Financial inclusion, social security, and low-cost benefits for the masses have been high on the NDA government’s agenda. Ever since the NaMo government’s ascent to the centre, PM Modi, FM Jaitley, and the Cabinet have worked relentlessly towards promulgation of new schemes that make financial security for the common man. The first step towards achievement of social security was the rollout of the Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY). With Phase I being declared a major success and 1.8 crore accounts having been opened across the country, the government has flagged off three new schemes on 9 May 2015 – two insurance schemes (Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana, and Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana), and a pension scheme (Atal Pension Yojana). This is called Phase II of the PMJDY, since it was important to get people into mainstream banking before any benefits can be extended to them.

**Atal Pension Yojana**

“As our young population ages, it is also going to be pension-less. Encouraged by the success of the Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana, I propose to work towards creating a universal social security system for all Indians that will ensure that no Indian citizen will have to worry about illness, accidents or penury in old age”, said Finance Minister Jaitley in his February 2015 Budget speech. In keeping with this ideal, a National Pension Scheme, the Atal Pension Yojana will be effective from 1 June 2015. The scheme intends to bring pension benefits to allow people of the unorganised sector to enjoy social security with minimum contribution per month. People who work in the private sector or employed in occupations that do not give them the benefit of pension can apply for the scheme. They can opt for a fixed pension of INR 1,000 or 2,000 or 3,000 or 4,000 or 5,000 on attaining the age of 60. The amount of contribution and the individual’s age will determine the pension. Upon the contributor’s death, the spouse of the contributor can claim the pension and after the spouse’s death the nominee will be returned the corpus accrued. The amount collected under the scheme is to be managed by Pension Funds as per the investment pattern specified by the Government. Individual applicants will have no choice of pension funds or investment allocation.

**Benefits of Atal Pension Yojana**

The Atal Pension Scheme will bring security to ageing Indians while at the same time promote a culture of savings and investment among the lower and lower middle class sections of society. One of the greatest benefits of the scheme may be enjoyed by the poorer sections of society. The government of India has decided to contribute 50 percent of the user’s contribution or INR 1,000 a year (whichever is lower) for a period of five years. This contribution will, however, be enjoyed only by those who are not income tax payers and those who join the scheme before 31 December 2015.
**Who is Eligible?**

The Atal Pension Yojana (APY) is open to all Indians between the age of 18 and 40. This allows an individual to contribute for at least 20 years before reaping the benefits of the scheme. Any bank account holder who is not a member of any statutory social security scheme can avail of the scheme. All existing members of the government’s ‘Swavalamban Yojana NPS Lite’ will automatically be migrated to the Atal Pension Yojana. It will now replace the Swavalamban scheme, which did not gain much popularity across the country.

**How to Enroll?**

To sign up for the Atal Pension Yojana, an account holder must fill in an authorisation form and submit it to his/her bank. The form will require complete details including account number, spouse and nominee details, and authorisation for auto debit of contribution amount. Account holders signing up for the scheme need to ensure that sufficient balance is maintained in the account every month, failing to do so will attract a monthly fine of –

- INR 1 for monthly contribution up to INR 100
- INR 2 for monthly contribution between INR 101 and INR 500
- INR 5 for monthly contribution between INR 501 and INR 1,000
- INR 10 for monthly contribution beyond INR 1,001

If no payment is made towards the scheme for six months, the holder’s account will be frozen. For 12 months, the holder’s account will be deactivated. For 24 months, the holder’s account will be closed.

For those who do not have a bank account: A person needs to open a bank account first by submitting the KYC document and Aadhar card. He/she is also required to submit the APY proposal form. Exiting the scheme: Under ordinary circumstances, an account holder who has enrolled for the Atal Pension Yojana will not be able to exit the scheme before the age of 60. Exiting the scheme is only possible in special circumstance such as in the event of the death of the beneficiary.

**Launch Across the Country**

The Atal Pension Scheme and the other insurance schemes were launched on 9 May, simultaneously by Union and Chief Ministers. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the scheme from Kolkata. Launch functions were held at about 116 locations across the country including state capitals and a number of district headquarters. Post its launch, 41,124 people have already registered for the scheme as on 11 May 2015.
‘Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao’ Scheme

Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched scheme, ‘Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao’ (save the girl child, educate the girl child), on January 22 in Panipat in Haryana. With an initial corpus of Rs 100 crore, the scheme has been launched in a hundred districts across the country. In Haryana where the child sex ratio (CSR) has been dismally low, 12 districts have been chosen: Rewari, Mahendergarh, Bhiwani, Jhajjar, Ambala, Kurukshetra, Sonepat, Rohtak, Karnal, Kaithal, Panipat and Yamuna Nagar. The scheme aims at making girls independent both socially as also financially through education. This approach of the Government can facilitate in generating awareness and improving the efficiency of delivery of welfare services meant for the women.

Why the scheme?

The latest census of 2011 reveals a declining trend in CSR in the age group of 0 to 6 years, the figure for girls having gone down to 919 per 1,000 boys, from what it was in the 2001 census – 927. The practice of aborting female foetus has become more rampant with the availability of modern diagnostic tools for sex determination of the unborn. With the social biases favouring the male child on consideration of economic advantages and the deep-rooted attitude of labelling the girl child as more of a liability, the sex ratio in the country has been skewed. The process of elimination continues even after birth in various forms of discrimination in matters of health, nutritional and educational needs of the girl child. Therefore, it has been rightly stated that women’s disempowerment begins even before birth. Concomitantly, the fact remains that empowerment of women leads to allround progress and emancipation from backwardness of beliefs and unscientific practices in the society. And towards driving this home among the rural folks confined to superstitious beliefs and practices, the new media and communication methods need to be fully utilised. The ‘Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao,’ campaign has been launched to achieve this objective, of bringing about the awareness and the change. What Modi said Lamenting that we have an 18th century mindset, the Prime Minister called for an end to the discrimination between sons and daughters. He said this is the key to ending female foeticide. Modi reminded the medical fraternity which also contributed to female foeticide, that their medical education had been for the purpose of saving lives, and not killing daughters. The Prime Minister also launched the ‘Sukanya Samriddhi Account’ for the benefit of the girl child. He released a stamp on the theme of ‘Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao,’ and administered the ‘Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao’ pledge on the occasion. Today the society as a whole needs to change the attitude towards the girl child to end female foeticide. The practice is prevalent among every strata of the society. Although there was a healthy sex ratio in the north-eastern region and tribal areas, in many parts of the country the incidence of female foeticide is high. The Government has initiated this innovative scheme to save the lots of the girl children.

Scheme is boon not only for girls but also for society

In this scheme, the Ministry of Women and Child Development is functioning in collaboration with various other Ministries like Education Ministry and Health Ministry. It can be a boon not just for the girl children but also for the whole society. Moreover, ‘Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao’ yojana comes at a time when the nation is confronted with problems associated with women’s safety like rape and other forms of assault. The Government also projected Rs 150 crore to be spent by the Ministry of Home Affairs on a scheme to extend the security of women in large cities. The Union budget has also

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allocated to the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways Rs 50 crore for pilot schemes to safeguard the safety of women on public road transport. That may be a welcome step as this can facilitate to restore women’s faith in the system. The formidable project can embrace a number of the most effective practices for better initiation and implementation. For example, West Bengal has a system for enabling money transfers at periodic intervals for the child’s education. In Punjab, pregnant girls are registered in their first trimester in order that the authorities may follow up and monitor cases of foeticide. Another example is Tamil Nadu’s Amma Baby Care Kit. However, the initiative although sensible has been for the most part criticized by many people. It’s not enough to allot funds and formulate schemes, it is said. There is need to amend the laws and penalise those who harm the girl children. There’s also need to educate the grass roots about the rights of the girl child to exist.
Sukanya Samriddhi Account

Save for every girl child in India. Reinforcing this idea, Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched ‘Sukanya Samriddhi Account Scheme’, a small savings scheme as a part of the ‘Beti Bachao Beti Padhao’ campaign. It is also considered a part of the government’s initiative to increase the percentage of domestic savings, which has reduced from 38% of the GDP in 2008 to 30% in 2013. This scheme will encourage parents to save for the education and future of their girl child.

How to Open the Sukanya Samriddhi Account?

Guardian to open the account: The account can be opened only by parents or legal guardians for up to two girl children. In case of twins or triplets, an exemption will be made on production of a certificate from authorised medical institutions.

Age Eligibility: A Sukanya Samriddhi account can be opened for a girl child till she attains the age of 10. The scheme started from 2 December, 2014. An initial grace period of one year has been announced for convenience. A girl child, who is born between 2 December, 2003 and 1 December, 2004, can open account by 1 December, 2015.

Account in the name of the beneficiary: Sukanya Samriddhi Scheme can only be opened in the name of the girl child. The depositor (guardian) will be an individual, who deposits amount in the account on behalf of the minor girl child.

One Girl One Account: Only one account can be opened per girl child.

Where to open Account: Sukanya Samriddhi account can be opened in Post Offices or authorised Banks (State Bank of India, Bank of Baroda, Punjab National Bank, Bank of India, Canara Bank, Andhra Bank, UCO Bank, and Allahabad Bank, to name the few).

More Information on Sukanya Samriddhi Account

Account Transferability: The account can be opened with an amount of Rs. 1000. It can be transferred from the original location to anywhere in India as the girl child relocates.

Minimum Contribution: A minimum contribution of Rs. 1000 per account has to be deposited per year. A maximum of Rs.1, 50,000 per account can be deposited. There is no limit in the number of deposits in a financial year. The money can be deposited through cash, cheque or draft.

Penalty: A penalty of Rs.50 will be imposed if the account is not credited with the minimum amount.

Rate of Interest: The scheme is offering an interest rate of 9.1% per year. However, it will be revised in April every year and the change will be communicated subsequently. The interest will be compounded yearly and directly credited to the account.

Term Period: The guardian is expected to deposit amount in the account only till the completion of 14 years. No deposits after that are required till the maturity of the account.

Withdrawal: A premature withdrawal (at the end of the previous financial year) of 50% of the accumulated amount is allowed after the girl child turns 18.

Closure of Account: The account can be closed only after the child turns 21. If the money is not withdrawn even after that, it will continue to earn the interest.

Taxation: As per Section 80C of Income Tax Act, the investment (up to Rs.1.5 lakhs) under the scheme, all the payments including the interest payment and the total maturity amount will be fully exempted from taxation.

What Are the Documents Required for Opening an Account?


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MUDRA Bank

The Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the promised Micro Units Development and Refinance Agency Ltd (MUDRA) Bank on 8 April, 2015 with a corpus of Rs 20,000 crore and a credit guarantee corpus of Rs 3,000 crore. The launch was the fulfillment of an announcement made earlier by the Finance Minister Arun Jaitley in his FY 15-16 Budget speech.

How Can MUDRA Bank Make a Difference to the Economy?

Most individuals, especially those living in rural and interior parts of India, have been excluded from the benefits of formal banking system. Therefore, they never had access to insurance, credit, loans and other financial instruments to help them establish and grow their micro businesses. So, most individuals depend on local money lenders for credit. The loan comes at high interest and often with unbearable conditions, which make these poor unsuspecting people fall in a debt-trap for generations. When businesses fail, the borrowers become vulnerable to the lender’s strong-arm tactics and other forms of humiliation. As per NSSO Survey of 2013, there are close to 5.77 crore small-scale business units, mostly sole proprietorships, which undertake trading, manufacturing, retail and other small-scale activities. Compare this with the organised sector and larger companies that employ 1.25 crore individuals. Clearly, the potential to harness and nurture these micro businesses is vast and the government recognises this. Today, this segment is unregulated and without financial support or cover from the organised financial banking system.

The principal objectives of the MUDRA Bank are:

- Regulate the lender and the borrower of microfinance and bring stability to the microfinance system through regulation and inclusive participation.
- Extend finance and credit support to Microfinance Institutions (MFI) and agencies that lend money to small businesses, retailers, self-help groups and individuals.
- Register all MFIs and introduce a system of performance rating and accreditation for the first time. This will help last-mile borrowers of finance to evaluate and approach the MFI that meets their requirement best and whose past record is most satisfactory. This will also introduce an element of competitiveness among the MFIs. The ultimate beneficiary will be the borrower.
- Provide structured guidelines for the borrowers to follow to avoid failure of business or take corrective steps in time. MUDRA will help in laying down guidelines or acceptable procedures to be followed by the lenders to recover money in cases of default.
- Develop the standardised covenants that will form the backbone of the last-mile business in future.
- Offer a Credit Guarantee scheme for providing guarantees to loans being offered to micro businesses.
- Introduce appropriate technologies to assist in the process of efficient lending, borrowing and monitoring of distributed capital.
- Build a suitable framework under the Pradhan Mantri MUDRA Yojana for developing an efficient last-mile credit delivery system to small and micro businesses.

Major Product Offerings

MUDRA Bank has rightly classified the borrowers into three segments: the starters, the mid-stage finance seekers and the next level growth seekers.

To address the three segments, MUDRA Bank has launched three loan instruments:

- Shishu: covers loans upto Rs 50,000/-
Kishor: covers loans above Rs 50,000/- and upto Rs 5 lakh

Tarun: covers loans above Rs 5 lakh and upto Rs 10 lakh

Initially, sector-specific schemes will be confined to “Land Transport, Community, Social & Personal Services, Food Product and Textile Product sectors”. Over a period of time, new schemes will be launched to encompass more sectors.

Some of the Offerings Planned for the Future:

MUDRA Card

Portfolio Credit Guarantee

Credit Enhancement

Can MUDRA Really Be a Game Changer for India?

Yes it can. See the existing demographics. Majority of Indians are poor and live in rural and interior parts of India. Most are excluded from getting facilities that would be termed very basic, even by Indian standards. Most people do not have access to farmland and in the absence of jobs, are left to their own creativity to feed themselves and survive. They figure out ways to do odd jobs in exchange of money or barter their services. Most of these people belong to scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and other backward classes. It is to be noted that most of the micro enterprises, retail or trading activity, are initiated and controlled by women, with no exposure to education, formal training or access to any form of banking support. Now visualise this. If India could harness this free spirit of enterprise and offer some guidance, support, training and financial assistance, the potential to get an immediate jump in GDP is there for the asking. Narendra Modi recognises this and was clear of the potential of this low-hanging fruit. If MUDRA can continue to retain focus on the underprivileged and extend its reach to the interiors, it can well emerge as a bigger success story than what Grameen Bank of Bangladesh ever was or will be. There is an old saying that goes like this: “Give a man a fish you feed him for a day, teach him how to fish and he will never go hungry”. MUDRA Bank is a step by the government that can be a game changer in giving birth to a new set of entrepreneurs, some of whom may scale heights not imagined today. This is far better than giving subsidy, which may seem welcoming at first, but does little to help an individual strive for a better life. MUDRA is the way to go. The modalities of functioning of MUDRA Bank are in place and it has been decided that the funding activity will be carried out by microfinance institutions. However, the small businesses have to wait to get full information on Mudra Bank and have a clarity on who all are eligible for loans and how to get the benefits of this scheme.

Recent Developments

Hasmukh Adhia, union financial service secretary said that Mudra Bank will be first set up as a subsidiary of the Small Industries Development Bank of India and later will be converted to a full-fledged bank through an Act of Parliament. Adhia made this announcement during a ‘roundtable on financing of innovations’ which was attended by chiefs of banks and financial institutions, and also the President of India. Although Adhia did not disclose the details about the set up of Mudra Bank, he said that the Prime Minister will launch it soon.
MUDRA bank has join hands with 19 state and regional level coordinators so as to reach the small entrepreneurs who have limited branch presence and are cut off from the general banking system. The initiative taken by the government is expected to be helpful for the small and micro businesses. It is also expected that these businesses will generate 10 times more number of jobs which are normally generated by the big business firms/companies at present.
Swachh Bharat Abhiyan

Mahatma Gandhi had rightly said, “Sanitation is more important than Independence”. He was aware of the pathetic situation of Indian rural people at that time and he dreamt of a clean India where he emphasised on cleanliness and sanitation as an integral part of living. Unfortunately, after 67 years of independence, we have only about 30% of the rural households with access to toilets. President Pranab Mukherjee, in his address to Parliament in June 2014, said, “For ensuring hygiene, waste management and sanitation across the nation a “Swachh Bharat Mission” will be launched. This will be our tribute to Mahatma Gandhi on his 150th birth anniversary to be celebrated in the year 2019”.

First Cleanliness Drive Started on 25 September 2014

A cleanliness drive, just before the formal launch of the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, was carried out from 25 September till 23 October by all offices up to panchayat level. As a part of the awareness campaign, the Delhi Government also covered more than eight lakh ration card holders by sending sms to their mobile numbers.

Swachh Bharat Launched on 2 October 2014

The Narendra Modi Government launched the “Swachh Bharat” movement to solve the sanitation problem and waste management in India by ensuring hygiene across the country. Emphasising on “Clean India” in his 2014 Independence day speech, PM Modi said that this movement is associated with the economic activity of the country. The prime objective of the mission is to create sanitation facilities for all. It aims to provide every rural family with a toilet by 2019.

Objectives of Swachh Bharat Abhiyan

The objectives of the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan include the following: Construct individual, cluster and community toilets. Eliminate or reduce open defecation. Open defecation is one of the main causes of deaths of thousands of children each year. Construct latrines and work towards establishing an accountable mechanism of monitoring latrine use. Create Public awareness about the drawbacks of open defecation and promotion of latrine use. Recruit dedicated ground staff to bring about behavioural change and promotion of latrine use. Change people’s mindset towards proper sanitation use. Keep villages clean. Ensure solid and liquid waste management through gram panchayats. Lay water pipelines in all villages, ensuring water supply to all households by 2019.

What is Modi’s opinion?

Modi has directly linked the Clean India movement with the economic health of the nation. This mission, according to him, can contribute to GDP growth, provide a source of employment and reduce health costs, thereby connecting to an economic activity. Cleanliness is no doubt connected to the tourism and global interests of the country as a whole. It is time that India’s top 50 tourist destinations displayed highest standard of hygiene and cleanliness so as to change the global perception.

Clean India can bring in more tourists, thereby increasing the revenue. He has appealed to the people to devote 100 hours every year to cleanliness. Not only the sanitation programme, Modi also laid emphasis on solid waste management and waste water management. Nitin Gadkari, Union Minister of Rural Development, Drinking Water & Sanitation, said that solid and liquid waste management.
activities using scientifically proven advanced techniques will be launched in each gram panchayat. Narendra Modi has also directed that separate toilets for boys and girls should be provided in every school in the country by 15 August, 2015.

**Modi’s Nominees for Promoting the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan**

On 2 October, 2014, Modi nominated nine celebrities from various fields to propagate the mission, considering the new age marketing via social media. The nominated personalities included, Anil Ambani, Mridula Sinha, Baba Ramdev, Kamal Hassan, Priyanka Chopra, Sachin Tendulkar, Salman Khan, Shashi Tharoor and the team of the TV series Taarak Mehta Ka Ooltah Chashmah. On 25 December, Modi nominated nine more people including the comedian Kapil Sharma, Sourav Ganguly, Kiran Bedi, Padmanabha Acharya, Nagaland Governor, Sonal Mansingh, Ramoji Rao of Eenadu group and Aroon Purie to take forward his “Swachh Bharat Abhiyaan”. Some organisations such as the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India, India Today, Eenadu and the popular “dabbewale” of Mumbai were also nominated to be the torchbearers.

**Funds Allocation**

This project is expected to cost over Rs. 2 lakhs crore. Fund sharing between the Central and State Governments and Urban Local Bodies is allocated in the ratio of 75:25. It has been officially stated that for North Eastern and special category states, the allocation of funds is in the ratio of 90:10. To give a boost to the project, the government has sought financial and technical support from the World Bank. Also, all big corporates and private organisations are asked to join the movement as part of their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiative.

**Measures Proposed in 2015-16 Union Budget**

Describing Clean India campaign as a “programme for preventive healthcare, and building awareness”, the Finance Minister Arun Jaitley proposed that the donations made to the Swachh Bharat Mission and the Clean Ganga Fund will be eligible for tax deductions under the Income Tax Act. The budget also proposed Swachh Bharat cess on select services at the rate of up to 2 per cent. The resources generated from this cess will be leveraged for funding initiatives towards the campaign.

**Construction of 31.83 lakhs Toilets till January 2015**

According to government data, in January 2015, 7.1 lakh individual household toilets have been built under this dream project. This number is considered the highest for any month since its launch in October 2014. 31.83 lakhs individual toilets have been built until January 2015. So far, Karnataka is the best performer by achieving 61% of the target while Punjab is the worst performer by achieving 5% of the target.
Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana

The Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana (PMJJBY) is one of the several ambitious social security programmes initiated by Narendra Modi. It is basically a term life insurance policy that can be renewed either on a yearly basis or for a longer period of time. It will provide life insurance coverage on the death of the policyholder.

Who is Eligible?

The Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana will be made available to anyone between the age group of 18 to 50 years. The concerned person should also have a bank account. People, who avail this policy before they are 50 years old, will be allowed to enjoy the risk of life cover till the age of 55 years. However, they will need to pay the premium on a consistent basis in order to be provided that benefit.

What is the Premium?

The policyholders will need to pay INR 330 per year. The amount will be deducted each year from their bank account in a single installment. This will be done by the bank from where the policy is being opened.

What is the Risk Coverage?

The risk coverage being provided in the Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana is INR 2 lakh. In case the policy has been availed for a longer term period than just a year, the amount will be deducted for each year of the agreed term period from their respective bank accounts.

Who will Offer the Programme?

Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) will be offering the plan. However, other life insurers, who are eager to take part in the programme, can join it through tie-ups with specific banks. The banks, whose clients join the programme, will be deemed as the master account holders in case of the PMJJJS. The LIC or the other insurers will finalise the claims settlement and administration procedures, which are expected to be simple and friendly towards the subscribers. This will be done in consultation with the banks.

How can One Enroll?

The plan is being launched initially from 1 June 2015 till 31 May 2016. The subscribers will need to enroll as well as provide the option for auto debiting their premium on or before 31 May 2015. This date will be extended to 31 August 2015. If someone wishes to enroll after this date they will need to submit a self certificate, where they state that they are in good health and will also pay the entire annual premium. In case someone wants to continue beyond the first year then they will have to agree to auto debiting by 31 May that year. For anyone who renews the policy after this, he or she will need to furnish a self certificate of good health as well as the entire yearly premium. In case someone did not join in the first year, he or she can provide a good health self certificate and the entire yearly premium. The procedure is the same for people who had joined the policy once and then left it, only to come back later and rejoin the same.
When will the Policy be terminated?

The policy will come to an end once the holder reaches the age of 55 years. However, for this to be effective the policyholder will need to keep renewing the policy till that time. If the account holder has to close his or her account in the bank, where the policy is being maintained, because of paucity of sufficient funds to even maintain the minimum balance needed to ensure the policy is active, then the insurance policy will be closed as well. If the concerned person has taken more than one such account and the insurer gets the money in an unintended manner, then the said premium will be forfeited.

What Role will the Bank play?

Apart from being the master account holders and deducting the premium each year, the banks will need to play some other roles as well. Their primary duty will be to transfer the deducted premium to the insurers. They will also have to take care of the following:

• Enrollment forms

• Authorisation of auto-debit

• Providing declaration-cum-consent form in the exact shape that they are supposed to be done. They will get it and keep it as well since at time of claims, or any other occasion as required by the insurer, they will be supposed to provide it to the insurer

How will the Premium be divided?

Out of the yearly premium of INR 330, INR 289 will go to the insurer and INR 30 will be reimbursed for the expenses incurred by the BCs, corporate or micro agents. The bank will get INR 11 as compensation for administrative costs incurred by them. For further information on PMJJBY, please log onto: www.jansuraksha.gov.in or www.financialservices.gov.in. One can also call the National toll free numbers: 1800 110 001 / 1800 180 1111 and State wise Toll free number are listed in this document – http://www.jansuraksha.gov.in/PDF/STATEWISETOLLFREE.pdf Application Form The application form can be downloaded from http://www.jansuraksha.gov.in/FORMS-PMJJBY.aspx. The forms are available in different languages – English, Hindi, Gujarati, Bangla, Kannada, Odia, Marathi, Telugu and Tamil.
Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana

The Pradhan Mantri of India Narendra Modi has launched another flagship social security scheme: Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana (PMSBY) - An accidental Death and Disability insurance scheme. A large part of the Indian population lives in rural areas and most of them are not covered under any kind of social security scheme. A large section of this population has not even gained the benefits of the banking system and most are still unaware of various governmental schemes that are launched from time to time. To correct this serious anomaly in the lives of ordinary and poor people, the Pradhan Mantri of India has launched the PMSBY scheme in Kolkata on 9 May 2015, along with two other insurance- and pension-related schemes. Such is the seriousness of the government to make these schemes a success that almost the entire senior Cabinet has fanned out to various state capitals and major towns to simultaneously launch the scheme and ensure its successful implementation.

So what makes this scheme stand out from other social security schemes launched by the previous governments? There are two aspects of PMSBY that make it different in offering and approach. Firstly, it is the sheer size and depth of inclusion to bring and get covered the maximum number of people under this scheme, which kind of makes it very ambitious and challenging.

Today, if an earning member of a family becomes permanently disabled or dies an accidental death, his or her family faces a life in penury and hardship, with no protection or support from any institution or group. By joining the PMSBY scheme and by paying a nominal premium of Rs. 12/- per person per year, he or she will get an insurance cover for a sum of Rs. 2,00,000/- (two lakh) in case of accidental death or permanent full disability or a sum of Rs. 1,00,000/- (one lakh) in case of partial but permanent disability. The scheme will be valid for a year and it can be renewed every year.

A lot of government social security schemes have not had a very positive response from people due to lack of financial system infrastructure at a nearby location and moreover, the paperwork involved in opening accounts or making claims was too much for them to handle. Even the leakages in the system resulted in large sections remaining excluded from the benefits of these schemes. This has now been largely addressed by the present government that has made extensive use of technology to augment its social scheme delivery and monitor mechanisms. All the payments will be directly credited to the beneficiary’s account with no scope for leakages.

Who is eligible to be covered under PMSBY?

Any person between the age of 18 and 70 with a savings bank account and Aadhaar Card can join the scheme. A person will need to fill out a simple form, mentioning the name of the nominee and linking the Aadhaar Card to the bank account. The person will need to submit the form each year before 1st June to continue the scheme. With this, the account can be easily activated and the entire premium due will be auto-debited from his or her account. In other words, all a person has to do is to open a bank account and then ensure the availability of at least Rs. 12/- before 1st June of each year to ensure automatic renewal of the scheme. A person has the option to go in for a long-term inclusion under the scheme by instructing the bank to auto-renew the scheme every year.

Who will implement the PMSBY?

All government-sponsored general insurance companies will offer the scheme, while other insurance companies will have the option to join the program delivery by signing-up with banks.
Will I get any tax benefits on joining the scheme?

The entire premium paid by the subscribers will be tax free under Section 80C. Furthermore, all the proceeds received up to Rs. 1,00,000/- (one lakh) will be tax exempt under Section 10(10D). For all the proceed amounts exceeding Rs. 1,00,000/-, a TDS at the rate of 2% of the total proceeds will apply if Form 15H or Form 15G is not submitted to the insuring agency.

So what made the present government kick start three major social security programs at one go?

The present government led by PM Narendra Modi is going to complete one year in office and has realised that their performance will come under close scrutiny for gap analysis between poll promises and actual deliverables after staying in power for one year. The government has come under some criticism for not speeding up the government spending, especially in the much needed infrastructure and manufacturing sectors, both of which are tied to various pending bills in the Parliament, including the implementation of Goods and Service Tax (GST) and the vital Land Acquisition Bill. The government is, therefore, keen on not only announcing these social security schemes but also giving it the adequate push that it needs to ensure deeper penetration amongst various sections of people who really need them. While it is true that the Jan-Dhan Yojana has achieved remarkable milestones in a short period of time in terms of the number of accounts opened, it is also equally true that a lot of these accounts remain with zero or minimal balance, thereby negating the very purpose for which they were opened in the first place. The PMSBY scheme will take a year for it to be implemented across a wide section of people and next year around this time will be a good time to do a reality check on what was targeted and what had been achieved in terms of actual impact. Meanwhile, the general mood remains buoyant and hopeful that PM Modi will come out considerably true on his promises of taking India on a path of accelerated development and that the PMSBY scheme will play its part in the overall success of the present government.


PMSBY Application Form

Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana

What is Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY)?

Even as he launched the Make in India campaign inviting investors from all over the globe to invest and set up businesses in India, Prime Minister Narendra Modi promised an abundance of skilled labour in the country. Complementary to this was the idea of skills development among the youth of the nation. The Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY) was thus envisaged as a key measure to impart skills-based training to young men and women, making them capable of earning and supporting the nation’s anti-poverty endeavours. The scheme becomes all the more important in the Indian society which has the world’s largest youth population that requires employable skills (356 million population between 10 and 24 years of age – The Hindu, Nov 2014). Earlier this year, on 20 March 2015, the government of India gave the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship a formal go-ahead to formulate and implement the Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY) through the National Skill Development Corporation. With a total outlay of about INR 1,500 crore, the PMKVY is likely to impart skills training to 24 lakh youth of the country, focusing on the Class X/XII dropouts and lower income groups. The scheme was developed over a period of almost three months and its implementation started in select states (primarily Bihar) by early June 2015. The scheme will be launched in all states of the country on 15 July – National Skills Day. India’s unemployment rate averaged about 4.9 percent by early 2014. This scheme should bring that number down by a reasonable measure.

Skills Needs Assessment

According to the PMKVY plan published by the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship in March 2015, one of the key objectives of the scheme was to cover the skills training of about 24 lakh people. The specific skills imparted would be decided based on the National Skill Qualification Framework (NSQF) and on the basis of feedback from the various industries that would potentially employ the trainees. The specific skills trainings to be imparted have been assessed by the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) on the basis of demand in recent skills gap by a study for 2013-17 period. Central ministries and state governments departments were consulted and the inputs of various industry and business heads were also considered. Skills needed to implement various other flagship schemes such as Digital India were also assessed. Currently, about 428 job roles are being catered to by the skills training imparted under the scheme.

Enrollment Process

The government has partnered with various telecom operators to create awareness about the PMKVY. After the nationwide launch telecom operators are likely to send out mass SMS about the scheme and will provide potential candidates a number to call. Candidates need to give a missed call to this toll free number, following which they shall receive an automated call back connecting them to an IVR. The potential candidate will, at this stage, need to input his/her details into the system. These details will be recorded, and screened. Candidates eligible to enroll for the training programmes will be provided details of the nearest training centre and will be asked to report on the training dates.
Implementation of the Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana

In keeping with the draft plan, the scheme was launched (in Bihar) and the NSDC partnered with about 24 sector skill councils. As of 1 July 2015, about 1,17,564 people from all parts of the country have already enrolled for skills training. Training has commenced for some 1,07,080 trainees already. The scheme’s implementation is being undertaken by NSDC’s training partners. The NSDC has some 187 listed training partners with 2300 training centres spread out in almost all the states of India. While the scheme is on a pilot mode in select states, a nation-wide launch is expected by mid-July. The total outlay planned for the scheme is over INR 1,500 crore, of which INR 1120 crore is likely to be allocated towards the skill training of some 14 lakh youth. Additionally, INR 220 crore will be spent towards the “recognition of prior learning”. The scheme budget includes INR 67 crore that shall be spent on spreading awareness and encouraging enrolment. This includes implementation of the website and running awareness campaigns. In this effort to create awareness about the PMKVY, the NSDC will partner with state governments and municipal organisations and use the administrative machinery extensively to mobilise candidates from the grassroots level. The NSDC has also partnered with various business houses and corporates in an effort to garner mentorship for the candidates and to secure placements once their training is completed. The government has allocated INR 67 crore towards this. The scheme has the youth of the North Eastern region of India in special focus. This region has been traditionally neglected and hence a separate allocation of INR 150 crore has been made towards the training of youth in this region. Apart from training, the candidates shall also go through an assessment at the end of the training schedule. A certificate of merit shall also be issued to candidates at the end of this training period based on the assessment. ‘Third party assessment bodies’ have been roped in by the NSDC to assess the candidates on the skills acquired and a monetary incentive or reward is given to exemplary candidates. The average monetary reward that each successful candidate is likely to get is about INR 8000. The scheme has placed much focus on the training partners. These partner institutions have been studied and assessed before enrolment. Digital training facilities and able instructors are highly valued by the NSDC for the training sessions. The curriculum developed is highly relevant and efficient in practical employability. Training sessions and the training institutes will be constantly monitored by state government agencies and by the sector skill councils. Feedback from the candidates themselves will also be sought.
Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY) – Housing for All by 2022

Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana

According to current estimates, the urban population of the country, which has already seen a sharp increase over the past decade, is set to see a phenomenal growth in the years to come. By the year 2050, the country’s urban population is set to reach a population of more than 814 million people. This is an increase of about 400 million from current levels. One of the biggest challenges faced by the country will be providing affordable housing, sanitation and development, and a safe environment to the city dwellers. Currently, the development of a city is led by the real estate developers who decide the areas which shall be developed. Real estate prices have also skyrocketed over the past couple of decades leaving the common man with only dreams of owning a house. It is to address these issues that Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the Housing for All by 2022 scheme, also known as the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY) on 25 June 2015 at a launch ceremony in Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi. Two other schemes were also launched as complementary to the affordable housing scheme, a scheme for development of Smart Cities across the country and the Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT) that allows for urban renewal and upgradation of infrastructure in the major urban tracts of the country. The Prime Minister of India launched the PMAY and the two other schemes in the presence of mayors, municipal commissioners, and state-government officials from all parts of the country. At the launch he said, “The country’s 40 per cent population lives in cities and it is the responsibility of the government to uplift their standards of living. We cannot leave them to their fate... The housing for all scheme will ensure every urban poor is enabled to own a house. AMRUT will ensure basic infrastructure and sanitation is in place in cities.”

Scheme Details

According to the terms of the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, the government of India will undertake to construct about two crore houses by the year 2022. Each house provided under the scheme will involve a central grant of about INR 1 lakh which may go up to INR 2.3 lakhs. This will come as part of a 6.5 percent interest rate subsidy scheme (previous schemes had an interest rate subsidy of about 1 percent). This means that the applicants from lower income groups who avail of the housing scheme may apply for a housing loan with interest subsidy of 6.5 percent. The tenure or term for these housing loans may go up to 15 years and the total benefit received by such loan subsidy will add up to INR 1 to 2.3 lakh each. Currently housing loan interest rates are estimated at about 10.5 percent. The subsidy should, therefore be a major relief to applicants. The “Housing for All” scheme will replace all previous government housing schemes such as the Rajiv Awas Yojana. According to preliminary estimates, the Housing for All by 2022 will cost the central government about INR three lakh crore spread over the next seven years. The operational guidelines for the schemes launched have been finalised after a year-long round of negotiations with states and Union Territories, say news reports. Apart from the PMAY itself, the government has come up with a number of incentives and subsidies for the development of housing in urban areas. One of these is the grant of INR 1 lakh per beneficiary to state governments for the development of housing projects in slum areas. Affordable rental housing, an INR 6,000 crore initiative, which was initially to be part of the Housing For All scheme was missing from the NDA government flagship scheme. The measure, meant to combat the proliferation of slums in urban regions may be released as a separate scheme at a later date.

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**Benefits to Women, SC/ST**

While the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana is clear about its goals – affordable housing for all by 2022, it does ensure that the benefits of the scheme are enjoyed by women, economically backward groups of Indian society and the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. In an unprecedented move, the government has decided to protect the interests of neglected groups in the country. Transgenders and widows, members of the lower income groups and urban poor, and the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes shall be granted preference when they try to avail the affordable housing scheme. Apart from these groups members of society who often find themselves out of a home, seniors and differently-abled people shall also gain preference in allotment of houses. They shall also be able to choose a ground-floor house if need be. Apart from this, it is also mandatory that while registering to avail the benefits of the scheme, the beneficiaries must necessarily mention their mother or wife’s name. According to news reports, these details were revealed by a Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation Ministry official before the launch of the scheme. The scheme is one-of-its-kind in India in terms of the protection and benefits that it extends to previously neglected groups such as transgenders and widows.

**Smart Cities and AMRUT**

As per the government’s scheme for Smart Cities, 100 smart cities shall be developed across the country in the next five years. This project shall involve major national and international stakeholders and comes at a cost of about INR 48,000 crores. Simultaneously over 500 cities in the country have been slated for urban renewal – upgradation of facilities, especially the drainage and sanitation facilities and infrastructure in these parts. The selection of Smart Cities will be done by a competition open for public voting, said the PM. The 500 cities for AMRUT are currently being identified. The government of India has made a commitment to spend about INR 400,000 crore on these three schemes together in the next six years. The government will be looking at the public private partnership model to finance and successfully run these schemes.
One Rank One Pension (OROP)

The Indian government has come up with the One Rank One Pension (OROP) in what is being seen as a final effort to get the attention of the defence community of the country – at the present moment there are 14 lakh soldiers and officers serving in various capacities in different wings of the national armed forces. There are also in excess of 25 lakh military officers in India who have retired. Incidentally, this has been demanded for a long time now and has also been promised but till now it had not been implemented. This is also being regarded as an important step taken by the ruling government before the national assembly elections come calling a few months later.

P Chidambaram, the Union Finance Minister, has stated that the OROP will be implemented in a proactive manner and will come into play from the ongoing financial year. The government will be transferring an amount of INR 500 crore to the pension accounts of defence personnel. The main aim of this transfer is to bring down the gap in the amounts being received by people who have retired prior to 2006 and ones who have retired after that.

In fact, in the week gone by, Rahul Gandhi, the prime ministerial candidate for Congress, had lent his support towards the demands for OROP by former armed forces officers. In some ways, this event could now be regarded as a sign of things to come. It needs to be considered in this scenario that if the armed forces officers, soldiers and their family members are taken into account, it would come up to almost 2 crore voters, which is a sizeable base that the ruling party can do with.

As per OROP, defence officers who have retired in the same rank and have served for a similar period of time, they will be paid the same pension. It will not take into consideration the year of their retirement. In the last 4-5 years many ex-servicemen have become disillusioned with how the OROP issue has been handled and have thus staged rallies and also given back their medals. During one such rally organized at Rewari during September, VK Singh, an erstwhile chief of the Indian Army and Narendra Modi had attended the proceedings. The main issue was the fact that OROP was not being implemented. In fact, in some circles this step of passing the OROP is being seen as an eyewash of sorts.

A senior military official has termed the amount to be fairly low. As per the official it is strange that even though the UPA has been at the center they have introduced the measure only a few months prior to the election. The amount has also been termed as being an insufficient one. Previously an amount of INR 1730 crores had been calculated for the 2014-15 fiscal by the controller general, defence accounts, and the ministry of defence. In some official sources, an amount of INR 3 thousand crores was supposed to be set aside for OROP on a yearly basis.

However, the ministry of defence has gauged the various aspects of this financial benefit and the manner of its implementation is expected to be worked out in the weeks to come. As per officials from the ministry the quoted figure is just a way of showing that the government is committed towards extending the benefit. Chidambaram has said that if any additional amount is needed for this purpose then the same will be provided too, thus confirming the opinions of the defence ministry. The government, though, has not provided any reason as to why the OROP proposal was not passed previously and not mentioned the administrative and legal procedures that led to it being delayed.

It is expected that this financial benefit for the military officers and soldiers could lead to civilians making similar demands and it could cost the government anywhere between INR 8,000 and 9,000 crores per year.
OROP Recent Developments

According to government sources, the long-pending OROP scheme is likely to be rolled out ahead of the Bihar assembly polls.

On 15 June 2015, a group of about 55 ex-servicemen who belong to Jalandhar district began their relay-hunger strike at Jantar Mantar in New Delhi, demanding the government to announce a date to introduce the OROP policy.

On 10 June 2015, a group of ex-servicemen met Finance Minister Arun Jaitley and expressed their concerns regarding the delay in the OROP scheme which is likely to benefit as many as 22 lakh retired defence personnel.

On 3 June 2015, a group of ex-servicemen led by Maj Gen Satbir Singh (retd) met Dalbir Singh Suhag and discussed about the early implementation of ‘one rank one pension’ scheme.
Seventh Pay Commission: Expectations and Controversies

All Central Government employees, including defence personnel keenly await the Seventh Pay Commission. Since Independence, India has had seven Pay Commissions put up to review the existing costs, inflation and other impact costs and make suitable revisions to the salary structure of central government employees.

The Seventh Pay Commission

On 24 February 2014, the Government of India issued a Gazette notification announcing the formation of the Seventh Central Pay Commission with Justice A.K.Mathur as the Chairman, Vivek Rae – Member (full time), Dr. Rathin Roy – Member (part time), and Meena Agarwal – Secretary. The Seventh Pay Commission had to submit its recommendations within 18 months (expected by August 2015) and the same is to be implemented from 1 January 2016. The ‘Terms of Reference’ was to examine, review, evolve and recommend changes regarding the emoluments structure comprising pay, allowances, facilities and benefits – in cash or kind. The Commission has been asked to examine the existing scheme of bonus and its bearing on productivity and performance, examine the incentive scheme to reward performance, productivity and integrity, and examine the pension scheme along with other retirement benefits that will impact:

- Central Government employees – industrial and non-industrial
- Personnel belonging to All India Services
- Personnel of the Union Territories
- Officers and employees of the Indian Audit and Accounts Department
- Members of regulatory bodies (excluding RBI) set up under Acts of Parliament
- Officers and employees of the Supreme Court
- All employees of Defence Forces
- The Commission is mandated to make recommendations based on current:
  - Pay structure, associated benefits and existing retirement benefits.
  - Economic conditions prevailing in the country and fiscal prudence.
  - Adequacy of resources to meet various welfare measures and developmental expenditures.
  - Impact on State Government finances as most states adopt recommendations made by the Commission with some revisions as per their priority.
  - Best global practices and adopt the same.

Pay Commissions Over the Years

Stakeholders have been debating the level of salary increase expected prior to each Pay Commission recommendations. The First Pay Commission chaired by Srinivasa Varadachariar, was formed in January 1946 and submitted its recommendations in May 1947 to the then interim government. The Second Pay Commission in August 1957 and submitted its report in 1959. The Pay Commission was headed by Jagannath Das and its central theme was to ensure smooth government functioning by recruiting persons with minimum qualifications, to give more people an opportunity to join government services. The Third Pay Commission, headed by Raghurib Dayal, was established in April 1970 and submitted its report in March 1973. Coming in the wake of an expensive war with Pakistan, the Pay Commission made its mark by adopting a different approach from the first two commissions,

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which focussed on pay being kept at minimum subsistence levels. The commission, for the first time, referred to the need of ensuring that the pay structure incorporated concepts of adequacy, comprehensiveness and inclusiveness to ensure a fair compensation. This approach cost the government Rs 1.44 billion, which was a significant escalation in cost at the time. The Fourth Pay Commission chaired by PN Singhal was set up in June 1983 and submitted its recommendations in three phases, over a four-year period. The Fifth Pay Commission chaired by Justice S. Ratnavel Pandian was set up in 1994. This Commission left its mark as its recommendations had a major impact on not just central, but for the first time, on state governments. Its recommendations resulted in an increase in central government expenditure, including salaries, pensions and other related costs by 99%, and state governments’ by 74%. The dramatic increase in expenditure created a major controversy with 13 states failing to fulfill their salary obligations and seeking central assistance. Amongst other radical recommendations was to reduce the central government staff levels by 30%. The Commission furthered suggested that the government should not fill the 3,50,000 job vacancies. Even the World Bank expressed surprise over the cost escalation and radical level of reforms suggested. The government, however, did not accept any of the recommendations made. The Sixth Pay Commission chaired by Justice BN Srikrishna was appointed on 5 October 2006 and submitted its recommendations on 24 March 2008. The Commission made the following recommendations:

- Special pay scales for Secretary to Government of India posts and Cabinet Secretary.
- Introduction of four distinct running pay bands, with one running band each for Group ‘B’ and ‘C’ employees, and two running bands for Group ‘A’ posts.
- Total number of grades running across four distinct pay bands be reduced to 20 from the earlier 35.
- Defence Forces be allowed running pay bands and grade pay on par with civilians.
- Introduction of Performance Related Incentive Scheme (PRIS).
- Pension to be paid at 50% of average emoluments or the last pay drawn.

Controversies Regarding Seventh Pay Commission

Inter-service rivalries extend to salaries and benefits received by certain services. There is widespread resentment against the IAS officers, who are seen to be favoured by most pay commissions. The Indian Revenue Service has raised objections to an IAS Officer being included as part of the Seventh Pay Commission since there is no representation from their side. The IRS lobby believes that they have a right to be on par with the IAS since the revenue for the government is collected by them. Same stands true for the Defence Forces. For many years, the senior most positions in all three forces have been downgraded progressively, in terms of promotions, salaries and benefits, while the IAS lobby has progressively increased its stature, promotions, emoluments and benefits, as compared to what senior Defence Officers received. Furthermore, the Defence Forces have a long standing demand (and rightly so) for a representation from the Services on the Pay Commission, especially since the role, responsibilities and risks of work are unique to the forces and thus require a qualified representative who understands the nature of work and can thus make suitable recommendations on the basis of that. This demand has been strongly resisted by the IAS lobby all these years. It remains to be seen how the present government deals with demands of its employees from different arms when setting up the Eighth Pay Commission subsequently.
Garib Kalyan Yojnaye

The government cares for the poor. At least, that’s what BJP has been trying to convey through its slew of initiatives within months of holding the reins of governance. A party that came to the helm of power on the pro-poor plank is leaving no stone unturned to stay true to its commitment. After its pro-farmer image took a beating during the Land Acquisition Bill controversy, it has come up with a new experiment. And this time, it is conducting a workshop. Titled ‘Garib Kalyan Yojnaye’ (Poverty Alleviation Schemes), this pay-and-attend workshop on 19 April is organised in association with Rambhau Mhalgi Prabodhini, a think tank having links to RSS.

Objective of the Workshop

The workshop will revisit the government’s pro-poor welfare programmes and ideate ways to effectively implement them and maximise their outreach. While senior ministers would address the MPs and try to create a road map for the latter to take these initiatives to the grassroots level, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Venkaiah Naidu is expected to give MPs a brief rundown on poor welfare schemes. According to party functionaries, this day-long workshop should be seen as an effort to “motivate and appraise” the MPs for effective implementation of government-run schemes for the poor. To be hosted a day ahead of the second half of the budget session that begins on 20 April, the timing of workshop indicates that the NDA government is sceptical about the prospects of the land acquisition ordinance, which will come up for ratification during this session.

What to Expect From the Workshop?

The workshop will cover a host of schemes conceived by the BJP government. There will be dedicated sessions on rural and urban development schemes. Besides, the Transport Minister Nitin Gadkari will deliver a presentation on Sansad Aadarsh Gram Yojna. Health Minister J. P. Nadda would explain MPLADS (Members of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme) to the MPs. External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj will focus on a macro level and sensitise MPs on the bigger development agenda. Modi will set the stage for the workshop with an inaugural speech and the party president, Amit Shah will conclude the session. If this workshop happens to be a success, BJP will host similar events for personal assistants of MPs.

Is Workshop a Way to Rebut Congress’ Vilification Campaign?

At a time when the Congress is acting as a perfect iconoclast by running a kind of ‘Expose BJP’ campaign, the ruling party has come to realise that the success of the schemes is linked to the involvement of local public representatives or the MPs. They must be well aware of the development schemes so that they can convince people to cooperate with the government in its mission. The workshop is increasingly being looked upon as a response to Congress’ mega rally on the same day. The party vice-president, Rahul Gandhi, is set to address the attendees at the national farmers’ rally in Ramlila Maidan on Sunday. The opposition party would like to leverage this platform to mount attack and label the government as pro-rich.

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Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana

Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana is the flagship financial inclusion plan of the NDA Government. The Finance Ministry rolled out this scheme to enable each household in the country to have access to at least one bank account. All Indian citizens can now avail of a bank account despite the lack of KYC documentation. These bank accounts are valid for a year within which account holders must furnish proof of having applied for valid documents required to comply with KYC norms. The idea of this scheme was first announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in his Independence Day speech and it was later launched on August 28, 2014. The bank accounts opened under the scheme come with a RuPay debit card and accident insurance cover. Holders of accounts opened before January 26, 2015 are also provided with a premium-free life insurance cover.

Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana gets a website

The Government of India launched a website for the Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY) on October 27, 2014. The portal is available in two languages – English and Hindi. The Union Finance Ministry launched the dedicated portal in keeping with the Digital India ambitions of the Government enabling technology to facilitate the implementation of all Government schemes. G S Sandhu, Secretary of Department of Financial Services, launched the website in New Delhi. “The website will provide easy access to information on the Yojana, administrative structure created for monitoring, progress of the scheme, availability of account opening forms and financial literacy to the urban and rural population”, he said on the occasion of the launch. Apart from the contact details of all the various mission directors and the nodal officers, the portal also contains all scheme-related details including the Government circulars, media campaigns, and event-related update. Currently the site features the following sections – Circulars, Progress Report, Press Release, and Who’s Who. It also showcases the national toll free numbers and allows for a direct contact with the Ministry of Finance. The site has also been linked up with the scheme’s Social Media fronts.

Unprecedented success

According to official statements from the Finance Ministry, the Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana has met with unprecedented success. On the first day of the launch over 1.5 crore accounts were opened in banks under the scheme – setting a record of sorts. By October 22, 2014, reports suggest that 6.47 crore bank accounts have been opened under the scheme. On an average about a lakh accounts are still being opened every day. A total amount of INR 4,813.59 cr has been mopped up from the market in the form of deposits by the scheme. Prior to the launch of the scheme, this money would have remained out of the scope of the mainstream banking sector.

Gearing up for Phase II

On January 26, 2015, Phase I of the Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana is set to come to an end and Phase II will be launched. In the run-up to this phase, the Finance Ministry has asked the Life Insurance Corporation (LIC), India’s largest life insurance provider, and all other State-owned general insurance companies to finalise the details of the products to be sold to all the bank account holders under the scheme. Anoop Wadhwa, Joint Secretary, Insurance, at the Ministry of Finance, held a meeting in October to review the progress on the preparations for the Phase II plans. About 15 micro-insurance products have been identified for Phase II. These will be sold to the PMJDY account holders. Some of

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them like crop insurance are targeted at the rural sector while life insurance may be applicable to all account holders. While the rollout of Phase II is scheduled for January, news reports say that a number of State insurance providers have already started selling these micro-insurance products in small quantities to the PMJDY account holders.

More delays and concerns

After a very successful launch, the PMJDY seems to have run into delays, and concerns about the effective implementation of the scheme. By early October, about 5.29 crore accounts had been opened while only 1.78 RuPay cards had been issued. The RuPay debit card is a major highlight of the scheme and is key to providing the account holders the promised life and accident insurance covers. A lack of supply of debit cards has been blamed and authorities are trying to hasten the process of issuing debit cards, say news reports. If supply constraints persist, the problem could, however, spiral out of hand as estimates suggest that the scheme will require about 10 crore debit cards by 2015. Another major concern that has come up is that of duplication of accounts. The lack of KYC regulations make it easy for account holders to open multiple accounts in different banks to avail of multiple insurance policies. Provision of overdraft facility without adequate documentation is another worry. These concerns have not been addressed yet. Linking the accounts to Aadhar cards looks like the only feasible solution and banks are working in this direction.
DigiLocker

DigiLocker is yet another Digital India initiative launched by the Government of India in February 2015. Released by the Department of Electronics & Information Technology (DEITY), Ministry of Communications & IT, DigiLocker is actually an e-locker to save your official and other documents.

What is DigiLocker?

This is a secured personal online storage space where you can store your documents. The service is open to all Indian citizens with Aadhaar cards. Each citizen, when registered with DigiLocker, will be allotted a storage space of 1 GB linked with his or her Aadhaar number. You can not only store your official documents like mark sheets, Pan cards, Passports, certificates, voter id cards, etc. but also store Uniform Resource Identifier (URI) link of the e-documents issued by various departments. You can digitally sign e-documents with the e-sign facility provided by this system.

Sections Within the Digital Locker

My Certificates:

(a) Digital Documents: This contains the URIs of the documents issued to the user by the various government departments or other agencies.

(b) Uploaded Documents: This subsection contains all the documents uploaded by the user. Each file should not be more than 1 MB in size. Only pdf, jpg, jpeg, bmp, gif, png file types can be uploaded.

My Profile: The user’s complete profile is seen here.

My Issuer: The issuers’ names and the documents issued to the user are available here.

My Requester: The requesters’ names and the documents requested by the requesters are available here.

Directories: Complete list of registered issuers and requesters along with their URIs are available here.

Signing Up Process: How Does it Work?

Log on to the official site of the DigiLocker (https://digitallocker.gov.in/).

Click on Sign-in.

In the text box “Enter Aadhaar Number”, type your Aadhaar number.

For user authentication, there are two options to choose: “Use OTP (One Time Password)” and “Use Fingerprint”.

OTP

If you choose OTP, the password will be sent to the mobile number and email-id registered with your Aadhaar.

Once the OTP is entered, click on ‘Validate OTP’ button.
Once the OTP is validated, the user can complete sign up by setting his username and password.

**Fingerprint**

If you choose fingerprint, you will have to put the thumb print on the finger print device.

If it is valid, your identification is authenticated and you can set your own username and password to complete the sign up.

**Using Social Media**

You can also sign in using your Gmail ID or Facebook ID.

**Advantages of DigiLocker System**

- Empowers the citizens digitally.
- Ensures easy availability of documents online.
- Reduces the use of physical documents and fake documents.
- Offers authenticity of the e-documents.
- Provides a secured access to documents issued by the government.
- Reduces administrative costs of government departments and agencies.
- Provides fast access to documents anytime and from anywhere.
- Enables easy sharing of documents across departments and agencies.
- Ensures complete privacy of residents’ data.
PAHAL SCHEME

The world’s largest cash subsidy under the Direct Benefit Transfer Scheme was re-launched by the Union Government in November 2014 in 54 districts and is extended all over the country with effect from January 1, 2015. The scheme was launched for the consumers of Liquid Petroleum Gas (LPG). The modified scheme is referred to as Pratyaksh Hanstantarit Labh or PAHAL DBTL (Direct Benefit Transfer of LPG).

What is PAHAL DBTL?

The PAHAL DBTL ambitious scheme was earlier launched on June 1, 2013 by the previous Government with the objective of giving cash subsidy on cooking gas and it covered 291 districts. The present government has comprehensively examined the PAHAL scheme and after reviewing the problems faced by the consumers, it modified the prior scheme and re-launched it in 54 districts on November 15, 2014 to cover 2.5 crore households. The second phase of this revised scheme started on January 1, 2015 to cover all the districts of the country. Under the previous scheme, it was mandatory to have the Aadhar number for all consumers who want to receive the LPG subsidy. However, this was a big problem for consumers who did not have the Aadhar card, which meant that they could not avail the subsidy.

How to receive LPG subsidy?

However, the new scheme has made available the LPG subsidy to all consumers. Under the modified scheme, the consumers who use LPG can now receive subsidy in his bank account under two options. Such a consumer who joins the scheme will be called Cash Transfer Compliant (CTC) and he can receive subsidy in the bank account.

Option 1 With Aadhar: If the consumers have their Aadhar numbers, then they have to get the number linked to the bank account to receive the subsidy.

Option 2 Without Aadhar: If a consumer does not have his Aadhar number, he can get the subsidy by linking his bank account with the LPG connection ID. This can be done in two ways:

The LPG distributor should get all bank details (account holder’s name, account number, and IFSC code) of the consumers who want to get LPG subsidy from his location. All information will be captured in the LPG database.

The bank should have all the information of the LPG connection of the consumer. This includes the 17 digit LPG consumer ID.

While the first option is known as the primary option, the second option is referred as the secondary option. In fact, the primary option of having an Aadhar number is the best option to avail the subsidy and hence recommended to all. Now, those consumers who have already registered themselves under the previous scheme need not register their information again with the LPG distributors. They will receive their subsidy directly in their bank account.

Benefits of PAHAL

There are three bodies which are going to be benefited by the PAHAL scheme:

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For LPG consumers: All consumers using LPG cylinders will get cash subsidy to buy 12 14.2-kg cylinders or 34 5-kg refills. The amount of money which is equal to the difference between the present subsidised rate and the market price is automatically transferred to the bank account of the consumer, when he or she makes the first booking for a cylinder. However, this is possible only after joining the scheme. When the consumer takes the delivery of the cylinder, another advance subsidy is transferred to the bank account.

For Government: This scheme will reduce or prevent the unauthorised sale of LPG cylinders at higher rates. The purchase of multiple gas connections will be prevented. Accordingly, the subsidy burden for the Government will be reduced.

For oil marketing companies (OMC): The LPG gas distributors won’t have much burden of sending the cylinders to the intermediate gas suppliers. They will be in direct contact with their consumers, thereby building a good customer relationship. Multiple unauthorized connections won’t be provided. The OMCs will be able to ensure that the consumers receive the LPG gas at one fixed rate and do not have to stand in long queues if they had made the booking well in advance.

**Grace period**

Those consumers who are not yet in the CTC bracket will be given 3 months time from the date of launch of PAHAL to become CTC. During this period, such consumers will need to buy the LPG cylinders at the market rates but they will receive the subsidised amount in their bank account once they become CTC consumers.

**Parking period**

After the grace period of three months, all non-CTC LPG consumers will get another three months time as Parking Period. In case a consumer does not become CTC during this period, the parked subsidised funds will lapse and consumer shall become ineligible to receive subsidies till the consumer becomes CTC. When non-CTC consumers become CTC after the parking period, they will get one time permanent advance and total cash subsidized cylinders in that financial year.

**Permanent advance**

Once a consumer becomes a CTC after joining the PAHAL scheme, a one-time advance will be given to him or her. This is known as the permanent advance and will remain fixed for a financial year. This amount will remain with a CTC consumer till the time he has the gas connection. LPG consumers who have the permanent advance on a previous scale will not be paid for any extra payment on account of the revision in the permanent advance.

Things to remember

All consumers need a bank account to join the scheme.

One time permanent advance will be received by the consumers in their bank account, before they buy the first market priced LPG cylinder.
The subsidies will be debited to the consumers’ bank account according to their entitlement of subsidized cylinders.

The consumers who have joined the scheme will get cylinders at subsidized price for three months from November 15, 2014 to February 14, 2015.

The consumers will get LPG cylinders at market price for the next three months, but the subsidy amount will be given back to them if they join this scheme before April 14, 2015.
Skill India Programme

After ‘Digital India’ and ‘Make in India’, the NaMo Government is to launch yet another programme. This one is a revised version of programmes launched earlier under the skill development policy. This new programme, called ‘Skill India’, is supposed to be a multi-skill programme. It will be launched in March 2015. Like all other programmes, ‘Skill India’ too is a dream project of Narendra Modi and the work to launch this programme has already been initiated.

Objectives of ‘Skill India’

The main goal is to create opportunities, space and scope for the development of the talents of the Indian youth and to develop more of those sectors which have already been put under skill development for the last so many years and also to identify new sectors for skill development. The new programme aims at providing training and skill development to 500 million youth of our country by 2020, covering each and every village. Various schemes are also proposed to achieve this objective.

Features of ‘Skill India’

The emphasis is to skill the youths in such a way so that they get employment and also improve entrepreneurship.

Provides training, support and guidance for all occupations that were of traditional type like carpenters, cobblers, welders, blacksmiths, masons, nurses, tailors, weavers etc.

More emphasis will be given on new areas like real estate, construction, transportation, textile, gem industry, jewellery designing, banking, tourism and various other sectors, where skill development is inadequate or nil.

The training programmes would be on the lines of international level so that the youths of our country can not only meet the domestic demands but also of other countries like the US, Japan, China, Germany, Russia and those in the West Asia.

Another remarkable feature of the ‘Skill India’ programme would be to create a hallmark called ‘Rural India Skill’, so as to standardise and certify the training process.

Tailor-made, need-based programmes would be initiated for specific age groups which can be like language and communication skills, life and positive thinking skills, personality development skills, management skills, behavioural skills, including job and employability skills.

The course methodology of ‘Skill India’ would be innovative, which would include games, group discussions, brainstorming sessions, practical experiences, case studies etc.

How is it different from the previous skill development policies?

It’s not that we do not have any skill development programme already. The Government of India has always considered skill development as a national priority. It is just that since the ministry is new, the approach taken for skill development is also new. Earlier, the emphasis was on traditional jobs. But this time, all kinds of jobs will be given equal emphasis. Earlier, the responsibility was divided among various ministries, but this time, these are being clubbed together. The ministry of skill development...
and entrepreneurship will be the principal ministry which is going to coordinate with other ministries and organisations. According to NaMo, Skill India won’t be just a programme but a movement. Here, youth who are jobless, college and school dropouts, along with the educated ones, from rural and urban areas, all will be given value addition. The new ministry will be the certifying agency. Certificates will be issued to those who complete a particular skill or programme and this certificate has to be recognized by all public and private agencies and entities, including overseas organisations. Skill India is a programme for the entire nation.

**Advantages of Skill India**

The idea is to raise confidence, improve productivity and give direction through proper skill development. Skill development will enable the youths to get blue-collar jobs. Development of skills, at an young age, right at the school level, is very essential to channelise them for proper job opportunities. There should be a balanced growth in all the sectors and all jobs should be given equal importance. Every job aspirant would be given training in soft skills to lead a proper and decent life. Skill development would reach the rural and remote areas also. Corporate educational institutions, non-government organizations, Government, academic institutions, and society would help in the development of skills of the youths so that better results are achieved in the shortest time possible.

**To sum up**

What shape ‘Skill India’ will take and what it will do only time can tell. But no doubt it seems to be a good initiative – providing skills to people, especially because India is one of the few countries all across the world whose working age population will be very high, few years down the line, going by its ever-increasing growth of population, as per the World Bank. It is also high time now measures are taken to improve the physical and mental development of the youths of the country so that none of them remains unemployed and the country’s unemployment problem also gets reduced. It is time to open up avenues by which the youth accepts responsibility and no one remains idle because an idle youth is a burden to the economy. The economy should concentrate on job creation and social security schemes. With this new approach towards skill development, India can definitely move forward towards its targeted results.
Sagarmala Project

On 25 March 2015, the Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, gave the final nod to proceed with the Sagarmala Project and prepare the concept and institutional framework. It was a significant development in India’s growth story. Taking ex-PM Atal Bihari Vajpayee’s dream project forward, Modi has rightly identified Sagarmala as a crucial infrastructure initiative whose development has the potential to boost India’s GDP by 2%.

Why is Sagarmala Project So Crucial for India?

India is bound by sea on three sides and has a 7,516.6 km coastline, making it the 7th largest in the world. Therefore, it is only natural that Indian ports handle 90% of the export-import trade volume. But that does not tell the entire story. The railways contribute 9% to the GDP, the road sector contributes 6%, whereas the ports’ share of GDP is only 1%! This contradiction reflects the vast potential for development of coastal cities and ports.

India suffers from poor port linkages, under performance of existing port infrastructure and lack of developed infrastructure near ports, for value addition of inbound or outbound merchandise. Along with this, an inefficient inter-modal transport connectivity results in high cost of logistics and exports. The share of merchandise trade in GDP for Germany is 75%, and for European Union it is 70%. For India, it is 42%. The Sagarmala project aims to improve this.

The present government has therefore prioritised the development of coastal cities, along with existing and new port development, as growth drivers.

The Sagarmala Project Stands on Three Pillars of Focus

- Supporting port-led development with pro-active policy initiatives and providing institutional framework to assist all stakeholders.
- Modernising port infrastructure.
- Developing integrated transport infrastructure for connecting the coast to the hinterland.

The Current Infrastructure Scenario

Unfortunately, the country has not focussed on developing the coastal and port infrastructure in an integrated manner that would have realised its full potential. Today, most ports lack adequate cargo handling infrastructure. The ship turnaround time is poor compared to most other developed ports in China, Japan, Korea, Dubai, Netherlands, etc. The loading-unloading processes are cumbersome. The rail and road connectivity to the hinterland is inadequate. Industrial centres near port locations that can offer value addition are also lacking.

Integrated Development at the Core of Sagarmala Project

Under the project, 12 smart cities will be developed near ports with an investment of Rs 50,000 crore. These will be integrated townships that will have affordable housing and implement green initiatives for sustainable living. The government has identified 1,208 islands for development along with 189 light houses. This is likely to boost both domestic and international tourism significantly. Giving boost to economic activity near coastal locations, Coastal Economic Zones (CEZs) will be established. These
CEZs will be planned with modern support infrastructure and adequate fiscal incentives to attract investment. Kandla Port in Gujarat, for instance, has around two lakh acres of land in its possession and has been identified as a potential CEZ. The project will undertake redevelopment of existing port infrastructure through upgrade in port handling equipment and extensive use of IT in improving monitoring and operations of port activity. Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust, which is one of the 12 major ports in India, will receive Rs 4,000 crore to develop its SEZ. The project will identify suitable port locations with deep drafts to enhance shipping and port handling capacity. Specialised ports with focus on handling coal, energy, chemicals, commodities, etc., will be developed.

Development and linking of short-sea shipping, coastal shipping and inland waterways transportation will get the due attention. Further development of ship building, ship repair and ship recycling industry will also be a priority. Enhanced development of offshore drilling and storage platforms is another objective of the project. It also aims at developing logistics parks and warehousing near coastal locations to support port activity. With its long coastline, India offers great potential for developing offshore renewable energy and government has accorded due priority to attract investment in this area. The power generated will feed the coastal activity and also contribute to the national grid.

The Government Means Business

The government is planning a comprehensive National Perspective Plan (NPP) to be prepared in six months. The NPP will identify suitable geographical locations along the coast to develop as CEZs. The NPP will endeavour to synergise and integrate the CEZs with various existing government development initiatives like the National Highways Development, Inland Waterways, Smart Cities, SEZs, Industrial Corridors and Dedicated Freight Corridors.

Sagarmala Coordination and Steering Committee

To plan, initiate, supervise and monitor the Sagarmala project at the apex level, A Sagarmala Coordination and Steering Committee (SCSC) will be constituted under the chairmanship of the Cabinet Secretary and will have on board Secretaries from the Ministry of Shipping, Road Transport and Highways, Industrial Policy and Promotion, Environment, Forest & Climate Change, Revenue, Expenditure, Defence, Home Affairs, Chairman Railway Board and the CEO of NITI Aayog. The SCSC will ensure fund availability and oversee smooth coordination among various arms of the central government and state governments and agencies. Under the Federal structure, the states will play a major role in implementing and facilitating development in their respective areas. Each stakeholder state will have a State Sagarmala Committee (SSC) that will be headed by the Chief Minister or the Minister in charge of Ports. The panel will comprise members of relevant departments and agencies. The State Maritime Board or the State Port Development will report to the SSC and monitor and implement projects in the state. To facilitate investments in CEZs and port development activities, the government is open to setting up of Special Purposes Vehicles (SPVs). The SSC will coordinate with the SPVs for speedy implementation of individual projects. The central government proposes to establish Sagarmala Development Company (SDC), under the Companies Act 1956, that will extend equity support to SPVs operating in various states. The SDC will be mandated to prepare Detailed Master Plans for various proposed zones within a period of two years and submit a business plan within six months. The central government has allocated Rs 692 crore for FY ’15-’16 for launching of the initial phase.
Sagarmala Could Well Emerge a Jewel in the NDA Crown

The need exists as does the opportunity to develop India’s coastal potential and while it was Atal Bihari Vajpayee who dreamt of it, the credit for its launch and implementation will remain with PM Modi. If successfully implemented, this will be yet another success story for the PM to flaunt at the time of the next general elections.
eBasta

Digital India programme was launched by the government with a focus on digital empowerment of citizens and creation of digital infrastructure as a utility to every citizen for governance and services on demand. Under this initiative, the NDA government is trying to transform every possible sector.

eBasta

The Government of India has now extended a helping hand to the students of India in the form of the eBasta platform. This is a collaborative platform where students, teachers and book retailers can come together and help each other.

How it Works?

The stakeholders of eBasta are the students, teachers, eBasta app, and the publishers. The eBasta app has to be installed to get access to the portal. The school/teachers customise the contents of the eBasta for the students. The publishers upload the content as per the requirement of the eBastas. The students, with the help of the app, can access the portal and download content of interest.

Features of eBasta

‘Basta’ in Hindi means a school bag. As the name suggests, eBasta is literally a digital schoolbag with the digital version of school books and study material. The various features of eBasta are as follows:

This programme will make all school books available in the digital format and can be accessed on laptops and tablets. Resources available in the digital form include text, simulation, animations, audio books, and videos among many other features. Web based applications will be available to access and navigate the framework of eBasta. Teachers or the school can log on to the portal and customise the eBasta contents according to the requirement, standard, and syllabus of their students. Students can access the content included by the teachers or the school on the same portal. They can use eBasta application by downloading them on their computers or android phones. The android app is like an eBook reader. Once the student has access he/she will have the content as required by the teachers. The content is easily transferable. eBasta is also beneficial for the publishers. It will be easier for them to penetrate into schools and students in every nook and corner of India and sell books in the digital format. All they need to do is register on to the eBasta portal.

Benefits of eBasta for Students and Publishers

The publishers and the students both benefit because feedback on the online material available online comes directly and thus, any action required concerning the content will also be more prompt. Thanks to DRM (Digital Rights Management), the publishers do not have to worry about piracy of the content that they upload. Even though this platform has been newly launched, there are many eBooks available on the portal. With an increase in demand and popularity, this initiation of the Government is surely going to achieve success, and thus benefit the future generation of India.

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