

# The Times of India

## Unemployment allowance scheme fizzles out

DEHRADUN: Uttarakhand government's scheme to pay a monthly allowance to unemployed youth, launched with much fanfare in November 2012, has fizzled out.

Under the scheme, youth in the state were paid according to their education level i.e. intermediate (Rs 500), graduate (Rs 750) and postgraduate (Rs 1,000). According to an estimate by directorate of training and employment, the number of unemployed youngsters in the state has been recorded at 9,40,461 in July 2016. Majority of the unemployed youth in the state are in Nainital followed by Uttarkashi and Dehradun.

The state unemployment minister, Harish Chandra Durgapal, confirmed to TOI that the monthly allowance has been stopped this financial year.

"Due to budget constraints we were forced to stop the scheme for the moment. We are hopeful that it will be resumed as the matter has been brought to the notice of the CM," Durgapal said.

The directorate of training and employment provides training programmes to hone skills of youth so they can avail themselves of employment opportunities. But since the formation of the state in 2000, the department has only been able to provide jobs to 30,737 of the registered candidates.

The unemployed youth in the state have been hit hard with the discontinuation of the monthly allowance.

"This allowance is not about the money but it is the hope that it ignites in lakhs of youths like me. We are hoping that the scheme is restarted soon because even a sum of Rs 1,000 matters when you don't have a regular source of income," said Rahul Barthwal, a 26-year-old from Pauri.

Another unemployed youth, Ranjeet Baunthiyal from Udham Singh Nagar, said, "It is difficult to find jobs in other states. Uttarakhand government should streamline its tourism, ayurveda, and other sectors so that youth can find employment."

Another youngster from Dehradun, Meenu Rawat, said, "The entrepreneurs use raw materials from the state but have their

manufacturing units in other states. This means that people from those states find employment. Also, how do we know that industries set up in Uttarakhand actually employ people of the state? This should be monitored by the authorities."

Some, however, were hopeful that the unemployment allowance scheme would be revived by the government as it would not want to suffer losses in the 2017 assembly elections.

"The unemployment scheme was a key poll promise during the last elections. Next year the state goes to the polls. The government will ensure that majority of the young voters find employment or at least receive some monthly amount," said a retired bureaucrat from Uttarakhand who didn't wish to be named.