

Centre calls for fresh list on housing scheme

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CORRESPONDENT**

New Delhi: The Union government is set to ask states to identify fresh eligible persons for housing support under the Pradhan Mantri Gramin Awas Yojana but would not conduct a census for the collection of socio-economic data.

Finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman has announced that the Union government will provide housing support to two crore families in rural areas in the next five years.

The ministry of rural development has estimated that nearly 1.4 crore households have been on the waiting list of eligible beneficiaries selected under the Awas Plus survey in 2018. It would need a list of 60 lakh fresh eligible persons to meet the 2-crore target.

"The ministry will ask for a fresh list of eligible persons from the states. The states will have to prepare the list of eligible persons. The states may have to carry out a survey through their machinery," said an official of the Odisha government.

In 2018, the state governments conducted an Awas Plus survey and identified 3.57 crore additional households which need housing support. But the ministry disagreed with these figures and asked the states to verify them. After scrutiny, the Awas Plus list was revised to 2.8 crore. Of these, the ministry has sanctioned 91 lakh houses.

Hence, about 1.9 crore identified households were on the waiting list under the Awas Plus with most of them from rural areas. However, the ministry expects that the list may come down to 1.4 lakh now since states are continuing their housing schemes and those getting government jobs become ineligible too.

However, the central government will not hold any survey like the Socio-Economic and Caste Census (SECC), officials said.

Several state governments, including Bihar, have demanded the conduct of a fresh SECC. "The household data will be available after the census is conducted. The household data is essential for a census like the SECC. There is no proposal for the conduct of an SECC for the selection of the Pradhan Mantri Gramin Awas Yojana beneficiaries," said an official.