligible age is 40 years and the pension is ₹ 300 per month. After attaining the age of 80 years, the beneficiary would get ₹ 500 per month.
- Indira Gandhi National Disability Pension Scheme (IGNDPS): The eligible age for the pensioner is 18 years and above and the disability level has to be 80 *per cent*. The amount is ₹ 300 per month and after attaining the age of 80 years, the beneficiary will get ₹ 500 per month. Dwarfs would also be an eligible category for this pension.

In addition to the Central Government share, the State Government deliver the benefit to the beneficiary by providing its share. As the State Government is not aware about the age of its beneficiary, then the demand for reimbursement of the amount from Centre Government would also be defective which is loss to the State Government.

A person is eligible for the grant of Old Age Samman Allowance if the person is of age 60 years or more. Similarly, a person or women in the age group of 18 years and above shall be eligible for grant of Divyang pension and Widows and Destitute Women Pension Scheme.

Scrutiny of data for the selected schemes showed that the important mandatory fields like Date of Birth and Age was 'Null' or incorrectly entered (like 0 or more than 120 years up-to 2,068 years) in 15,646 cases. Out of 15,646 beneficiaries, 3145 beneficiaries were related to old age pension enrolment wherein data in age field were entered incorrectly (less than 60 years or more than 120 years) and age field of balance 12,501 beneficiaries in respect of Divyang pension and Widows and Destitute Women Pension Scheme were updated as 'Null' in database.

If age captured was as less than 60 years then the person was not eligible for enrolment in the Old Age Samman Allowance and if it was captured as more than 120 years then the same is subject of investigation, but no correction/checking in these cases have been made by the department even after

lapse of 39 months of complete digitization. The incorrect entry in the Age field would continuously lead to the incorrect reimbursement from the Central Government in respect of NSAP scheme.

2.15.3 Missing records of beneficiaries from master database

It was revealed in analysis of beneficiary data that audit trail for 327 beneficiary IDs were present in data dump but no records related to these IDs existed in master data table (Beneficiary table). Hence, information about these beneficiaries such as name, father's name, DOB, address, bank account number, etc. as well as payment made to them, if any, could not be ascertained as depicted below:

Table 2.6: Details of missing records of beneficiaries

No. of beneficiary IDs	Details in audit trails	Remarks
186	Two entries against each ID in audit trails, one for insertion and other for deletion	No records of beneficiaries found in master database for these IDs.
16	Only one entry against each ID in audit trails i.e. for deletion of record	No records of beneficiaries found in master database for these IDs.
125	One entry against each ID in audit trails, entry is for insertion of record	No records of beneficiaries found in master database for these IDs. Information of beneficiary and payment made to them could not be ascertained.
327	Total Beneficiary IDs	

In the absence of audit trails, unauthorised changes in the database could not be ruled out. This could lead to erroneous payments.

2.15.4 Gaps in beneficiary ID sequence in master database

Gaps were observed in sequence of allotted beneficiary IDs e.g. beneficiary IDs from 3,871 to 3,934; 8,472 to 9,990; 4,38,109 to 4,39,430 did not exist in master database, however, beneficiary IDs before and after these gaps were allotted to other beneficiaries. In multiple cases, gap of 1 or 2 IDs was also found in the beneficiary IDs.

Further, significant gaps were also detected in beneficiary IDs. Absence in sequence from beneficiary ID 35,48,907 to 50,00,000 (absence of 14,51,094 IDs), 25,83,454 to 26,55,133 (absence of 71,680 IDs) and 33,50,818 to 33,77,769 (absence of 26,952 IDs) was observed.

In the absence of information and system documentation, audit could not derive the requisite assurance that this gap arose in the normal course of porting of legacy data.

2.16 Absence of IT Security Policy

Any good IT system should have specifically laid down IT security policy indicating minimum standards and compliance requirements for specific areas like assets classification, data security, personal security, physical, logical and environmental security, communications security, legal, regulatory and contractual requirements, business continuity planning, security awareness and training, security breach detection and reporting requirements, violation of enforcement provisions, etc.

As per the Best practices and Guidelines to States on Data security, Privacy, Confidentiality and Protection issued by Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, State is required to conduct security posture assessment to determine appropriate risk levels and maintenance requirements of its assets and frame State's security policy accordingly.

Audit observed that Department did not have any documented IT security policy. Documents of review policy, periodic reviews' minutes of meeting, etc., was not found on records.

2.17 Lack of training to users/staff

Staff training and development are closely linked to staff resource planning.

Audit observed that no training was provided to staff at the time of roll out and no periodical trainings were conducted.

2.18 No business continuity planning and disaster recovery planning

The objective of having a Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery Plan and associated controls is to ensure that in the event of an interruption or disaster leading to temporary or permanent loss of computer facilities, the organisation can still accomplish its mission and it would not lose the capability to process, retrieve and protect information maintained.

Continuity and disaster recovery plans should be documented, periodically tested and updated as necessary. Back-up should be cycled through a number of generations by, for example, using daily, weekly, monthly and quarterly tapes. Backup should be stored, together with a copy of the disaster recovery plan and system documentation, in a fire-safe off-site.

No record showing compliance to the above requirement was furnished by the Social justice and Empowerment Department.

2.19 Weak access control

Guidelines for Assessment of Effectiveness of Security Controls (January 2010) published by GoI emphasizes use of quality authentication secret word or phrase (password). The guidelines for assessment of effectiveness in the security controls defined in the guideline are recommended for use in information systems for e-Governance. As per these guidelines the minimum and maximum password age should be one day and 30 days (typically) respectively. These

guidelines recommend imposing password complexities, password change on first use and after specific periods, restrictions on re-use of passwords, etc.

It was observed that no password policy, as per guidelines was formulated by the department.

Reply from Social Justice and Empowerment Department was awaited (December 2021). However, DSWOs Karnal, Kaithal, and Yamunanagar stated that the observation was noted for future compliance.

2.20 Missing audit trails in IT system

Audit trail is a series of records either in hard copy or in electronic format that provide a chronological record of user activity and other events. It demonstrates how a specific transaction was initiated, processed and summarised and is necessary to track the history of transactions, system shortcomings, erroneous transactions, changes/ modifications in data, etc. The system should be capable of recording logs of different events with date and time of each event occurring during the business process.

Analysis of data of beneficiaries revealed that audit trails related to 5,55,807 (out of 40,07,597 beneficiaries IDs) beneficiary IDs was not present in data provided. In the absence of audit trail it could not be ascertained when or by which user of department and from which IP address these beneficiaries were enrolled.

Further, 1,183 gaps (in beneficiary ID sequence) were detected in audit trails in which 38,033 items/entries/transactions were missing. Due to inadequate controls, application is vulnerable to unauthorised amendments to programs/data. Also it could lead to erroneous payments, misleading reports, wrong postings of transactions and ultimately qualified accounts.

During exit conference, the matter was discussed and it was opined that it needs to be examined by the Department.

2.21 Approval of beneficiaries in bulk in a single day

As per the system prescribed on the e-disha portal, applicants collect the application form SARAL portal/department website, etc. and the filled forms are signed/verified by the Sarpanch/Municipal Councillor/Gazetted Officer along with required supporting documents. Thereafter, applicants' details and scanned copy of application form are to be uploaded on SARAL portal by Antyodaya/Common Service Center operators (CSC)/online mode by applicants itself and after receiving the application in 'view mode' by DSWO office, the application is marked for verification. Applicant has to visit block level office (DSWO) for physical verification with application form and supporting documents. After verification, DSWO approves the application and

assigns pension ID to applicants. Data of approved beneficiaries is recorded in pension portal through Web enabled API (Application programming Interface). Pension disbursement is initiated with next upcoming regular pension.

Analysis of data of beneficiaries revealed that in Faridabad district, 3,135 beneficiaries were approved by the DSWO in a single day (11 February 2020). Similarly 1,206, 1,035, 1,297, 1,147 beneficiary cases were approved by the respective DSWOs Palwal, Sirsa, Sonapat and Jind districts in a single day. The above approvals are assessed as area of concern.

During exit conference, the Department was of the opinion that reasons for approval in bulk in a single day may be enquired from concerned DSWOs.

2.22 Irregular payment of commission to banks and post office

As per office Memorandum F. No. 32 (07) / PF-II 2011 (Vol. II) Ministry of Finance Department of Expenditure (PF-II Division) dated 26 February 2016, all DBT transactions should be routed through the National Payment Corporation of India (NPCI). A transaction cost of ₹ 0.50 would be payable for each transaction to be shared between the sponsor banks, destination entities and NPCI in accordance with the extant NPCI Circular. Further, vide office Memorandum No. F. No. 32 (07) / PF-II 2011 Vol. II dated 01 June 2016 it was clarified that with regard to the charges for transactions pertaining to the State DBT Schemes, transaction charges as per the extant NPCI circular will be applicable, for which the NPCI may approach the respective State Governments for settlement of its claims for all DBT transactions for 2015-16, which were not routed through NPCI, transaction charges shall be payable at the extent NPCI rate only to claimant sponsor banks. After 31 March 2016, DBT/DBTL transactions not routed through NPCI will not be entitled to either transaction charges or cash out incentives.

Audit noticed that Department transferred benefits under various pension schemes under DBT through Banks and Post Office. As per instructions issued by GoI, Ministry of Finance Department of Expenditure all the payment under DBT should be routed through NPCI and for this ₹ 0.50 was payable for each transaction, which was to be shared between the sponsor bank destination entities and NPCI. Further, it was also instructed that DBT transactions which were not routed through NPCI after 31 March 2016 would not be entitled for either transaction charges or cash out incentives.

The department paid ₹ 38.05 crore during the period between April 2016 and July 2020 to the Banks and Post Offices as commission transferred under the schemes, which was in violation of GoI instructions as all the respective DBT payments were made without involving NPCI and thus was irregular. Further, no MoU signed between banks/Post Offices and Department was found on records.

2.23 Non-updation of Savings data on State DBT Portal

As per Guidelines/Methodology “for assessing benefits due to Aadhaar based DBT” issued by the DBT Mission, GoI which envisages that ‘Data on saving should be reported on monthly basis to DBT Mission/State DBT Cell. If any, Ministry/Department proposes to deviate from the periodicity, they should refer the matter to the DBT Mission/State DBT Cell.

Audit noticed that Social Justice and Empowerment Department assessed saving amounting to ₹201.33 crore during the year 2015-16. While scrutinizing the record of DBT Cell, it was noticed that data of saving in respect of DBT schemes for the years 2016-17 to 2020-21 was not uploaded on the State DBT cell. This was in violation of above said guidelines.

2.24 Non-conducting of Social Audit of Schemes under NSAP

NSAP guidelines stipulate that social audit of all the schemes should be conducted at least once in every six months by Gram Sabha/Ward Committee and that for each social audit, the Gram Sabha/Ward Committee has to elect a Social Audit Committee comprising at least two beneficiaries from each of the schemes under NSAP, of which one shall be a woman. It should be ensured that beneficiaries from SCs, STs and Minorities also are represented in the Social Audit Committee.

Scrutiny of records of the department revealed that no such audit was conducted.

2.25 Conclusion

Audit observed deficiencies like enrolment and payment to ineligible beneficiaries (deceased, underage or enrolled in other schemes), multiple beneficiaries enrolled under same Aadhaar id or without Aadhaar id, transfer of benefit to account other than beneficiaries account. This indicated not only inadequate controls but lack of effective verification and monitoring by the concerned authorities.

There were instances of missing audit trails, beneficiary data and pension being disbursed to untraceable beneficiaries questioning the integrity of the data in the application.

Planning and implementation of the IT system was deficient and assurance that the system met its objectives could not be derived in audit due to absence of complete documentation. Analysis of data showed non-compliance to various rules and procedures as detailed in the findings, indicating the system is not adequate to meet its objectives in its present form and is unable to mitigate the risk of duplication and erroneous payments.

2.26 Recommendations

- To ensure transfer of payment to correct beneficiaries' accounts, the Government may evolve proper systems for authentication of Aadhaar numbers of legacy beneficiaries with Aadhaar portal.
- The Government/Department may carry out a comprehensive review of the beneficiaries' data including legacy data to ensure its completeness, authenticity and correctness.
- The Government/Department may put in place a robust system for scrutiny of applications, validation and verification process of beneficiaries and transfer of benefit in correct account. Access to state pensioner database should be obtained and before enrolment of beneficiaries cross verification should be carried out.
- Distribution of pension to deceased persons should be avoided by linking the software with various agencies and not only from data of Registrar General of India. System of disseminating information like payment of financial assistance to the beneficiaries through SMS should be considered.
- The Government may consider evolving real time monitoring mechanism for effective decision making and supervision. This would assist in assessing the undisbursed amount of pension in respect of untraceable beneficiaries and discontinuance of pension of unauthorized beneficiaries. and to revert back the amount in these cases in the Department's account and evolve Information System for regular SMS notifications to the beneficiaries.
- The State Government may evolve proper systems for identification and on boarding of all DBT applicable schemes, beneficiaries and saving earned after implementation of DBT.
- The State Government may devise mechanism to enable enrolment of eligible beneficiaries immediately after attaining the age i.e. 60 years and suitable business re-engineering process should be put in place.
- The State Government may take strenuous efforts for effecting recovery of inadmissible payment of assistance besides fixing responsibility for inaction by the authorities concerned.
- The Department may put in place a mechanism to ensure preparation of required documents (User Requirement Specifications, System Requirement Specifications, etc.) whenever development or updation of any IT system is taken up. Audit of functional requirement of IT system may also be done periodically.