

Minutes of the 23rd Meeting of Standing Committee of Voluntary Agencies (SCOVA) held on 20.9.2013 under the Chairmanship of Hon'ble Minister of State (PP) at Vigyan Bhawan Annexe, New Delhi.

The list of participants is at Appendix-I (*Not reproduced*)

2. At the outset Joint Secretary (P) welcomed Hon'ble MoS (PP), representatives of Pensioners Associations, and the participating Officers of various Ministries/ Departments. She mentioned that Standing Committee of Voluntary Agencies was set up in 1986 and over the years, it has served very useful purpose. The SCOVA highlighted the issues of pensioners, facilitated policy decision and provided discussion forum, where various nodal Ministries can interact. She added that the Pensioners Associations, also have done good work and they deserved appreciation for their contribution. This Department itself has made sincere efforts towards simplification of Rules and Procedures for payment of pension and sanction of these payments. Streamlining the procedure has helped both the pensioners and the implementing agencies. The list of recent changes has been provided on the Department's website. However, all these have been possible only because of the dynamic leadership provided by the Hon'ble Minister, who has directed that no stone should be left unturned for the benefit of the pensioners.

3. Welcoming the participants, Hon'ble MoS (PP) stated that as promised last time, the SCOVA Meeting was being held for the second time in a year. The Minister appreciated the selfless service of the Pensioners Associations'. On the basis of recommendation made by the Department related Parliamentary Committee, this Department is in the process of increasing the existing number of Pensioners Associations from 30 to 50. The Department has launched a web-based 'Pensioners Portal' a Mission Mode Project under National e-Governance Plan of the Government. The portal CPENGRAMS (Centralized Pension Grievance Redress and Monitoring System) serves as a one stop information source for the pensioners of Government of India across the country. He further highlighted the significant recent initiatives taken by the Department in the best interest of pensioners and family pensioners.

4. Thereafter, the Action taken Report (ATR) of 22nd SCOVA Meeting and Agenda items of 23rd SCOVA Meeting were taken up for discussion.

5. Action Taken Report (ATR) on the points raised

in the 23rd Meeting of SCOVA.

i) Sl.No. 1 of ATR of para 5:

Status of issue of revised PPOs to pre-2006 pensioners.

While the target date for completion of this work for CPAO, Railways & Posts was 31st March, 2013, the status and further course of action was as follows:

a) CPAO informed that as on 8.8.2013, 71,334 cases (34,733 pre-1990 and 36,601 pre-2006), of Civil Ministries/Depts, are pending for revision. Approximately, 82% work of Civil Ministries/Departments have been completed. The major reason for non-revision of the remaining cases by Ministries/Departments are non-availability of records of the pensioners in CPAO, Ministries/Departments and Banks. Efforts are also made to approach the pensioners through advertisements, however, as pension has already been revised by the Banks, response from pensioners was not encouraging.

To strengthen the monitoring at the level of the Secretary of the administrative Min./Deptt, this item has been made a part of the monthly D.O to the Cabinet Secretary.

Target date:- 31st December, 2013.

b) Ministry of Railways informed that they have completed the revision of 5,87,035 out of 10,93,772 cases and due to non-availability of complete information from the pensioners, they are not able to revise the remaining PPOs for which they have asked the Banks to help them. They have also issued fresh instructions in May, 2013 that the PPOs may be revised suo-moto and the revised deadline is December 2013. These cases are closely monitored by the Ministry of Railways. Hon'ble MoS (PP) desired that the Ministry of Railways should give advertisements in concerned regional languages. MoS (PP) will take up the issue with the Railway Minister, demi-officially.

Target date:- 31st December, 2013.

c) Department of Posts informed that after re-verification the number of pre-2006 pensioners have come down to 1,96,000 and now the DoP has completed 84.78% of the work. 29,855 cases are pending which will be covered by 30th November, 2013. The DoP are going through a transition from non digitisation to digitisation form, and the Department has already started ERP

solution, by putting all the legacy data into ERP solution.

Target date:- 30th November, 2013.

d) Department of Telecommunication informed that as on date 53,000 cases remain to be revised. The main problem was that DoT has to depend on BSNL for the records. The Secretary of DoT will address all Heads of Circles of BSNL to expedite the cases by constituting a Coordination Committee at each CCA. As per their plan of action the DoT will be able to wipe out pending cases by 31st March, 2014. To enable this 31st December, 2013 has been kept as a target date for BSNL to provide all the documents relating to it.

Target date: 31st March 2014

e) Ministry of Defence informed that they have started issuing corrigendum PPOs. Corrigendum PPOs could not be issued by the concerned Pension Sanctioning Authorities (PSAs) for want of computerised data. There was some mismatch in data between the PSAs and with the PDAs. It has been reported that the records in respect of Post 2006 pensioners have since been computerised and database exists for 4.5 lac pensioners (approx). Digital records of 5.88 lac pensioners have also been created in respect of pre 2006 pensioners under Project SANGAM so far. Implementation of the Cabinet decision of September 2012 regarding enhancement of pension was a priority and the entire entitlement had to be revised again. MoD has set a target of issuing around 1 lac PPOs every month. Further since the orders issued in this regard did not include all categories of invalid pensioners, the file had to be moved again for amending the orders. The file is still with the Defence/Finance. MoS(PP) directed that a reference demi-officially from him to the Defence/Minister may be sent.

While the digitisation of pension data will be completed by 31st March, 2014, the revision exercise for all cases is proposed to be completed by September, 2014.

*(Action: CPAO, M/o Railways, DoP,
D/o Telecom, M/o Defence & DoP & PW)*

ii) SI.No. 2 of ATR

a) Revision of ex-gratia amount to CPF/SRPF retirees.

b) Uniform rates of DR

d) Ex-gratia to those who voluntarily retired after 20 years of service in respect of pre 1986 CPF/SRPF

retirees.

e) Ex-gratia should not be less than minimum pension and the same should be effective from 1.1.2006.

As regards (a), (b) & (e):-

The rates of CPF ex-gratia have been revised to bring these in tune with the SRPF rates w.e.f. 4.6.2013. The ex-gratia payable to the families of CPF as well as SRPF beneficiaries has been increased to Rs. 645/- per month w.e.f. 4.6.2013.

Necessary instructions have been issued by D/o P&PW & M/o Railways vide D/o P&PW O.M. No.1/10/2012-P&PW(E) dt. 27.6.2013 and Ministry of Railways letter No. F(E)III/98/PN/Ex.Gr./3 dt 15.11.2006, and No.F(E)III/2008/PN1/Ex.Gr./2 dt 31.7.2013 respectively and these points to be dropped.

As regards (d):-

Necessary instructions have been issued by D/o P&PW & M/o Railways vide D/o P&PW O.M. No. 41/26/2010-P&PW(E) dt. 25.6.2013 and M/o Railways O.M. No 2012/F(E)III/4dt. 15.7.2013.

Hence the item was closed.

iii) SI.No. 3 of ATR:

(13)- The Orders of Ministry of Health reiterating that all the pensioners are at liberty to opt themselves with any of the nearest CGHS Hospital/Dispensary may be widely circulated. Arbitrary Orders dated 1.8.1996 and 1.9.1996 issued by Ministry of Health and Director of CGHS may be withdrawn and the benefit of CGHS facilities be allowed to the pensioners of Department of Post and Department of Telecom.

16(i) Medical facilities for existing P&T pensioners.

The representative of Ministry of Health & FW informed that the matter regarding withdrawal of O.Ms dated 1.8.1996 and 1.9.1996 (which provide that the P&T pensioners not participating in CGHS while in service may not be extended this facility) is sub-judice.

(Action: M/o Health & FW)

(ii) Regarding merger of P&T dispensaries with CGHS.

CGHS has taken over 19 P&T dispensaries in 12 cities w.e.f. 1.8.2013 vide MoH & FW Notification dated 9.7.2013 circulated by Department of Posts vide Circular No. 2-3/2009. Medical dated 18.7.2013. Accordingly, P&T pensioners residing in these cities can join CGHS to avail its facilities including inpatient medical

treatment/hospitalisation etc.

Hence the issue was closed.

(iii) S.No 6 of ATR:-

Regarding additional dispensaries.

Ministry of Health & FW informed that due to the financial and logistic constraints it is not possible to open more dispensaries. Ministry is however mooted a proposal to open CGHS dispensaries at all State Capital not yet covered by CGHS. MoS (PP) said that for opening of dispensary at Panchkula, the matter from his level will be taken up again.

Ministry of Health & FW informed that with the merger of 19 P&T dispensaries with CGHS, the problem of non-availability of hospitalization facility has been mitigated to a large extent.

Regarding empanelment of hospitals, the Ministry of Health & FW informed that in smaller cities, the empanelment of hospitals has been done only in those places where CGHS dispensaries are available. This is because the number of patients in such cities is sizeable.

On the question of computerisation of CGHS dispensary at Jammu, the Ministry of Health & FW informed that the matter is under process.

(Action: M/o Health & FW)

iv) SI.No. 4 of ATR

Dissemination of information in real time.

Department of Posts vide dt. 11.10.2012 has issued instructions for payment of DR to pensioners on the basis of O.M issued by Department of Pensions and Pensioners Welfare, and without waiting for the separate Circular. These instructions were again reiterated vide dt. 25.6.2013.

In view of this the item was closed.

v) SI.No. 5 of ATR

Nomination facility for Family Pensioners drawing Life Time Arrears of Family Pension.

The matter has been again examined in consultation with the D/o Legal Affairs. It has been decided that since family pension is granted only for the sustenance of the family of the deceased Govt. servant/pensioner it is not legally correct to consider the same as property of the family pensioner and therefore to facilitate nomination for the same. At the same time, instructions have been issued to allow payment of lifetime arrears up to Rs. 2,50,000 without Succession Certificate when no member

in the family is eligible for family pension. In view of the foregoing, it is proposed that the item may be closed.

vi) SI.No 7 of ATR

Nomination facility for reimbursement of expenses incurred under CGHS.

In D/o P&PW letter dated 30.7.2013, Ministry of Health was informed that seeking Affidavits/NoC etc., on stamp paper from the legal heirs/family members may cause avoidable inconvenience to them. The feasibility of reimbursing the hospitalization expenses in respect of the deceased employee/pensioner to the nominee for the purpose of GPF, gratuity CGEGIS, etc., could, therefore, be examined. Ministry of Health & FW was again requested to re-consider the matter and to inform the decision taken in this regard.

Ministry of Health & FW informed that in the light of the observations of D/o P&PW, the issue is being re-examined.

(Action: M/o Health & FW)

vii) SI.No. 8 of ATR

Extension of duty hours of CGHS Dispensaries:-

The working hours of CGHS dispensaries have since been revised to 8.00 A.M. to 3.00 P.M. with a 30 minutes lunch break from 1.00 P.M. to 1.30 P.M. It has been made applicable across the Country at all CGHS locations. Hence the item was closed.

viii) SI.No. 9 of ATR

CGHS sites on the net:-

Link of current website of CGHS is available. Hence, the item was closed.

ix) SI.No. 10 of ATR

Anomaly in fixation of pension to DoT employees absorbed in BSNL, who retired between 1.10.2000 and 31.7.2001.

The representative of Department of Telecommunications informed that the matter has been re-examined by them and a fresh proposal will be sent to D/o P&PW for consideration before 30.9.2013.

(Action: D/o Telecommunications & D/o P&PW)

x) SI.No. 11 of ATR

Merger of 78.2% IDA with basic pension benefit to the absorbed BSNL Pensioners:-

The representative of Department of Telecommunications informed that the matter has been

re-examined by them and a fresh proposal will be sent to D/o P&PW for consideration before 30.9.2013.

(Action: D/o Telecommunications & D/o P&PW)

6. Fresh Agenda Items for 23rd SCOVA Meeting

(23.1) Submission of application in Form 14 be dispensed with for sanction of Family Pension.

The matter has been examined in the Government. Necessary instruction for grant of family pension with application in Form-14 where pensioner has a joint account with the spouse and using Form-14 in other cases without having it attested has been issued vide D/o P&PW O.M. No. 1/27/2011-P&PW(E) dt. 20.9.2013. In view of the position explained above the matter may be closed.

(23.2) Extension of benefit of upgraded Grade Pay to pre-2006 retirees of S-12 grade.

Ministry of Finance has informed that the grade pay of Rs. 4600 is not the corresponding grade pay in respect of the pre-revised pay scale of Rs 6500-10,500. This grade pay is the corresponding grade pay of the upgraded post in the pay scale of 7,450-11,500. The corresponding grade pay for pre-revised pay scale of 6,500-10,500 is Rs.4,200/- since the benefit of upgraded pay scale is not to be given to the pre-2006 pensioners, the pension of pre-2006 pensioners who retired in the pay scale of 6,500-10,500 cannot be fixed with reference to the minimum of fitment table with grade pay of Rs. 4,600. Pensioners Associations informed that there are some CAT Orders allowing benefit of grade pay of Rs. 4,600 to the pre-2006 pensioners who retired in the pay scale of 6,500-10,500. It was decided that since the matter is sub-judice, the final decision would be taken subsequent to court decisions.

(Action: D/o Expenditure, D/o P&PW)

(23.3.) Complaints Against the System of Lodging of Pension Grievance.

This Department has been forwarding the grievances on pension related matters, received in this Department either on line through CPENGRAMS or otherwise, to designated Nodal Officers of concerned Ministries/Deptts/Organisations. Since even for monitoring those grievances, this Department has been interacting with the designated Nodal Officers, it is neither prudent nor feasible to send grievances directly to subordinate formations. However, the Department is working on the

feasibility of forwarding e-mails where email-ids of nodal office has been provided. Hence the matter may be closed.

(23.4) Broad Banding of Disability Element for Pre-1996 cases.

The matter regarding extension of benefit of broad banding to pre-1.1.96 invalidated out individuals was processed and referred to MoD(Fin) for concurrence. But MoD (Fin) returned the matter back for knowing the financial implications involved. CGDA, expressed its difficulty in furnishing the requisite information. MoD(Fin) was persuaded to process the matter without the financial implications. The case has been referred to M/o Finance by MoD(Fin) in March, 2013. The DESW has been in constant touch with the D/o Expenditure to get the case finalized. Secretary (Pension) requested the Ministry of Finance to expedite the disposal of cases.

(Action: M/o Finance, D/o Expenditure & D/o Ex-Servicemen Welfare)

(23.5) Appointment of Specialists and General Medical Officer in CGHS.

Keeping in view the difficulties being faced by the aged CGHS pensioner beneficiaries, feasibility of appointing specialists of various disciplines in CGHS dispensaries on part time/contract basis is being explored. Ministry of Health & FW have delegated powers to the field level committees headed by Additional Director, CGHS of that city to appoint retired Government doctors against the vacant posts of Specialists. Hence, the matter may be closed.

(23.6) Problems faced by non-Smart Card (old card holders) of CGHS.

CGHS has already started issuing plastic cards at all its locations (except Jammu). Beneficiaries may apply for the same with the requisite details and get their plastic cards made from the Office of Additional Director, CGHS of the city concerned. Two new vendors have been appointed for the issue of plastic cards. Hence the matter may be treated as closed.

(23.7) Extension of benefit of O.M. dt. 28.1.2013 w.e.f. 1.1.2006 instead of 24.9.2012.

It was stated that a SLP filed by the D/o P&PW has been dismissed by the Hon'ble Supreme Court on 29.7.2013. The Department was considering further course of action in consultation with the Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Law.

Action: DoP & PW