

SCOVA

No. 42/05/2022-P&PW(D)
भारत सरकार/Government of India
Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances & Pensions
Department of Pension & Pensioners' Welfare

3rd Floor, Lok Nayak Bhawan,
Khan Market, New Delhi-110003
Date:- 20th May 2022

To

All the Pensioners' Associations included in the SCOVA
Vide Resolution dated 25.01.2021

**Sub:- Minutes of the 32nd SCOVA meeting held under the Chairmanship of Hon'ble
MOS(PP) on 12.04.2022, at Sardar Patel Bhawan, New Delhi-reg**

Please find enclosed herewith the minutes of the 32nd Meeting of Standing Committee of
Voluntary Agencies (SCOVA) held under the chairmanship of Hon'ble MOS(PP) on 12.04.2022
at Sardar Patel Bhawan, New Delhi.

Encl: As above

(Charanjit Taneja)

Under Secretary to the Government of India

Minutes of the 32nd Meeting of Standing Committee of Voluntary Agencies (SCOVA) held on 12.04.2022 under the Chairmanship of Hon'ble MOS(PP) at Sardar Patel Bhawan, New Delhi.

Welcoming Hon'ble MoS (PP), Secretary (P&PW), representatives of Pensioners Associations and the officers from various Ministries/Departments participating in the meeting, Joint Secretary (Pension) briefly stated the objectives of SCOVA meetings. He mentioned that SCOVA is a useful platform to provide feedback on implementation of policies/programs of DoPPW, to discuss & examine policy initiatives and to mobilize voluntary efforts to supplement the Govt action. Moreover, it provides the representative associations an opportunity for raising the issues concerning pensioners' welfare directly before the concerned Ministries/Departments.

2. Addressing the participants, Secretary (P&PW) highlighted the recent reforms and initiatives undertaken by the Department for welfare of pensioners. He mentioned about the notification of revised and updated Central Civil Service (Pension) Rules, 2021 on 20.12.2021, by amalgamating several orders/clarifications issued during last 50 years. He also referred to several initiatives of the Department in regard to submission of life certificate by pensioners, e.g. Video based life certification, Doorstep DLC service through Postman/Gramin Dak Sevak of IPPB and Face Authentication Technique through Android phone, launched on 29.11.2021. He further mentioned about his recent interactive meetings with Pensioners' Associations, Pension Disbursing Banks and the nodal officers of Ministries/Departments and stated that such meetings would be held at regular intervals.

3. Thereafter, discussions were held on the agenda items for the meeting. Director (PP) mentioned that an Action Taken Report on the decisions taken on the unresolved agenda items of 31st meeting of SCOVA had been sent to the Pensioners' Associations by e-mail. It was observed that most of the items of 31st meeting of SCOVA had been resolved. The Departments concerned were requested to take a final decision, at the earliest, on the following agenda items of 31st meeting of SCOVA, which are remained unresolved:

- i. Extension of benefit of Composite Hospitals to CAPF personnel

(Action: Ministry of Home Affairs/ Ministry of Health & Family Welfare)

- ii. Booking of Holiday Homes for Central Government Pensioners-enhancement of time limit from 30 days to 60 days.

(Action: Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs/Directorate of Estates)

- iii. Formal approval to Chandigarh Administration for allotment of plot to CGHS, Chandigarh.

(Action: Ministry of Health & Family Welfare /Ministry of Home Affairs)

4. Thereafter, the agenda items for 32nd meeting were discussed. The gist of the discussion held and decisions taken on these items are as under:

(32.1) Shortage of Doctors, Specialists and Para-Medical Staff in CGHS posts due to increase in number of patients consequent on merger of Postal Dispensaries and need for creation / sanction of new posts to maintain patient and Doctor/ Para-medical staff ratio

The Central Government Pensioners Welfare Association, Jaipur mentioned that there is a shortage of Doctors, Specialists and Para-medical staff in many CGHS Wellness Centres in the country which is affecting smooth functioning of CGHS. Recruitment of staff on contract basis was resorted to but that has not sorted out the problem. Also, consequent on merger of P&T Dispensaries in CGHS and increase in the strength of beneficiaries, the strength of staff and infrastructure needs to be augmented.

Discussion/Decision on the agenda item

Ministry of Health and Family Welfare informed that in 2019, Postal Dispensaries in 33 cities were taken over and all the dispensaries are functional. These postal dispensaries had the requisite manpower when they were taken over by CGHS. However, the infrastructure in these dispensaries needed improvement for which CGHS is taking necessary action.

As regards shortage of doctors and paramedical staff at CGHS Wellness Centres, out of sanctioned strength of 1516 General Duty Medical Officers, 1227 are in position. There is some time lag between offer of appointment by CHS Division and actual joining of the candidates. In order to ensure uninterrupted medical services to the beneficiaries, retired doctors are engaged on contractual basis against the posts of Medical Officers, as an interim measure. Presently, a total of 219 retired doctors have been engaged on contract basis in various CGHS Wellness Centres all over India. As regards other staff, recruitment is being done through Staff Selection Commission.

Hon'ble MoS(PP) directed that selection against the vacancies may be finalized early and the Pensioners' Association may be kept informed of the progress of filling up of the vacancies.

(Action: Ministry of Health & Family Welfare)

(32.2) Periodical Health check-up of pensioners

The Central Government Pensioners Welfare Association, Jaipur suggested that a periodical health checkup for pensioners may be conducted at least once in six months or one year, on all health parameters.

Discussion/Decision on the agenda item

Ministry of Health and Family Welfare informed that Pensioners aged 75 years and above are permitted to undergo annual health check-up. However, those pensioners who are less than 75 years of age and desirous of a medical check-up can also have annual health check up on a referral from CGHS Medical Officer. Since, cashless services are rendered to pensioners, once a referral for Medical Check-up is given, no cash payment would be required to be made at the empanelled hospitals. It was stated that the guidelines already exist for medical officers at Wellness Centres for referring the pensioners for periodical medical checkup. MoS (PP) directed that since the Pensioners' Associations have complained that CGHS Wellness Centres are not adhering to these guidelines, the guidelines in this respect may be reiterated to all Wellness Centres for strict compliance.

(Action: Ministry of Health & FW)

(32.3) Issues relating to CGHS Wellness Centre Jammu, J&K:-

The Central Government Pensioners Welfare Association, Jammu raised the following issues:

(a) CGHS Wellness Centre (WC) at Jammu was inaugurated in June, 2008 and operationalised in September, 2012. Subsequently, P&T Dispensary, Jammu was merged with it in 2019. Later, serving employees within Jammu Municipal Limits were also extended CGHS facility. Addition of a large number of beneficiaries resulted in paucity of budgetary funds and accommodation. For more than 10 years, the Wellness Centre is being operated from the old accommodation allotted by J&K Govt, putting the beneficiaries to discomfort and problems. After the merger of P&T Dispensary (WC-II), its staff was shifted without a Doctor, who had retired. Many members of staff also retired in a few years without any replacement. Therefore, WC-II, is non-functional.

(b) A separate Additional Directorate with Headquarter at Jammu may be sanctioned for covering Wellness Centres of Jammu, Srinagar and some adjoining Centres of Punjab, as beneficiaries are facing problem of delay in getting Medical Reimbursement Claim bills cleared from the office of Additional Director at Chandigarh.

Discussion/Decision on the agenda item

Ministry of Health & FW informed that Jammu has a total of 4,512 beneficiaries registered under CGHS. Out of this, 2,046 are pensioners and 2,466 are serving. The average patient seen per day comes to 148. Presently, 2 Medical Officers are working at CGHS, Jammu. The strength of doctors is adequate to take care of the patients availing treatment at the dispensary.

In 2013, when postal dispensaries were taken over, one of them was a non-functional dispensary at Jammu. It had a dilapidated building which was unfit to house a dispensary. Since, then efforts have been continuously made to find a suitable accommodation. State (now UT) Government has also not been able to offer any building. Also, no other Central Government Department has been able to provide any suitable accommodation. As soon as a building is available, the Wellness Centre will start functioning.

CGHS Wellness Centre in Jammu is under the administrative control of Additional Director, Chandigarh. At present, 74 CGHS covered cities outside Delhi are under the administrative control of 23 Additional Directors. On an average, each Additional Director is looking after 8-10 Wellness Centres. Therefore, it is not possible at this stage to appoint a full-fledged Additional Director for every CGHS city and that too with only two Wellness Centres. The proposal will be examined as and when it is found feasible.

(Action: Ministry of Health & FW)

(32.4) -Non-acceptance of Nominations of pensioners for Life-Time Arrears by the Banks

The Railways Senior Citizens Welfare Society, Mohali mentioned that as per Payment of Arrears of Pension (Nomination) Rules, 1983, every pensioner has to nominate any person for receiving arrears of pension accruing after his death (on account of Pay Commissions, etc.) and to provide such nomination to their Pension Disbursing Authority (PDA). However, in many cases, when pensioners file their nominations with the PDA, there is a reluctance on the part of the bank staff to accept these nominations, as the staff is not quite conversant with the rules. Further, the pensioners are not sure about the safe storage of nominations in the Bank and about retrieval of these nominations when needed.

Discussion/Decision on the agenda item

Joint Secretary, (Pension) informed that instructions have been issued to Pension Disbursing Banks, Ministries/Departments etc. reiterating the provisions of the Payment of Arrears of Pension (Nomination) Rules, 1983 vide letter no. 1/2(40)/2022-P&PW(E)

on 31.03.2022. Pension Disbursing Banks have been advised to accept the nominations under acknowledgment and keep a proper record of the same in their systems. They have also been advised to review the availability of nominations in respect of all pensioners and to ask the pensioner to submit the nomination, if the same is not available with them. Banks have also been advised to indicate the status of availability of nominations in Pension Seva Portals/ Similar portals and also in the monthly pension slips.

It was mentioned that the above instructions will again be highlighted in the next meeting of DoPPW with the Pension Disbursing Banks. MoS (PP) directed that the instructions may also be shared with Pensioners' Associations.

In view of the above, item was closed.

(32.5) Holding of Pension Adalat meetings by Departments at national level

The Central Government Pensioners Welfare Association, Jaipur raised the issue regarding holding of Pension Adalats by Departments at national level.

Discussion/Decision on the agenda item

It was informed that Department of Pension & Pensioners' Welfare has decided, to convene an All India Pension Adalat on May 5, 2022. On that day, DoP&PW will also be conducting its own Pension Adalat, besides organising an All India Pension Adalat.

The following Ministries/Departments intimated the details regarding Pension Adalats held/being held by them

Ministry/Department	Details of Pension Adalats
Department of Ex-servicemen Welfare	A Pension Adalat will be held on 05.05.2022
Department of Telecom	(i) In 2021-22, total 73 Pension Adalats were organized in all field units on quarterly basis. (ii) A nation-wide Pension Adalat was held on 23.03.2022 and 353 cases were received in this Adalat wherein about 90% cases were settled on same day of Adalat. (iii) Further, on 23.08.2019 and 24.11.2022, nation-wide Pension Adalats were conducted wherein about 90% cases were settled on the same day of Adalat.

Ministry of Health and Family Welfare	Necessary instructions have been issued to Additional Directors, CGHS to hold Pension Adalats once in every 6 months in their respective area of administration
CGDA	<p>Department has successfully organized 174 Pension Adalats across the country since 1987. On an average, 10 to 12 Adalats are held each year. Last physical Adalat was held at Barrackpore (West Bengal) in January, 2020.</p> <p>2. Due to Covid-19 and subsequent restrictions on holding public gatherings, Pension Adalats for 2020 and 2021 were put on hold.</p> <p>3. In the meantime, one virtual Pension Adalat was held in January, 2021 as per directions of DoPPW.</p> <p>4. Physical Pension Adalats would be resumed as and when State Governments allow public gatherings.</p>
Ministry of Home Affairs	Pension Adalats are organized by the CAPFs to redress the grievances of pensioners.
Ministry of Railways	Pension Adalats on Indian Railways are conducted on 15 th December each year on Production Units and quarterly at Divisional level. Nationwide Pensioners Adalats were conducted on 18.09.2018 and 23.08.2019.

In view of the above, item was closed.

(32.6) - Payments of DA/DR arrears freezon for 18 months from 1.1.2020 to 30.06.2021

The Central Government Pensioners Welfare Association, Jaipur and Ex-Defence Employees Welfare Association, Balasore mentioned that although the Central Government has granted the DA/DR rise of 11% from 01.07.2021, the arrears for 18 months have not been released. The Association requested for releasing the DA/DR for 18 months to Central Government employees and pensioners / family pensioners.

Discussion/Decision on the agenda item

Joint Secretary, Department of Expenditure stated that this issue was raised in the last meeting of JCM chaired by Cabinet Secretary also and the JCM was informed that

the decision to freeze DA and DR due from 01.01.2020, 01.07.2020 & 01.01.2021 was taken in the context of Covid-19 pandemic, so as to ease pressure on Government finances. The rates of DA/DR have been restored prospectively and subsumed in the cumulative revised rates effective from 01.07.2021 vide OM dated 20.07.2021.

In view of the above, item was closed.

(32.7) - Enhancement of Additional Pension

The Ex-Defence Employees Welfare Association, Balasore and All India Organisation of Pensioners (Civil & Military), Kerala mentioned that as per the existing system, for pensioners below the age of 80 years, basic pension does not change for at least 10 years, i.e. till next pay commission. The Association suggested to consider the increase in pension @ 1% every year, so that after 20 years of retirement he/she gets 20 per cent, if alive. Alternatively, after retirement at the age of 60 years, additional 5% of pension may be granted after every 5 years which will lead to 20% after attaining age of 80 years.

Discussion/Decision on the agenda item

JS (Pension), DoPPW informed that a proposal to grant additional pension of 5%, 10% and 15% on attaining the age of 65 years, 70 years and 75 years, respectively is under consideration in consultation with Department of Expenditure and Department of Economic Affairs (on the aspect of funds availability in the Budget).

**(Action: DOPPW/Department of Expenditure/
Department of Economic Affairs)**

(32.8) - Enhancement of Fixed Medical Allowance (FMA)

The Ex-Defence Employees Welfare Association, Balasore mentioned that Fixed Medical Allowance (FMA) of Rs. 1000/- p.m. to pensioners residing in Non-CGHS areas is insufficient for purchase of medicines every month as the cost of medicines has increased manifold after Covid-19. A request was made to increase the amount of FMA.

Discussion/Decision on the agenda item

JS (Pension), DoPPW informed that a proposal to increase the amount of Fixed Medical Allowance is under consideration. Based on the data received from the

concerned Departments, financial implications on the proposal are being worked out and a reference will be made to Department of Expenditure shortly.

(Action: DoPPW)

(32.9) - Difficulties in online submission of Accounts for grants.

The N.F. Railways Pensioners Association, Guwahati mentioned that the Pensioners' Associations are experiencing a lot of difficulty in booking expenditure online and its finalisation to seek grant for next financial year. Pensioners' Associations are also facing problems in updating of Aadhaar No. in NITI Aayog's portal and Anudaan.

Discussion/Decision on the agenda item

DoPPW informed that the matter is being taken up with PFMS team and NITI Aayog to simplify the procedure within the extant provisions. DoPPW team has been helping all Pensioners' Associations in providing UC by providing regular trainings, demonstrations and actively engaging PFMS and NITI Aayog teams. It was further mentioned that the issues faced by the Associations are being rectified by the dedicated team handling GIA. Pensioners' Associations were requested that any such issues may be forwarded on mail or WhatsApp to the DOPPW team and the same would be resolved without delay.

In view of the above, item was closed.

(32.10) Enhancement of amount of Grants in aid to Pensioners' Associations

The Ex-Defence Employees Welfare Association, Balasore requested that Grant in Aid may be enhanced from Rs. 75,000 to Rs. 1.5 lakhs and the same may be released every year by the month of November.

Discussion/Decision on the agenda item

Joint Secretary (Pension), DoPPW informed that a proposal for increasing the amount of Grants-in-Aid to identified Pensioners' Associations is under consideration. It was further informed that efforts will be made to release Grant-in-Aid for 2022-23 in the 1st Qtr of 2022-23.

In view of the above, item was closed.

(32.11) Providing a laptop to identified Pensioners Associations

The Ex-Defence Employees Welfare Association, Balasore requested that a laptop may be provided to all identified Associations replacing the existing Desktops, for better performance.

Discussion/Decision on the agenda item

Joint Secretary (Pension), DoPPW informed that a proposal to sanction of Rs. 80000/- to each identified Pensioners' Association for purchase of Computer/Hardware related items has been recently approved. Accordingly, 34 Pensioners Associations have been sanctioned Rs.80000/- for purchase of laptops. Remaining Associations will also be sanctioned this amount in FY 2022-23.

In view of the above, item was closed.

5. In addition to the above agenda items, Central Government Pensioners' Welfare Association (CGPWA), Jammu raised issues relating to functioning of CGHS Wellness Centre, Jammu i.e Delay in supply of life saving drugs, delay in payment of MRCs/Tracking system, delayed payments to empanelled hospitals and allotment of State land/construction of CGHS complex in Jammu.

6. In this connection, Hon'ble MOS(PP) asked DoP&PW to form a Fact-Finding Committee to assess first-hand information regarding hardships/difficulties faced by pensioners in obtaining CGHS facilities through CGHS Wellness Centres/CGHS empanelled private hospitals situated in Jammu region. Secretary (P&PW) informed MoS(PP) that a Committee to study the working of CGHS Wellness Centres/CGHS Empanelled Hospitals has already been constituted and it has conducted field visits at Dehradun, Chennai and Delhi. Hence, it was decided that the Committee would also conduct field visits at CGHS Wellness Centre and CGHS empanelled Hospitals at Jammu to assess hardships faced by CGHS beneficiaries especially pensioners. The Committee was also mandated to hold discussions with CGPWA Jammu and submit a detailed report in this regard and then take up the matter with Ministry of Health & Family Welfare accordingly.

7. In his concluding address, Hon'ble MoS(PP) and Chairman of SCOVA Dr. Jitendra Singh mentioned that several revolutionary changes were brought in since 2014 for bringing "Ease of Living" to the common man. He directed for setting up of a Single Window Portal for the benefit of pensioners and superannuated elder citizens. The Portal will enable the Department to have constant contact with pensioners and their associations across the country. The portal will regularly receive inputs, suggestions and grievances for prompt response. This Portal would be a single window digital mechanism for pensioners to raise their grievances and get the same resolved without approaching different authorities in person. He said that all Ministries responsible to process, sanction or disburse pension dues, would be interlinked to this system and

grievances would be forwarded after assessment to the concerned Ministry/Department for resolution. Pensioners as well as Nodal officer can view the status of the grievance online till disposal in the system. Hon'ble MoS (PP) said that we need to make good use of the knowledge, experience and efforts of the retired employees which can help in value addition to the Department of Pension & Pensioners' Welfare.

8. Hon'ble MoS (PP) mentioned that since the launch of Doorstep Service for submission of Digital Life Certificate (DLC) through Postman in November 2020, more than 3,08,625 Life Certificates through India Post Payments Bank (IPPB) have been done. The facility to submit life certificate online through Jeevan Pramaan Portal was launched by the Prime Minister in November, 2014 with the objective to provide a convenient and transparent facility to pensioners for submission of Life Certificate. He also added that Doorstep banking for collection of Life Certificates is in place in 100 cities by Public Sector Banks and the number of Life Certificates done through Banking Agents is 4253. Face Authentication Technique through Android phone for submission of life certificate digitally has been launched on 29.11.2021 and till date, more than 20,500 Life Certificates through face authentication have been done. Similarly, he informed that as on date total number of DLCs submitted by the Central Government Pensioners is around 1,07,75,980 /- since 2014. In 2021, total DLCs submitted till date are 19,80,977.

9. Hon'ble MoS (PP) mentioned that the 'Bhavishya' platform, an integrated online pension processing system is at present being successfully implemented in the main Secretariat of 96 Ministries/ Departments including 813 Attached Offices. As on date, more than 1,50,000 cases have been processed ie. PPOs issued which includes more than 80,000 e-PPOs. Hon'ble Minister also informed that Bhavishya 8.0 was released in August, 2020 with a new feature to PUSH the ePPO in Digilocker. 'Bhavishya' platform is the first application to use the PUSH Technology of Digilocker.

10. Hon'ble MoS (PP) emphasised the need for creating widespread awareness of the initiatives for the welfare of pensioners through official and social media channels.

11. The meeting ended with a vote of thanks to the chair and all other participants.

Annexure

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

S.No	Department	Name and Designation
1.	Dr. Jitendra Singh	Minister of State (Personnel, P.G & Pensions) Chairman, SCOVA
2.	Sh. V Srinivas	Secretary (P&PW) Convener, SCOVA

Officers/Officials of Department of Pension & Pensioners' Welfare

S.No	Name	Designation
1.	Sh. Sanjiv Narain Mathur	Joint Secretary
2.	Sh. Ruchir Mittal	Director
3.	Sh. Pramod Kumar	Director
4.	Sh. Sanjoy Shankar	Deputy Secretary
5.	Sh. S Chakrabarti	Under Secretary
6.	Sh. A K Singh	Under Secretary
7.	Sh. R C Sethi	Under Secretary
8.	Sh. Subhash Chander	Under Secretary
9.	Sh. Charanjit Taneja	Under Secretary
10.	Sh. Deepak Gupta	Section Officer
11.	Sh. Harjit Singh	Sr. Consultant
12.	Ms. Ramanjit Kaur	Consultant

List of Participants- Ministries/Deaprtments

S.No	Ministry/ Department	Name and Designation
1.	CPAO	1. Sh. Bhupal Nanda, Chief Controller (Pensions)
2.	Ministry of Health and FW	1. Sh. Nikhilesh Chandra, Director (CGHS)
3.	Department of Telecom	1. Sh. V N Tandon, Jt. CGCA(BA&IT) 2. Smt. Roshni Sohni, DDG (Estt)
4.	Department of Posts	1. Sh. Nirmaljit Singh, DDG (Estt) 2. Sh. Hemant Khulbe, Astt DG(Pen) .
5.	Department of Ex-Servicemen Welfare	1. Ajay Kumar Agrawal, DS(PP)
6.	Department of Financial Services	1. Shri Pankaj Sharma, Jt. Secretary
7.	Department of Expenditure	1. Sh. Thanglemlian, Jt. Secretary
8.	CGDA	1. Dr. Jayaraj Naik, Jt. CGDA (Pen) 2. Sh. Awadesh Kr. Srivastava, AO
9.	Ministry of Home Affairs	1. Sh. S K Shahi, Advisor (Police-II)
10.	Ministry of Railways	1. Sh. Sunil Kumar, Exe. Dir(E)
11.	Director of Estates	Sh. Vijay Andley, Dy. Director
12.	NIC	1. Sh. Deepak Shirhatti, Tech. Director & HOD 2. Sh. Anil Bansal, Tech. Director (DoPPW) 3. Sh. Arun Kalburgi, Scientist (B)

List of Participants- SCOVA Pensioners' Associations

S.No	Pensioners' Association	Name
1.	NF Railway Pensioners' Association, Guwahati	1. Sh. Pratip Kumar Chakraborty 2. Sh. S M Kanjilal
2.	Central Govt. Pensioners Association, Jaipur	1. Sh. S K Sharma 2. Sh. Pramod Kr. Kashyap
3.	Central Govt. Pensioners Association, Noida	1. Sh. A K Nauriyal
4.	Tamilnadu Ex- Services League, Madurai	1. Lt. S Sugumar (Rtd) 2. Sub A Mathurainayagam (Rtd)
5.	All India Ex-Paramilitary Personnel Association, Jalandhar	1. Sh. D S Randhawa
6.	Railway Senior Citizens Welfare Society, Mohali	1. Sh. Harchandan Singh
7.	All India Organisation of Pensioners, Lucknow	1. Sh V K Mishra
8.	Railway Pensioners' Welfare Association, Mysore	1. Sh G S Swaminathan
9.	All India Organisation of Pensioners (Civil & Military), Trivandrum	1. Sh. K Krishna Pillai
10.	Defence Accounts Pensioners' Association, Pune	1. Smt. Rajalakshmi Devarajan 2. Sh. C B Ranpise
11.	Central Govt. Pensioners' Welfare Association, Jammu	1. Sh Kuldeep Khoda 2. Sh K B Jandial
12.	Ex-Defence Employees Welfare Association, Balasore	1. Sh. K C Mallik
13.	Baroda Central Pensioners' Association, Vadodara	1. Sh. Vithalbhai A Prajapati
14.	Postal Accounts & Audit Pensioners' Association, Nagpur	1. Sh. J P Dhandre