

February 14<sup>th</sup>, 2008.  
NMBS/548/west bengal.

Shri. Amit Kiran Deb  
Chief Secretary  
Government of West Bengal  
Writer's Building  
Kolkata  
West Bengal.

**Sub: Status of Implementation of NMBS/JSY in West Bengal.**

Dear Shri. A K Deb,

As you know we have been appointed by the Supreme Court to monitor food and employment schemes under PUCL vs. Union of India, CWP 196/2001. We have recently submitted the seventh report on the implementation of these schemes all across the country to the Supreme Court. We would like to bring to your notice some issues of concern in relation to the National Maternity Benefit Scheme (NMBS) in West Bengal.

We would also like to bring to your notice the latest order of the Supreme Court (dated 20.11.2007) which states that, "The Union of India and all the State Governments and the Union Territories shall (i) continue with the NMBS and (ii) ensure that all BPL pregnant women get cash assistance 8-12 weeks prior to the delivery." The above order also states that, "The amount shall be Rs.500/- per birth irrespective of number of children and the age of the women".

1. Based on projected population, birth rates and poverty rates, we estimate that around 4.25 lakh women in West Bengal would be eligible for benefit under the NMBS each year. The number of beneficiaries of NMBS/JSY in the state in 2006-07 was 2 lakh which is just about 46.8% of eligible beneficiaries. We would urge you to treat this with a sense of utmost priority for state intervention so as to increase the awareness and coverage of the scheme.
2. With regard to utilisation of funds too, it is seen that the state spent only 73.5% of the funds allocated under JSY by the Government of India.
3. Of the JSY beneficiaries, the number of those who had home deliveries has not been reported to the Central government. We hope there is no confusion regarding the scheme and that all BPL women are being given Rs.500 during pregnancy, *irrespective of the place of delivery*. We would be grateful if the figures as to the number of home deliveries is reported to us as well as the Government of India.

**DR. N. C. SAXENA, COMMISSIONER AND  
HARSH MANDER, SPECIAL COMMISSIONER OF THE SUPREME COURT  
IN THE CASE: PUCL v. UOI & Ors. WRIT PETITION (Civil) No. 196 of 2001**

---

We request the Government of West Bengal to look into the above listed matters on a priority basis and send us an action taken report on the same at the earliest.

With regards,

Dr. N.C. Saxena

Harsh Mander

CC: Ms. Anuradha Talwar, Advisor to the Commissioners to the Supreme Court, West Bengal.