

# **Aadhaar cards bare pension fraud 24% beneficiaries suspected to be fake; 10 persons found claiming pension fraudulently**

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In a shocking development, as many as 24 per cent beneficiaries of the pension scheme in the UT are suspected to be fake while at least 10 persons have been found to be claiming pension fraudulently.

The fake beneficiaries came to light after the linking of Aadhaar cards with the pension scheme. As many as 4,038 pensioners of the 21,092 beneficiaries did not turn up after the Social Welfare Department made the Aadhaar card mandatory for pension. This has pointed a finger of suspicion towards them. The department has ordered an investigation into the case.

Sources in the department said soon after the process of linking Aadhaar was initiated and inquiries conducted, the department found at least 10 cases of fake beneficiaries.

"We are looking into the matter. It seems there were many who were claiming pension fraudulently," said a senior official.

The sources said there were 5 to 7 per cent claimants earlier who were suspected to be fake, but there was hardly any departmental check on them.

The department was losing Rs 1.20 crore annually by way of disbursing pension to beneficiaries suspected to be fake. Now, only 16,064 beneficiaries are being given pension.

UT Social Welfare Department official Rajesh Jogpal said the department had stopped the pension of those who had not turned up for the past six months after the Aadhaar card was made mandatory for availing of the pension. He said the department was conducting a physical verification in these cases before discontinuing the pension.

The department was also updating the record of these missing pensioners by finding out how many had died or left the city. It was also trying to find the data of the fake claimants. He said the department had already cancelled the pension of those who were found fake after the verification of their credentials.

Records of the department revealed that 10,456 persons were getting old-age pension, 5,706 persons the widow and destitute pension, 3,047 persons the disabled person pension, while 1,474 dependent children of widows were getting financial assistance. Earlier, the department used to disburse the pension on a quarterly basis. However, after the launch of the direct benefit transfer scheme, the beneficiaries are getting pension on a monthly basis.

## **NO VERIFICATION**

Earlier, pensioners just had to produce their identity card for drawing the pension at e-Sampark centres. There was no verification by the department regarding the residential proof of the claimant. An official said cases had been reported where beneficiaries came to the city only at the time of the renewal of their pension.

<b>Type of pension</b>	<b>Number of claimants</b>
Old-age pension	10,456
Widows and destitute pension	5,706
Disabled person pension	3,047
Dependent children of widows	1,474