Phone Conversation with Chetawani Badaik, SEO, Bisra Block, Sundargarh Dist, Odisha.

21/06/2013

How is the pension list compiled?

- ➢ Announcements are made in gram sabhas regarding eligibility criteria for pensions.
- ➢ Potential beneficiaries also know the government gives a widow pension and an old age pension, if their relatives / neighbours get pension. They ask the Anganwadi Worker / EO / VLW / Sarpanch to submit forms on their behalf.
- ➢ VLW and AWW also maintain a list of potential beneficiaries. The applications and list are considered for approval around once a year.[1]

How is the accuracy of the pension list ensured? How do you go about deleting names of people who have died?

- ➢ If a person does not collect pension for 3 months, an enquiry is conducted into the case. If the person is unwell, then the pension is delivered to them. If the beneficiary has died, then the name is cut from the register.
- ➢ A yearly verification drive is carried out by the EO / VLW. They rely on information from neighbours / relatives / people who come to collect pension to tell them that a certain person has died.
- ➢ (In response to the survey) – A drive will be initiated to deliver pension in person to the people who are unable to collect the pension themselves, so that accuracy of the list can be maintained. (when I suggested that fraud was found to be taking place in cases where the VLW / GRS were colluding to siphon money, she said) - VLWs / EOs do tend to delete names of dead persons, but if there is collusion between those delivering pension, then it is difficult to detect fraud.

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[1] Conversations with some pension beneficiaries and with some people who were not getting pensions revealed that the process of getting pension sanctioned is often much more complicated. Most people mentioned that they 1. bought a form, 2. travelled to Bisra to get an age verification by a medical practitioner, for which a commonly cited bribe paid was Rs.50/- (ie to get the doctor's signature); 3. They then got the form back to the village and had to get it countersigned by the sarpanch / sachiv; 4. After this, the form was submitted to the AWW.