



ALL INDIA BHARAT SANCHAR NIGAM LIMITED RETIRED EXECUTIVES' ASSOCIATION

Central Headquarters

Registered under Societies Registration Act XXI of 1860 vide Govt. of NCT Delhi No. S/RS/SW/1161/2014

[Registered under Pensioners Portal vide DoP&PW letter No. 4(4)/2021-P&PW(H)7311 dated 04.01.2024]

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No. AIBSNLREA/CHQ/2024/37

Date: 11th June 2024

To

Shri Narendra Modi,
Hon'ble Prime Minister of India,
New Delhi

Respected Sir,

At the outset we convey our Greetings on your assuming charge as Prime Minister of India for a consecutive third term. As senior citizens, we always remember your words of acknowledgment and appreciation of the elders over their role in Nation Building. You have been all along advocating top-most priority to the dignity, financial security and the well-being of the Senior Citizens, stating that it is the nation's responsibility to look after them.

2. Your kind words had raised a lot of expectations, but we were really disappointed over non-settlement of some very important grievances of pensioners during the past, mainly due to Department of Expenditure either rejecting or sitting over vital recommendations of a Standing Committee of Parliament and some court judgements. With the formation of the new Government under your leadership again, we are just resubmitting some of these grievances, with a renewed hope that you will personally look into them and direct the Ministry of Finance and other Ministries concerned to re-examine the issues with the single objective of respecting and honouring the elders instead of viewing these issues with narrow economic considerations.

3. In order that these grievances of the pensioners are understood in their proper perspective, the background of each issue is duly appreciated with insight, the entire circumstances are re-examined, and the pensioners' concerns are addressed appropriately, we are annexing herewith a brief on the different grievances, vital to the ease of living of the elders/pensioners.

4. We would earnestly request you to kindly bestow your personal attention to these pensioners' grievances and direct the Ministries/Departments concerned to resolve them at the earliest possible time.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,



(R.R.Balasubramanian)
General Secretary

Enclosures: As stated

- Copy to:
1. Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman,
Minister of Finance, Gol
 2. Shri Ashwini Vaishnav,
Minister of Railways, Gol
 3. Shri V.Srinivas,
Secretary (Pension), DoP&PW
 4. Dr. T.V.Somanathan,
Secretary, DoE
 5. Shri Radha Chauhan,
Secretary (P), DoP&T
 6. Shri Ajay Seth,
Secretary (EA), DoEA
 7. Shri Anil Kumar Lahoti,
Chairman, Railway Board

1. Grant of 5% additional quantum of Pension on attaining the age of 65 years, 10% on 70 years, 15% on 75 years to the Pensioners:

The Department related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Personnel, Public Grievances, Law and Justice, in its 110th Report submitted to the Parliament on 10.12.2021 had recommended payment of “5% additional quantum of Pension on attaining the age of 65 years, 10% on 70 years, 15% on 75 years and 20% on 80 years to the Pensioners, **in view of changes at societal level and the need to have a robust pension system for elderly which can help them survive in this world without being a burden on anyone.**” As per existing system, additional pension is admissible after attaining the age of 80 years. It was suggested that after retirement at the age of 60 years, additional 5% pension may be granted after every 5 years which will lead to 20% after attaining age of 80 years.

However, Department of Expenditure vide their ID Note dated 01.06.2022 had stated that the proposal has been examined in that Department and in line with the views offered by Budget Division of DEA **considering the fiscal perspective of the Govt.**, the proposal is not agreed to.

Department related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Personnel, Public Grievances, Law and Justice, in its 120th on Action Taken on 110th Report of the Committee on "Pensioners Grievances, observed that **The Committee takes note of the reply and do not wish to pursue this matter for now in wake of the reply of the Department.**

The matter was also under consideration by the Standing Committee on Voluntary Agencies (SCOVA) functioning under DoP&PW. SCOVA meeting was last held on 22.02.2024 wherein the ID note by Department of Expenditure was taken note of and the Chairman SCOVA “suggested to DoPPW/Department of Expenditure **to again look into the matter.**”

On this matter, it is important to note that the Government of Himachal Pradesh has been already granting additional pension in the name of pension allowance @5%, 10% and 15% on basic pension/family pension to the State Government pensioners /family pensioners, including AIS pensioners/family pensioners on attaining the age of 65 years, 70 years and 75 years respectively, since the year 2014.

It is therefore requested that all the concerned departments may re-examine the matter with an intent to find a way to implement the recommendations of the Parliamentary Standing Committee and not merely basing the decision on the fiscal perspective of the Government.

2. Restoration of commuted value of pension in less than 15 years:

Orders were issued in the year 1983, in order to implement a Supreme Court judgement to restore commuted pension in 15 years, based on calculations which showed that the commuted amount was recovered in 12 to 13 years. Although the V CPC had recommended restoration in 12 years, the Government did not accept it. In the Standing Committee meeting of National Council (JCM) the demand for restoration of commuted portion of pension after 12 years was raised and the Official side stated that *"The matter has been referred to Ministry of Finance, Department of Expenditure on 03.10.2022."*

In the recent meeting of the Standing Committee of JCM held in December 2023, the Official side expressed its *"desire that the DOP&PW and the Department of Expenditure should hold a meeting with Staff Side and if the issue is not resolved then the same can be raised in the main meeting of the National Council – JCM"*. Such a meeting with Staff Side and the DoP&PW and DoE is yet to take place.

While the Kerala Government has been restoring the commuted portion in 12 years, Gujarat Government has issued orders for restoring in 13 years. Some other State Governments also are reported to have been restoring the commuted amount in less than 15 years.

We have taken up the matter with the Prime Minister last year requesting Restoration of Commuted Value of Pension after 7 years from the date of commutation in view of the fact that the interests on loans given by the banks have drastically come down and commuted value of pension gets recovered fully within 7 years. Recently, some courts have also reported to have issued direction/interim direction on the same plea.

It is requested that all the concerned Ministries/Departments be directed to examine the matter, taking into consideration that the pensioners are unjustifiably being forced to pay over and above the amount they are due to pay even along with interest.

3. Grant of Notional Increment for pensionary benefits in respect of those who retired on superannuation a day prior to their annual increment became due:

This has been another genuine grievance of pensioners who had put in a full year of service after their previous increment but were deprived of an increment just because they had to retire a day prior to their annual increment became due.

Tamilnadu Government granted this benefit to its employees vide a Gazette Notification on 31.12.2014. Since then, there have been number of CAT judgments favouring grant of notional increment, many High Courts confirming these judgements. Hon'ble Supreme Court of India vide its order dated 11.04.2023 in CA No.2471 of 2023[SLP (C) No.6185/2020] decided that the Division Bench of the Karnataka High Court has rightly directed the appellants (KPTCL) to grant one annual increment which the petitioners earned on the last day of their service for rendering services during the preceding one year from the date of their retirement with good behaviour and efficiently. Later Hon'ble Supreme Court vide order dated 19.05.2023 dismissed SLP (C) No.4722/2022 filed by Ministry of Railways with the observation that the issue raised in these appeals is squarely covered by judgment rendered in CA 2471 of 2023. Thus the judgement has attained finality. The Delhi High Court even ordered "*passing of necessary orders not only in respect of the petitioners but also in respect of all similarly situated persons*". Despite several representations from us and other organisations, amid continuing court cases being filed every other day by affected pensioners, DoP&T is still dragging its feet, citing 'consultation process'.

Unless a common order is issued, the affected pensioners will go on filing cases for similar relief, which is an unnecessary burden both on the pensioners concerned as well as the Ministry/Department/Organisation concerned. We believe that it is not the intention of the Government to force the poor pensioners to the courts at this old age. Also, the financial implication will be meagre considering the negligible number of beneficiaries.

We would therefore request you to kindly direct DoP&T to consider the issue with compassion and cause issue of a common order extending the benefit allowed by the Supreme Court in several cases, to all the similarly placed pensioners and thus put an end to the anxiety and agony of the affected pensioners.

4. Enhancement of Fixed Medical Allowance from Rs.1000/- per month to Rs.3000/- per month:

The Department related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Personnel, Public Grievances, Law and Justice, in its 110th Report submitted to the Parliament on 10.12.2021 had recommended to DoP&PW to take up the issue of Enhancement of Fixed Medical Allowance from Rs.1000/- per month to Rs.3000/- per month, as Rs.1000 is a very meager amount for an old age pensioner.

According to the Minutes of the 33rd meeting of SCOVA, “DoE informed that the existing rates are based on 7th CPC and were effective from 01.07.2017. Hence, no further revision, at this stage seems justified.”

It is requested that Department of Expenditure may be impressed upon to get the matter re-examined and the need to take a positive decision on the matter at the earliest.

5. Restoration of concession for senior citizens in train fares:

We were genuinely disappointed when the long existing concession for senior citizens in trains were withdrawn. The Southern Railway on 17th September 2020 informed the Madras High Court that **the concession that was being provided to senior citizens stands cancelled to discourage unnecessary travel during the COVID-19 pandemic**. But later the government changed tack, saying **“restarting concessions to senior citizens on train tickets is not desirable” since the cost of concession weighs heavily on Railways**.

It is really unfortunate that the Indian Railways shirks its social responsibility towards senior citizens in the name of ‘cost’, while even private airlines including the recently privatized Air India continue to provide concession to senior citizens despite rising cost of their operation. Also, Government’s social obligations are to be met by Indian Railways without indulging in profit-loss calculation, like BSNL which continues to fulfill the Government’s social obligations by providing telecom services to common man at affordable prices in spite of incurring huge losses for several years.

It is a matter of fact that after dedicating the entire prime years of their life to serving the Nation, these senior citizens find time only now to realise their dream of traveling across the country, mostly on pilgrimage with their family. It is a plain truth that these people could afford to travel in AC classes, a requirement arising out of their advanced age, only because of the concession, which they could never otherwise even imagine. It is also on record that around 40 lakhs senior citizens have opted out of the concession during the last two years before withdrawal of the concession, which shows that those who can afford to forego the concession are readily doing it without any second thought.

We strongly feel that a few crores of expenditure should not stand in the way of the Indian Railways discharging its social responsibility towards the elders. After all these senior citizens constitute a major chunk of honest Income Taxpayers, during past service and after retirement. Unlike in other countries, this tax is not being used to provide any social security to them.

In view of the above, we earnestly request you to kindly intervene and advise the Indian Railways to review its decision of withdrawing the concession and to order restoration of the senior citizen concession in trains forthwith.