



**DEPARTMENT RELATED PARLIAMENTARY STANDING
COMMITTEE ON PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES,
LAW AND JUSTICE**

The Department-related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Personnel, Public Grievances, Law and Justice headed by Shri Sushil Kumar Modi, MP, Rajya Sabha, presented its **One Hundred Thirteenth Report** on the Demands for Grants (2022-23) of two Departments of the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances & Pensions - **(i) Department of Administrative Reforms & Public Grievances; and (ii) Department of Pension & Pensioners' Welfare** on the 24th March, 2022 to both the Houses of Parliament.

While examining the Demands for Grants, the Committee has also made an appraisal of performance, programmes, and policies of these two Departments vis-à-vis expenditure made out of Consolidated Fund of India in the current financial year during the meeting held on 3rd March, 2022.

The Committee scrutinised the Demands for Grants thoroughly in its meeting with the Secretary, Department of Administrative Reforms & Public Grievances; and the Department of Pension & Pensioners' Welfare. The Report was considered and adopted by the Committee on 22nd March, 2022. The Recommendations/Observations made by the Committee in this Report are enclosed. The entire Report is available on <https://rajyasabha.nic.in>.

RECOMMENDATIONS/OBSERVATIONS - AT A GLANCE

on

113th Report on Demands for Grants (2022-23) of the Department of Administrative Reforms & Public Grievances; and the Department of Pension & Pensioners' Welfare

OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF THE DEMANDS FOR GRANTS

DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMS AND PUBLIC GRIEVANCES (DARPG)

1. The Department has been able to spend only 61.7% of the budgetary allocation made under RE 2021-22 upto 31st January, 2022, leaving 38.3% to spend in just 2 months. As per the instructions issued by the Ministry of Finance (MoF), expenditure in the last quarter has to be restricted to 33% ceiling and in last month (March) expenditure has to be restricted to 15% of ceiling. Thus, the performance of the Department in terms of utilization of funds needs considerable improvement. A focused planning and close monitoring of utilization of funds is required on the part of the Department. As restrictions imposed due to COVID on expenditure are waning, the Department should have met the quarterly expenditure targets set by the MoF without fail. The Committee, therefore, recommends that the Department should identify the bottlenecks responsible for not being able to maintain the pace of utilization required as per the instructions of the MoF and take remedial measures to improve its performance in utilization of funds in future.

(Para 2.5)

Scheme(s) of DARPG

2. The track record of the Department in terms of utilization of funds under the scheme has been very poor. In 2020-21 BE of Rs. 30 crores got reduced to Rs.15 crores at RE stage, and the actual expenditure incurred was Rs. 11 crores only. In 2021-22, BE of Rs. 15 crores got reduced to Rs.12 crores and the Department has been able to utilize only about 9.7 crores upto 09.02.2022. The Department may furnish detailed reasons for such under-utilization of funds to the Committee with Action Taken Note.

(Para 2.8)

3. After considering the elaborate mandate of the Department, the number of schemes and funds allocated to it does not seem commensurate with each other. The Committee is therefore of the view that the Department should devise more schemes and programmes aimed at improving the Human Resource potential and productivity of the government and project their funds requirements to the MoF accordingly.

(Para 2.10)

DEPARTMENT OF PENSION AND PENSIONERS' WELFARE (DPPW)

Scheme(s) of DPPW

4. During 2020-21 the BE allocation was Rs. 5 crores for the scheme, however, it got reduced to Rs. 3.03 crores at RE stage and at the end of the year only Rs. 2.54 crores could be spent. On a similar pattern the scheme allocation for the BE 2021-22 was again Rs. 5 crores, which was reduced to Rs. 3.31 crores at the RE stage and the actual expenditure upto 31.01.2022 is Rs. 1.48 crores only. Not surprisingly, the BE for the Department under scheme for the year 2022-23 has been pegged at Rs. 3.57 crores only, against their projection of Rs. 4.40 made to the Ministry of Finance. The Department should furnish detailed reasons for such under-utilization of funds in the last two financial years to the Committee.

(Para 2.17)

POLICIES, PROGRAMMES AND SCHEMES

DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMS & PUBLIC GRIEVANCES (DARPG)

Public Grievances

Centralized Public Grievances Redress and Monitoring System (CPGRAMS)

5. The Committee is of the view that no government can claim itself to be accountable, responsive and user-friendly unless it has established an efficient and effective grievance redress mechanism. In fact, the efficiency and effectiveness of any organization can be measured by its grievance redressal mechanism as it provides important feedback on its working. Thus grievance redressal should be one of the core components of good governance.

(Para 3.4)

6. The Committee also observes that CPGRAMS has become the mainstay of public grievance edifice of the country. The Committee notes that over the years the Department has made many significant improvements in the grievance redressal system. Citizens are now being able to benefit from the portal by getting their grievances redressed in a time-bound manner. The Department has brought to the notice of the Committee several instances where citizens have got redressal of their grievances promptly and timely through the portal during the lockdowns due to pandemic.

(Para 3.5)

7. The Committee is pleased to note that the Department has implemented most of its recommendations like reduction in redressal period from 60 to 45 days, introduction of appellate mechanism, integration of the portal with the portals of states and thus achieving one nation - one portal goal, making available the CPGRAMS website in regional languages, initiating preparation of a 'Grievance Redressal Index', creating a facility for filing grievance *via* speech to text method etc. The Committee therefore appreciates and lauds the efforts of the Department for continuously improving and bringing about thoughtful changes in the grievance redressal system.

(Para 3.6)

8. However, it has come to the notice of the Committee that a large part of grievances are being disposed off in a routine and ad-hoc manner and the complainant remains dissatisfied with the redressal. The Committee feels that the Public Grievances should be resolved in a professional and satisfactory manner. There is a need to fix accountability on the decision making authorities. In the event of unsatisfactory redressal of the grievances, the public usually tend to approach courts for redressal of their grievances which increases the burden of courts, so the Committee desires every endeavour should be made to resolve grievances to the satisfaction of the complainant. Accordingly, the Committee recommends the department to develop mechanism to ensure accountability of the government officials dealing with the citizen's grievances.

(Para 3.7)

9. The Committee also takes note of the fact that a very large number of the public grievances are limited to some specific aspects of certain organizations/Departments. The Committee desires that all those areas where a large number of grievances are received, should be examined and in those common areas of grievances, after analyzing the root cause, systemic changes wherever necessary should be brought without any delay which in turn will reduce the volume of grievances to a large extent.

(Para 3.8)

10. More and more people are becoming aware of the CPGRAMS, which may be gauged from the ever increasing number of grievances received every year on the portal. However, a large number of citizens are still not aware of the CPGRAMS; especially in the rural and semi-urban areas the awareness about it is very low or negligible. The Committee therefore recommends that every effort should be made to advertise on a large scale in mass media including newspapers, FM radio, social media etc. about CPGRAMS in the scheduled languages.

(Para 3.9)

11. Lastly, on the recommendations of this Committee, the Department has recently made available the CPGRAMS portal in three regional languages i.e. Bengali, Gujarati and Marathi. The Committee recommends that the Department should make available the portal in other regional languages on priority basis.

(Para 3.10)

Time Bound Delivery of Services

12. The Committee, recommends the government to bring a scheme for a time-bound delivery of goods and services for citizens. Initially the scheme may be started by including a few basic services only, which may later be expanded to include other services also. The Scheme should include appropriate measures for reward and punishment of government functionaries so that it remains effective.

(Para 3.12)

E-Office - Mission Mode Project

13. The Committee observes that e-Office is one of the key e-Governance reforms brought by the Department in the recent past. It has helped not only in making the government's work more faster and more efficient, but has also made a marked difference in the decision making process. It has proven its worth during the recent lockdowns due to COVID pandemic in the work-from-home scenario.

(Para 3.16)

14. The Committee is therefore of the view that the e-office should be implemented in all Central Government Ministries / Departments / organizations on priority basis. Proper training on e-Office should be imparted to the officials. Every effort must be made to encourage officials to carry out their office work through e-office only. Further, at an appropriate time, it should be made binding for all Government Departments/organizations, in a phased manner, to carry out all their official work through e-office only.

(Para 3.17)

15. The Department, along with NIC/MeitY should also keep on improving the e-office software based on the inputs received from all stakeholders, on a continuous basis. The e-office should also be made compatible with all widely used browsers. As e-office has the potential for making lot of savings for the government in terms of office space, stationery etc., the Committee therefore, recommends the DARPG to approach the MoF, with proper justifications, and seek funds to implement the e-office project on a faster pace in all Ministries.

(Para 3.18)

Administrative Reforms

16. The Committee observes that apathy of civil servants in implementation of Government schemes/programmes is one of the major impediments in the implementation of government schemes and delivery of services and therefore, recommends DARPG to make appropriate programmes and initiatives for instilling right public service delivery attitude in civil servants by strengthening their behavioural competency.

(Para 3.21)

17. The Committee observes that more than a decade and a half has passed since the 2nd ARC was constituted and there have been phenomenal changes in the governance of the country mainly on account of changes in the socio-economic structure and technological revolution and recommends that the Department should explore the need for setting up of 3rd ARC.

(Para 3.23)

NATIONAL CENTRE FOR GOOD GOVERNANCE (NCGG)

18. The NCGG is envisaged to be the apex think-tank to guide the Government and help it in implementing Good Governance Reforms. The Committee feels that with such a significant mandate, the scope and activities of the Centre should be made broad based and then seek commensurate allocation to carry out the mandate. The grant-in-aid provided to the institution seems insufficient and accordingly, the Committee recommends the NCGG to work out a detailed future plan to effectively carry out its activities, on the basis of which, it should approach the government for necessary funds. In the long run, the Government should also evolve a mechanism to ensure that the Centre evolves into a result oriented organization of global excellence, which is self-sustaining and does not remain dependent on Government grants.

(Para 3.28)

DEPARTMENT OF PENSION & PENSIONERS' WELFARE (DPPW)

19. From the mandate of the Department, it may be seen that it is primarily concerned with the Pensioners (including family Pensioners) of all Ministries / Departments under the Accounting jurisdiction of Controller General of Accounts, MoF. However, a large chunk of pensioners including Defence pensioners, Railway pensioners, Telecom pensioners, and Postal pensioners are governed by their own rules and are outside the jurisdiction of the DPPW.

(Para 3.30)

20. The Committee observes that though the name and the mandate of the Department suggest its jurisdiction over all Central Government employees, a large portion of pensioners from Defence, Railways, Telecom and Postal are outside the purview of the DPPW. These organizations also implement similar rules and schemes on the lines of DPPW. However, this multiplicity of agencies and rules in matters of pension creates confusion and duplicity. The Committee further notes that recently the Railway Budget has been integrated with the General Budget and the CPENGRAMS portal has been made common for all these organizations. Thus, there seems to be an approach in the Government towards integration and non-duplicity for making optimal utilization of resources.

(Para 3.31)

21. The Committee, therefore, recommends that the Department should explore the feasibility of integrating pensioners of all other organizations of Central Government viz. Defence, Railways, Telecom and Postal be brought in within the jurisdiction of the DPPW, by making it a single entity in the matters related to pension and pensioners' welfare. The Department may furnish a concept paper in this regard, to the Committee, within three months.

(Para 3.32)

Pensioners' Portal

22. The Committee notes that based on an independent third party comprehensive review of the root cause of the pensioners' grievances the DPPW has initiated key reforms like complete digitalization of pension process and improvement in submission of Life Certificate by pensioners. The Committee appreciates such initiatives being taken up by the Department based on their learning from pensioners' grievances.

(Para 3.39)

23. The Committee observes that as per last five years data provided by the Department on satisfaction ratings, about 40% of complainants have rated their grievance redressal as poor. Such ratings reflect poorly on the overall grievance handling by different organizations. Further, about twelve Ministries/Departments in the year 2021 and twenty two Ministries/Departments in the year 2020 have failed to resolve more than 30% of pensioners' grievances pertaining to them within the stipulated time. This shows apathy of those organizations towards handling of pensioners' grievances and the Committee feels dismayed over indifference shown by government officials to the grievances of their retired colleagues.

(Para 3.40)

24. The Committee accordingly recommends the DPPW to develop a mechanism/guidelines/policy to ensure accountability of the government officials dealing with the pensioners' grievances and suggest action against the erring officials. The appellate authority should be empowered to award monetary penalties and sanction disciplinary action against those officials who are habitually responsible for delayed action or summary disposal of grievances without any qualitative action.

(Para 3.41)

Pension Adalats

25. As per the data provided by the Department on disposal of pension grievances during Pension Adalats, their resolution rates are significantly high. This perhaps is due to the fact that all stakeholders of a particular grievance are invited on a single table, the grievances are resolved quickly. Considering this performance, as recommended by the Committee in its 106th report, the Committee once again reiterates that such Pension

Adalats should be held more regularly and frequently. Further, the experience gained during COVID times, the practice of holding Pension Adalats through video conferencing should be promoted.

(Para 3.45)

26. The Committee commends the overall performance of the Department of Pension and Pensioners Welfare and hopes that it will continue with its good work to bring about 'ease of living' for pensioners, especially for super senior citizens and family pensioners.

(Para 3.51)
