

Maharashtra Launches Probe into 2.63 Million 'Suspect' Beneficiaries of Ladki Bahin Yojana



The Maharashtra government has launched a massive verification drive to investigate 26.3 lakh (2.63 million) potentially ineligible beneficiaries under the Mukhyamantri Majhi Ladki Bahin Yojana. The probe follows the detection of widespread irregularities, with evidence pointing to violations of the scheme's eligibility norms related to age, household status, and gender. The ₹1,500 monthly benefit, introduced in August 2024 to assist women aged 21 to 65 from economically weaker sections, has been temporarily suspended for those flagged during the initial scrutiny.

The Women and Child Development (WCD) Department, working alongside the Information and Technology Department, uncovered numerous discrepancies in the beneficiary database. Among the anomalies were 14,298 men receiving benefits intended solely for women, households registering more than the allowed number of female recipients, and several individuals either below the age of 21 or above 65. Additionally, families owning four-wheelers were found to have bypassed the scheme's income-based eligibility criteria.

WCD Minister Aditi Tatkare confirmed that the disbursement of funds to these accounts has been halted since June 2025, pending a more detailed district-level verification. "The verification process is ongoing, and only eligible women will continue to receive the benefit," Tatkare stated. The government has revealed that the suspected fraudulent claims may have led to an estimated ₹4,800 crore being misallocated. In response, Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar has

announced plans to recover the funds from ineligible recipients and initiate legal action against those found to have willfully misrepresented information.

The Ladki Bahin Yojana was a flagship welfare initiative by the state's ruling Mahayuti alliance and played a significant role in their 2024 Assembly election campaign. Given its scale and impact, the government is now implementing stricter safeguards. These include cross-verifying beneficiary details with records from the Income Tax and Transport Departments, as well as using Aadhaar-linked data and information from OTT platforms to identify discrepancies. The ongoing review is being supervised by district collectors, who have been directed to ensure that only legitimate claimants continue to receive financial support. Reinstatement of benefits will be made for those cleared in the re-verification process, while those found guilty of fraud may face financial penalties and prosecution.