

**Minutes of the 27th meeting of Standing Committee of Voluntary Agencies (SCOVA) held on
13.10.2015 under the Chairmanship of Hon'ble MOS (PP) at**

Vigyan Bhawan Annexe, New Delhi.

List of Participants is at Annexure-I

At the outset Joint Secretary (Pension) welcomed Hon'ble MOS (PP), Secretary, Pension & Pensioners' Welfare, representatives of Pensioners Associations and the participating officers of various Ministries/Departments. She especially welcomed the new members of the SCOVA after its reconstitution. It was stated that the SCOVA under the able leadership of the Hon'ble Minister, continues to strive for the welfare of pensioners.

2. Secretary (P&PW), also welcomed the Hon'ble MOS (PP), Chairman, SCOVA, the pensioners associations and the various Departments. He said that there were a number of issues of the pensioners pending for want of decision. He expressed that this was not acceptable and so he directed to conduct a meeting at department level on second Tuesday of the every month to expedite the disposal of issue raised in SCOVA. He observed that CPAO has shown remarkable progress in the revision of PPOs of pre-2006 pensioners. He stated that the problems being faced in completing the exercise of revision of PPOs arise out of non-availability of information about pensioners with the PPO revising authorities. He urged the Pensioners Associations to help in getting this information so that there is zero pendency in the next one month. He stressed that more efforts need to be made to resolve grievances of pensioners, which arise mainly out of wrong fixation of pension, recovery of excess payment of pension and pending revision of PPOs. Regarding "Online Pension and Payment Tracking System Bhavishya", he said that lot of work had been put in by the Department. Presently it has been implemented in the main Secretariat of 83 Ministries/Departments and 9 Attached Offices.. He urged the Departments and DoPPW to realize that the grievances of the pensioners today would be their grievances tomorrow and hence these needed to be sorted out.

3. Thereafter, Hon'ble MOS (PP), Chairman, SCOVA, welcomed all participants to the meeting. He said that presently the number of pensioners is more than the number of employees in service. The pensioners in themselves have become a distinguished class on account of a large pool of experience. As the average life span has increased, they may be called as retired but not tired. Therefore, the possibilities to be explored for their utilization in a constructive manner. He called for pre-retirement counseling of the retiring persons so that their experience can be utilized in best manner and they can be served in a better way. Through the Prime Minister's initiative 'Anubhav', we are now learning from pensioners. It is to be seen how we can help pensioners in their further skilling and how best we can utilize the elderly human resource of India for the benefit of the society and their own well-being. He said the possibility of utilizing pensioners in decision making processes could be explored. He also stated that Hon'ble Prime Minister has announced "Startup India, Standup India" initiative from the ramparts of the Red Fort in his Independence Day speech this year. Our pensioners can be a guiding force for "Startup India,

Standup India" and can become torch bearers of this initiative. The energy of the youth could be coupled with the experience of the pensioners for remarkable results. He appreciated that during the last 6 months grievances have been reduced substantially and suggested that efforts should be made that such grievances which are pending for no reason should be redressed quickly. He desired that the mobile portal for grievance redressal may be launched as early as possible. He stated that health related issues of pensioners should be resolved quickly, and reimbursement of medical expenses, should be quicker and easier. He complemented the department for implementing 'Bhavishya' as a single window system for sanction and payment of pension dues.

4. Thereafter, the Action Taken Report of 26th SCOVA meeting and Fresh Agenda items of 27th SCOVA meeting were taken up for discussion.

5. Discussion on ATR of 25thSCOVA meeting:-

i) SI.No 1 of ATR: Status of issue of revised PPOs to pre-2005 pensioners.

CPAO intimated that as on date 9697 PPOs are yet to be revised. CGA took a meeting on 07.10.2015 in this connection. CPAO has been mapping the pendency location wise. One of the associations expressed their reservations about the 'Nil' pendency shown in the ATR by Department of Ex-servicemen Welfare. However, the association expressed its inability to provide the details of pending PPOs as the association did not maintain data in this regard. Secretary(Pension) directed that representatives of CGDA, Department of Financial Services and Department of Ex-servicemen Welfare be asked to present in the meeting scheduled to be held on 27.10.2015 for revision of pension.

One of the Railway pensioners' association suggested that perception for non-revision of PPO is partly due to the fact that many of the revised PPO are being sent at the addresses where pensioners no longer reside. The association suggested that the revised PPO be sent to pension disbursing bank who can send it to the pensioners. Department of Telecom informed that the remaining PPOs pertain to BSNL about which they do not have sufficient information.

Now, they are taking help from Banks to get that information to reach out to remaining pensioners.

Jt. Secretary(Pension) requested all the Ministries/Departments to issue revised authorities for all pending cases before the next SCOVA meeting so that this item could be closed finally.

(Action:- CPAO, Department of Posts, Department of Telecom, Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Railways)

(ii) Health Insurance Scheme for pensioners including those residing at non-CGHS areas. Ministry of Health and Family Welfare informed that after consultation with the concerned Departments such as NITI Ayog, Department of Expenditure, Department of Financial Services and the

Insurance Companies, a scheme for Health Insurance for employees and pensioners has been prepared. An EFC Memo in this regard would be circulated to the concerned Department shortly.

One of the Associations suggested that the Medical Insurance Scheme may be extended to CGHS beneficiaries also, so that they could get medical benefits under Insurance Scheme over and above the reimbursement under CGHS.

(Action: Ministry of Health and Family Welfare)

(iii) Special Family Pension for the Widows of Disabled War Veterans medically invalidated out of service. It was once again clarified that the matter pertained only to widows of disabled war veterans who have been invalidated out of service and not to widows of the all disabled war veterans. It was decided that Department of Ex- Servicemen Welfare will have a relook and take a decision at an appropriate level in consultation with CGDA at the earliest.

(Action: Department of Ex-servicemen Welfare and CGDA)

(iv) (a) Arbitrary orders dated 01/08/1996 and 01/09/1996 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.

(b) Medical facilities for existing P&T pensioners.

One of the Pensioners' Association stated that with the dismissal of the SLPs by the Hon'ble Supreme Court on 22-8-2014, the issue has attained finality, and therefore withdrawal of OMs cited above must be expedited to pave the way for extension of CGHS facility to P&T Pensioners.

Ministry of Health and Family Welfare informed that a proposal regarding extension of CGHS facility to all P&T pensioners at par with other Government pensioners has been forwarded for approval of Department of Expenditure. Department of Expenditure was advised to expedite their decision in this regard.

(Action: Ministry of Health & Family Welfare and Department of Expenditure)

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

It was informed that a proposal was sent by DOT to DoPPW on 24.04.2015 and a formulation was suggested by DoPPW on 26.06.2015. The case was thereafter referred to Department of Expenditure. Department of Expenditure sought some clarification/information on 17.09.2015 which are being obtained by DoT from concerned Departments/Agencies. DoT was asked to finalise their proposal by 31.10.2015

(Action: D/o Telecom & DoPPW)

(vi) Merger of 78.2% IDA with basic pension benefit to the absorbed BSNL Pensioners.

Department of Telecom informed that a draft Cabinet Note was circulated on 16.06.2015 and comments of DoPPW were conveyed to DOT on 06.07.2015. Comments/views from other Ministries/Departments have also been received. However, some queries have been raised by Department of Expenditure and the information/inputs on same are being collected for furnishing the same to Department of Expenditure. DoT were asked to send the reply to Department of Expenditure by 31.10.2015.

(Action: 0/0 Telecom & 0/0 Expenditure)

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

Department of Expenditure informed that they are examining the matter and a response would be sent to DoPPW in a week's time.

(Action: 0/0 Expenditure & DoPPW)

(viii) Extension of benefit of OM dt. 28.1.2013 w.e.f 1.1.2006 instead of 24.9.2012.

It was informed that orders of Hon'ble Supreme Court's have been complied with vide DoPPW OM No. 38/37/08-P&PW(A) dated 30.07.2015. It was informed that the proposal for revision of disability pension under EOP Rules has been referred to Ministry of Finance separately, as the formula for disability pension is different from that of normal pension.

(Action: 0/0 P&PW)

(ix) Stepping up of Disability Element on the basis of Fitment Tables.

In this regard, Government's letter dated 10.04.2015 has been issued. Hence the item was closed.

(x) Extension Counter of CGHS Wellness Centre at Sri nagar and Upgradation of facilities at CGHS Wellness Centre at Jammu including Construction of CGHS Hospital on the plot of land allotted by J&K Govt. at Jammu.

Ministry of Health and Family Welfare informed that the request for opening of dispensary in Srinagar has been regretted as the CGHS resources are fully committed as of now. Secretary(Pension) stated that he would take up the matter again with Secretary (Health).

Regarding computerization of Wellness Centre at Jammu, the payment has been made to BSNL for installing 4 Mbps lease line and approval has been conveyed to start CGHS application in Jammu using their existing Broad Band connectivity. Ministry of Health and Family Welfare informed that there are 2 doctors posted at CGHS Wellness Centre, Jammu, one on deputation from J&K Health Department and other is a retiree from J&K Health Department.

(Action: Ministry of Health & Family Welfare)

(xi) Extension of CGHS facilities to retired BSNL employees -Issue of follow up order by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare & fixation of rates of contribution & ward entitlement by DoT.

The Department of Telecom informed that the matter was being examined and a proposal in this regard is being submitted for approval of competent authority to take up the case further with Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. Department of Telecom was asked to finalise their proposal quickly and send it to Ministry of Health and Family Welfare by 31.10.2015

(Action: Ministry Health .and Family Welfare, Department of Telecom)

(xii) Simultaneous issue of orders for the release of Dearness Relief (DR). Members were informed of the revised procedure for issue of DR orders. In the revised procedure after the receipt of minutes of the Cabinet meeting. From Ministry of Finance, approval of CAG is sought for and the DR orders are issued with the approval of Secretary (Pension}. The process takes 2-3 days in issue of DR orders. The item was closed.

(xiii) Co-authorization of Family Pension of Permanently disable children/dependent parents and permanently disabled siblings.

In this regard, Government's letter dated 15.05.2015 has been issued. Therefore, the matter was closed.

(xiv) Non-adherence of extant rules with regard to submission of life certificate.

The action taken by the Government was informed to the Pensioners Associations and it was decided to close the matter.

(xv) Provision of CGHS facility for life time to dependent disabled/mentally retarded

Children of Central Government employees/pensioners. Ministry of Health and Family Welfare informed that the benefit of CGHS facility cannot be extended to married daughter if disability arises after marriage However, if the disability occurred before marriage; family pension is allowed to disabled married daughter. The item was closed.

6. Discussion on Fresh Agenda Points for the 27th SCOVA meeting.

(27.1): Modification to the format of Life Certificate- Issue of acknowledgment to Pensioners submitting life certificate.

CPAO intimated that the Correction Slip in respect of issue of acknowledgement to pensioners was issued on 12.10.2015. It is available on the CPAO website. Hence the item was closed. The alacrity with which the format of life certificate was amended was highly appreciated.

(27.2): Extension of the benefits of DoPPW OM No. 38/37/08-P&PW(A) dated 28.01.2013 read with OM dated 30.07.2015 to pre-2005 pensioners with less than 33 years of service.

It was informed that the matter was under examination in the wake of orders dated 26.08.2015 of Hon'ble Supreme Court in a Review Petition filed by the Government in the case of M.O.Inasu.

(Action: DoPPW)

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(27.3): Opening/Extension/Repair of Dispensaries at following stations

(a) Dehradun, Panchkula, Mohali, Chandigarh

(b) Ambarnath.

Ministry of Health and Family Welfare informed that opening/extension of more CGHS Wellness Centres in Dehradun, Panchkula, and Mohali is not possible at present since CGHS resources are fully committed. However, considering the number of CGHS card holders in Chandigarh, which is much more than the prescribed norms, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare agreed that they would re-examine the case for additional dispensary/staff at Chandigarh.

In respect of the Wellness Centre at Ambarnath, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare informed that funds for major repair and renovation of Wellness Centre at Ambarnath have been sanctioned by General Manager, Ordnance Factory, Ambarnath. The renovation work for CGHS Wellness Centre in Ambarnath, Maharashtra, is in progress since April, 2015.

(Action:- Ministry of Health and Family Welfare)

(27.4): Issues relating to CGHS Dispensary at Dehradun, Uttarakhand

(a) Regular appointment of Group C & D employees of CGHS Dehradun be made.

(b) Opening of Ayurvedic/Homeopathic and Sidda dispensary at CGHS Dehradun.

(c) Posting/Appointment of Regional Director at CGHS Dehradun in Uttarakhand.

Ministry of Health and Family Welfare representative intimated the following:

(a) The process to appoint regular staff has now been initiated.

(b) There are only 85 AYUSH dispensaries in CGHS. The feasibility of opening one at Dehradun would be examined.

(c) There is no post of Regional Director under CGHS, even at Chandigarh. However, there is post of Additional Director, CGHS at Dehradun and has been filled up by a regular incumbent. The question of delegating powers for sanctioning Medical Reimbursement Claims to Addl. Director, Dehradun would be examined.

(Action:- Ministry of Health and Family Welfare)

(27.5) Supreme Court judgment in CA No. 11527 of 2014 (Arising out of SLP No. - 11684 of 2012)

DoPT informed that there are legal and financial aspects involved and the matter is being examined. DoPT was advised to expedite the decision in this respect.

(Action: DoPT/DoPPW)

(27.6) Implementation of circular No. 38/37/08-P&PW(A) dated 30.07.2015 CPAO informed that the revised consolidated authority has been issued by CPAO in respect of more than 21,000 cases/ However, in other cases, the SSAs are being issued on the basis of revised authority received from PAOs. CPAO was asked to complete the process by 31.10.2015. Ministry of Defence and Ministry of Railways' were also requested to expedite the revision process. The item was accordingly closed.

(27.7) Facility of online Railway booking for physically challenged persons for availing concessions.

Ministry of Railways intimated that orders have been issued to enable online booking for disabled persons. However, a Pensioner Association suggested that for disabled war veterans, Railways should accept the Photo 10 card issued by the Ministry of Defence. Secretary (P&PW) asked Ministry of Railways to look into the matter. Therefore the item may be treated as closed.

7. Towards the end, one of the pensioners associations, pointed out the need, ease and the usefulness to 'digitalize' the PPO within a specific time-frame. It would be very easy for any pensioners to get his PPO copy downloaded from the web site of the concerned PSA Besides, updating the PPO poses no problem and can be done on real-time basis. It will also facilitate the update, consequent to the acceptance of the 7th CPC Report. There is a need of empowering the various. Associations based on their competence in an appropriate manner so that they can interact with the PSA and PDA in the capacity of an extended establishment of DoPPW. ATR of the previous meeting can be forwarded along with the notification for the next meeting to facilitate the participant to come fully prepared, to which the Secretary answered in the affirmative.

The meeting ended with a vote of thanks to the Chair.