

Minutes of the 19th meeting of Standing Committee of Voluntary Agencies (SCOVA) held on 20.9.2010 under the Chairmanship of Hon'ble MOS (PP) in Conference Room, CSIR Science Centre, opposite World Bank, New Delhi

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The 19th meeting of the Standing Committee of Voluntary Agencies (SCOVA) was held on 20.9.2010 at Conference Room, CSIR Science Centre, opposite World Bank, New Delhi under the Chairmanship of MOS (PP).

2. The list of participants is at Annexure – I.
3. Welcoming the Members of SCOVA and representatives of the Ministries and the Departments, Hon'ble MOS (PP) asked Secretary to convene the meetings of SCOVA more frequently and at least once in a year. He also desired that the next meeting of SCOVA should be convened in the first quarter of the next financial year. In his opening remarks Hon'ble Minister mentioned that after recommendations of Vth and VIth Central Pay Commissions have been implemented, there has been considerable improvement in the amount of pension of pensioners and in some cases the amount of pension is more than the salary which these pensioners had drawn while in service. Hon'ble Minister apprised the Members of the recent initiatives taken by the department e.g. Extension of scope of family pension to unmarried/ divorced/ widowed daughters, dependant disabled siblings, dependant parents; launching of web-based Pensioner's Portal for information and feedback; increase in the amount of FMA; and web-based grievance redressal mechanism. He assured that the concerns of pensioners were important for the government and the suggestions to improve their lot further, as and when received, would be considered with a positive outlook.
4. Shri Umraomal Purohit, Member, SCOVA thanked the Hon'ble Minister to for having taken the initiative to convene the meeting of SCOVA. He pointed out that for meaningful discussions in the meeting it would have been better if the minutes of the last meeting of SCOVA and action taken notes thereon had been circulated along with government orders issued thereon. He also pointed out that the agenda items as circulated were not clearly reflective of the subject and suggested that these could have been more elaborate. He further mentioned that the work of revision of PPOs' of pre 1.1.2006 retirees was still pending and needed to be expedited. He also suggested that for getting feedback and monitoring on the implementation of various orders issued by the Department of Pension and Pensioners' Welfare, a suitable mechanism should be put in place to ensure that all ministries/departments implement such orders in the right spirit.
5. Secretary(Pen., AR & PG) welcoming the Hon'ble Minister and the Members of SCOVA apprised that he had taken two meetings in the last couple of months with the representatives of Banks, CPAO and Ministries to get the PPOs of Pre 1.1.2006 pensioners expedited. He pointed out that the Banks were given time up to 31.7.2010 to submit details in Annexure III to the respective PAOs and a copy to CPAO so that the Pension Sanctioning Authorities are in a position to issue revised PPOs. He informed that some of the Banks have already complied with the deadline while others have sought a little more time for the purpose. He assured that the Department of P & PW would follow up the matter and get the work completed soon. Secretary (Pen., AR & PG) admitted that there has been administrative lapse in non-circulation of minutes and Action Taken Notes of the last meeting of SCOVA. He, however, pointed out that based on a rough record of discussions of the last meeting of SCOVA, the department had already taken action. Some of the important issues on which action has been taken based on the discussions in the last meeting of SCOVA include: reconstitution of SCOVA to make it broad based; holding of meetings of the Departmental Council of JCM on pensionary matters; trainings cum workshops for operationalization of Pensioner's Portal and web based grievance redressal system; Increase in the amount of FMA to be paid to the pensioners and the family pensioners who were living outside the CGHS areas. He assured that henceforth the minutes of meetings of SCOVA would be circulated to all and the Action Taken Report circulated to members before the next meeting.

(Action: Desk – G).

6. Thereafter, with the permission of Hon'ble Minister, the agenda items were taken up for discussion.

6.1 Issue of Corrigendum PPO for Pre-2006 retirees.

As informed in his opening remarks, Secretary (Pension, AR&PG) apprised that he took meeting with the representatives of various Banks and the Department of Financial Services on 15.6.2010 where it was decided that the task of sending Annexure III would be completed by 31st July, 2010 by all the Banks. In response to the said meeting, 18 Banks have replied; 8 of which confirmed the compliance of the work within the time frame of 31st July, 2010 and 10 banks requested for some more time to complete the work. Six banks had not replied so far. Secretary (Pension, AR&PG), not satisfied of the response, mentioned that he would take another meeting with Banks, CPAO and the Department of Financial Services. Members suggested for constitution of a Task Force for the purpose. It was agreed that the suggestion would be examined.

(Action: Desk – G)

6.2 To communicate the amount of pension as well as Family Pension to be revised consequent to the 6th Pay Commission to Pre 1.1.2006 pensioners.

Chief Controller (Pension), CPAO informed that they have already circulated instructions to all the Banks to issue due and drawn statements for arrear payment to the pensioners and pension slips every month. Moreover, Banks are also required to endorse the revised pension in the pensioners' portion of PPO. She also informed that under the changed system of Centralized Pension Processing Centre being introduced in the banks, the banks are required to have a good grievance redressal mechanism and the same should be in the public domain as per RBI instructions. However, it was felt that these instructions should be reiterated to the banks in view of all the complaints, especially in the case of SBI.

(Action: CPAO,Min of Railways,Defence,Post and Telecom)

6.3 Expediting cases of sanction of secondary family pension with monitoring mechanism at various levels.

Instructions for sanction of secondary family pension have been issued by Department of Pension & Pensioners Welfare which are not being implemented properly by the Head of Office of various Ministries/Departments/Organizations. Members requested to issue clarifications in this regard to remove any sort of ambiguity. The Members were apprised that the matter had already been taken up by the Department of Pension & Pensioners' Welfare with Ministry of Finance and necessary clarifications in this regard would be issued shortly.

(Action: Desk E)

6.4 Same fitment benefit to Pre-2006 pensioners as recommended and implemented in respect of serving employees by the VI CPC.

6.5 Parity between Past and Future Pensioners.

6.6 Stepping up of Pension and Family Pension to 50% and 30% respectively

6.7 Extension of new benefits granted to the past pensioners.

6.4 to 6.7: In regard to the demand for allowing the same fitment benefit to pre-2006 pensioners as has been granted to the serving Government employees, the Members were informed that the fitment benefit allowed to the pensioners was in accordance with the recommendations of the Pay Commission.

On the demands for revision of pension of pre-1996 pensioners by notionally revising their pay as on 1.1.1996 and for extension of the liberalized provisions to pre-2006 retirees, it was informed that no such recommendations had been made by the 6th Central Pay Commission.

On the issue regarding modified parity in terms of para 4.2 of DoP&PW's O.M. dated 1.9.2008, the Members mentioned that the orders issued in this regard were not in accordance with the recommendations of the Sixth Pay Commission who have recommended that the pensioners should also be extended the same benefit in fitment as in the case of serving employees. The representatives of DoP&PW and Department of Expenditure, however, informed that these orders were in conformity with the recommendations of the Sixth Central Pay Commission who have given different fitment methods for pensioners and the employees.

The representative of Department of Personnel & Training informed that the issues at 6.4 to 6.7 were under consideration with the National Anomalies Committee constituted under the Chairmanship of Secretary, DoPT after the Sixth Central Pay Commission. It was suggested that the recommendations of the Anomalies Committee may be awaited in this regard. The members requested that the concern expressed by them may be conveyed to the Anomalies Committee. As there was no forum for Group B and A Officers for removing such anomalies, it was suggested by a Member that another Anomalies Committee may be constituted for the purpose.

(Action: DOPT)

6.8 Additional pension for service beyond 20 years of service.

It was mentioned that this provision will not work as a disincentive to the employees putting in longer years of service because their pay will increase along with the tenure which will have a direct bearing on the pension payable to them.

6.9 A suitable alternative to merger of DR after it reaches 50% in view of VI CPC recommendation against 50% DA/DR merger benefit to ensure revision at reasonable intervals.

The merger of 50% of DA/DR as DP was recommended by the 5th CPC which was subsequently implemented w.e.f. 1.4.2004 as per the decision taken by the Government. However, 6th CPC has in para 4.1.18 recommended against merger of DA with basic pay at any stage. It was assured that the matter would be considered as and when situation so warrants.

6.10 Appointment of 7th Central Pay Commission, HRA & Transport Allowance, Children's educational allowance and Hostel Subsidy, Festival Advance.

It was informed by the representative of Ministry of Finance that it was too early to say anything about constituting 7th CPC at this stage. The demands like HRA, Children Allowance, LTC etc appeared very far fetched and it was difficult to consider the same.

6.11 Restoration of commuted pension after 12 years.

This issue was considered by the 6th CPC also who recommended in para 5.1.35 of their report that there may not be any justification for decreasing the period of restoration.

6.12 Revision of Ex-gratia rates in respect of pre. 1986 CPF/SRPF retirees and their families.

(a) Revision of ex-gratia amount:

It was informed that the proposal for revision in the ex-gratia amount payable to CPF retirees/dependant family members, on the same analogy as has been done by Ministry of Railways in respect of SRPF beneficiaries w.e.f. 1.11.2006, was under consideration in consultation with Ministry of Finance, Department of Expenditure. As regards revision of ex - gratia amount payable to SRPF

beneficiaries, the same was the concern of Ministry of Railways who may examine the matter at their level.

(b) & (c): DR and FMA to ex- gratia beneficiaries:

Once the ex- gratia amount is revised taking into account the current DR rate for both these categories the discrimination between the beneficiaries who retired prior to 1986 and afterwards will automatically go away and both the categories will start getting DR at the uniform rate. Regarding FMA facilities to such beneficiaries, the same could not be extended to them as they could not be equated with pensioners.

(Action: Desk – E, Ministry of Railways)

6.13 Ex-gratia amount to be raised for CPF/SRPF retirees.

(a) Ex-gratia to CPF/SRPF retirees:

A proposal for revision in ex-gratia amount payable to CPF retirees/dependent family members was already under consideration in consultation with Ministry of Finance, Department of Expenditure. As regards revision of ex-gratia to SRPF beneficiaries, who had been given the benefit from 1.11.06, it was for the Ministry of Railways to examine and take action.

(b) Uniform rates of DR:

Central Government employees who have retired on CPF benefits before 8.11.1960 and are in receipt of ex-gratia payment of Rs. 654/-, Rs. 659/- Rs. 703 and Rs. 965/-, there is a difference of eight per cent of DR between the category one and two. This difference is continuing since the issue of the order dated 16.12.1997 because of the fixation of quantum of ex-gratia for these two types of categories. Once the ex- gratia is revised taking into account the current DR rate for both these categories the discrimination will automatically go away and both the categories will start getting DR at the uniform rate.

© Ex- gratia to those who voluntarily retired after 20 years of service:

The matter is under examination in consultation with Ministry of Finance, Department of Expenditure.

(Action: Desk – E, Ministry of Railways)

6.14 Ex-gratia should not be less than minimum pension and the same should be effective from 01/01/06.

It was informed that the proposal for enhancement of ex-gratia amount payable to CPF retirees/dependent family members @ Rs. 3500/- per month, being the minimum pension/family pension, was earlier taken up with Ministry of Finance, Department of Expenditure but the same was not agreed to. A proposal for revision in ex-gratia amount payable to CPF retirees/dependent family members, on the same analogy as has been done by Ministry of Railways in respect of SRPF beneficiaries w.e.f. 1.11.2006, is under consideration in consultation with Ministry of Finance, Department of Expenditure.

Regarding SRPF retirees Ministry of Railways may take necessary action

(Action: Desk – E, Ministry of Railways)

6.15 Extension of secondary family pension to dependant widowed daughter-in-law.

It was informed that the proposal had already been considered but the same could not be agreed to.

6.16 Extension of benefit of enhanced family pension for 10 years even in cases of death after retirement.

The members were informed that the matter was under examination at present.

(Action: Desk – E)

6.17 Fixed Medical Allowance to be enhanced to Rs. 1,000/- p.m w.e.f. 01/01/06.

The Chairman apprised the members that the Government had revised the amount of FMA to Rs. 300/- p.m. from the existing amount of Rs 100/- p.m to be effective from September 2008. He mentioned that though the amount of Rs 300/- per month appears inadequate, the Government could not raise it further due to constraints of resources.

6.18 Implementation of Web Based Pensioners Portal-

a) Online Grievance redressal system:

b) Grant in aid to pensioners Associations to cover 'Rent' for office accommodation:

- a) The members were informed that the Department of Pension & PW would be monitoring the status of pending pensioners' grievances regularly and close such cases which were disposed of by the concerned Departments/Ministries. The monitoring would be done once in every two months.
- b) This is well beyond the provisions of approved scheme of Pensioners Portal. There is no proposal under consideration at present to provide grant for 'renting of accommodation' by the Pensioners' Associations. Some members of the SCOVA pointed out that the stakeholders were not involved at the time of framing the policy for release of grant to the Pensioners' Associations in connection with the implementation of Pensioners' Portal. They suggested that the policy need to be reviewed to make provision for important items like rent of accommodation, honorarium for computer operator, etc. It was decided that the issue would be examined in consultation with the Ministry of Finance and Planning Commission after the Associations submit their suggestions in this regard to the Department of Pension & Pensioners' Welfare.

(Action: Desk – C)

6.19 The implementation of orders dated 01.09.2008 read with the orders dated 14.10.08 is not correct for fixation of pension.

It was informed that the matter was examined in consultation with the Ministry of Finance. Ministry of Finance has observed that the orders contained in the OM dated 1.9.2008, 3.10.2008 and 14.10.2008 are in conformity with the recommendations of the Pay Commission and that no change in this regard is required to be made. This position has been clarified in OMs dated 11.2.2009 and 19.3.2010. The CCS (Revised Pay) Rules and the pay fixation tables based thereon are applicable to the serving Government employees and the same are not relevant to the revision of pension of pre-2006 pensioners. However as the matter was as an agenda item for the Anomalies Committee, it was felt to await the decision thereof.

(Action: DOPT)

6.20 & 6.21 The Orders of Ministry of Health reiterating that all the pensioners are at liberty to enrol themselves with any of the nearest CGHS hospital/dispensary may be widely circulated. 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 as specially provided in the order of the Department of Personnel and Pension.

The MOS (PP) informed that representative of Ministry of Health was not present hence it was difficult to comment on the same. He, however, assured that the matter would be taken up with the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

(Action: Ministry of Health and Family Welfare)

6.22 Early commencement of meeting of National Anomalies Committee to settle all anomalies arising out of 6th central pay commission recommendations.

The representative of DOPT informed that the National Anomalies Committee had met twice on 12th December, 2009 and 27th March, 2010. The next meeting of the Anomalies Committee is likely to be held shortly.

(Action: DOPT)

6.23 Grant of concessional telephone facilities to retired P&T Employees.

This matter is under consideration in the DOT in consultation with Department of Posts.

(Action: Department of Telecom/Posts)

6.24 (i) The existing Pensioners of Department of Posts and Telecom covered by P&T Dispensaries are neither considered for treatment of hospitalisation facilities nor for Fixed Medical Allowance.

(ii) Pensioners falling within the limit of P&T Dispensaries / CGHS Hospitals may be allowed to opt for P&T Dispensaries or drawl of Fixed Medical Allowance.

The matter is covered under P&T dispensary medical facilities to P&T serving/ retired employees. P&T medical facilities are administered by Department of Telecom/Posts. The matter would be taken up with them to settle.

As regards payment of FMA to pensioners who are residing within the area covered under P&T dispensaries, it was pointed out that this issue had also been discussed in the meeting of JCM chaired by the Cabinet Secretary couple of months back and it was emphasized that considering the increasing medical requirement of old pensioners it was not in the interest of such pensioners to avail FMA. Also there were operational difficulties if such dispensation was allowed.

(Action: Department of Telecom/Posts)

6.25. Extension of Benefits of Modified Parity to Pre-Jan 06 retiree Service Officers

The matter is under consideration of the Ministry of Defence.

(Action: Ministry of Defence)

6.26. Disability Pension: Extension of benefit to Pre-Jan 2006 disability Pensioners.

As no one from the Ministry of Defence was available, on the basis of comments received from the Department, the members were informed that the proposal for extending modified parity to disability/ war injury element has not been agreed to by Department of Expenditure. Department of Expenditure have however, advised the Ministry of Defence to reprocess the case in the light of provisions available on civil side. The matter has been referred by Ministry of Defence to CGDA for their expert opinion.

As regards the reply from Department of Pension & Pensioners' Welfare it was informed that the same has already been sent to Ministry of Defence for further necessary action at their end wherein Ministry of Defence has been informed that the provision of broad banding in the Disability pension already existed in the civil side since 1.1.1996.

(Action: Ministry of Defence)

6.27. Companion facility in the same class to all complimentary pass holders of Railways. Cut off age limit for this purpose should be the same as for concessions extended in railway fares.

It was decided that the matter may be examined by Ministry of Railways and the Department of Pension & Pensioners' Welfare informed of the decision.

(Action: Ministry of Railway)

6.28. Inclusion of Representatives of A.I.R.R.F and SCOVA in Railway Hospital Advisory Committees.

Ministry of Railway informed that they have their own norms in nominating the pensioners associations to be represented on their various Railway Hospital Advisory Committees and the membership of SCOVA or other such bodies would not entitle a person to be automatically represented on such Committees. Secretary (Pension, AR&PG) asked the representative of Ministry of Railways to examine the suggestion and let the Department of Pension and PW know about the same.

(Action: Ministry of Railways)

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

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LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Representatives from Pensioners' Associations

Sl. No.	Name and designation	Organisation
1.	Shri Umraomal Purohit, Secretary	National Council (Staff Side) JCM, New Delhi
2.	Shri Y. N. Sastry, President, AIRF	President, All India Retired Railwaymen's Federation, Chilkalguda, Secunderabad.
3.	Col. A. Sharma	President, Indian Ex-Services League, New Delhi.
4.	Shri M. S. Narasimhan, Editor	President, All India Federation of Pensioners Association, Chennai.
5.	Shri M. R. V. Nath, Joint Secretary	"
6.	Shri Shyam Sunder, Gen. Secretary	Bharat Pensioners' Samaj, New Delhi
7.	Wg. Cdr R. S. Johar (Retd.), Secretary	Air Force Association, New Delhi
8.	Shri D. S. Bhatt, * Vice President	P&T and Other Central Government Pensioners' Association, Ahmedabad.
9.	Shri Joginder Singh, General Secretary	P&T Pensioners' Welfare Association, Chandigarh
10.	Shri S. C. Maheshwari, Gen. Secretary	Retired Railway Employees Welfare Association, Gurgaon.
11.	Shri S. Gurudas, Secretary	Karnataka Central Government Pensioners' Association, Bangalore.
12.	Shri S. S. Ramanathe Rao, Vice President	"
13.	Shri K. Srinivasan, Zonal Secretary	National Federation of Railway Pensioners, Chennai.
14.	Shri Biman Bihari Roy, Asstt. Gen. Secretary	Federation of Central Government Pensioners' Organization, Kolkata.
15.	Shri D. P. Gupta, Secretary General	All India Federation of Pensioners' Association, Kanpur.

Representatives from other Ministries/Departments

1.	Shri K. R. Rao	Deptt. of Posts
2.	Shri S. P. Singh	Department of Telecommunications
3.	Shri Siddharth Sharma	Central Pension Accounting Office, M/Fin.
4.	Smt. Soma Roy Burman, C.C.(P)	Central Pension Accounting Office, M/Fin.
5.	Shri Manoj Sahay, Director	Department of Expenditure, Ministry of Finance
6.	Shri Dinesh Kapila, Director (JCA)	DOPT, Ministry of Personnel
7.	Shri Amitabha Khare, Member, Railway Board	Ministry of Railways
8.	Debasis Mazumdar, Joint Director, Railway Board	Ministry of Railways

P.T.O.

Officers of Department of Pension & Pensioners' Welfare

1. Shri Ramesh C. Misra
Secretary
 2. Shri Raj Singh,
Joint Secretary (Pension)
 3. Smt. Tripti Ghosh,
Dir (PP)
 4. Shri K. S. Chibb,
DS (P)
 5. Shri Harjit Singh,
US (Desk - A)
 6. Shri N. Mohan Ranganatha,
US (Desk - B)
 7. Shri Amitabh Dwivedi,
US (Desk - D)
 8. Smt. Geetha Nair,
US (Desk - E)
 9. Shri V. K. Wadhwa,
US (Desk - G)
 10. Shri S. P. Kakkad,
US (Desk - Coordination)
 11. Shri Rajan Sood,
SO (Desk - F)
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