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BHARAT PENSIONERS' SAMAJ

(All India Federation of Pensioners' Associations)

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S.C. Maheshwari
Secretary General,

Honoring Commitments, Ensuring Justice for Pensioners

Respected Dignitaries, Esteemed Members, and the pensioners and invitees

I extend my heartfelt greetings to all present. Today, we gather to address critical concerns affecting BSNL and MTNL Pensioners, who have significantly contributed to growth of India's Telecom Sector. Despite their unwavering service, they continue to face unresolved issues in pension revision and overall welfare.

1. 8th Central Pay Commission & Pension Revision

The 8th Central Pay Commission (CPC), scheduled for April 2025, brings hope for pensioners. However, the exclusion of BSNL/MTNL pensioners from pension revision remains a pressing issue.

Bharat Pensioners Samaj (BPS) Stand on Pension Revision :

- ◆ BSNL/MTNL pensioners' pensions are funded by the Government of India and should not be treated separately.
- ◆ 1982 Nakra Judgment (Supreme Court) upholds pensioners as a single statutory group, ensuring fair pension revision.
- ◆ No separate terms of reference for BSNL/MTNL pensioners under the 8th CPC are required. 8th CPC recommendations must apply uniformly to BSNL/DoT pensioners.
- ◆ We urge the government to act immediately. Pensioners deserve dignity, financial security, and a just revision.

2. Pay & Pension Hike Will Not Harm Government Finances

There is a misconception that pay and pension hikes burden the economy. However, historical data and expert analysis prove otherwise.

Fact : The government benefits from a squeeze in real pay overtime due to DA (Dearness Allowance) inadequacy. Even Montek S. Ahluwalia (former Planning Commission Deputy Chairman) emphasized the need for periodic revisions.

Economic Benefits of Salary & Pension Hikes :

- ◆ Increased Consumer Spending → Boosts demand for goods and services.
- ◆ Higher Tax Revenues → More earnings lead to higher income tax and GST collections.
- ◆ Enhanced Social Security → Financial stability for pensioners reduces dependence on government welfare schemes.

Recommendations for Fiscal Stability :

Eliminate wasteful expenditures (e.g., administrative overheads).

Rationalize VIP perks (reduce extravagant privileges).

Broaden the tax base (include high-earning sectors and large agricultural earners).

Pay & pension hikes are a necessity, not a financial burden. The 8th CPC must ensure just compensation.

3. The Need for Pay & Pension Reforms

1. The 10-Year Pay Commission Cycle

Pay commissions are constituted every decade, but DA adjustments fail to keep up with inflation, eroding real wages over time.

2. Addressing Wage Disparities

- ◆ Minimum-to-Maximum Salary Ratio:
 - ◆ 5th CPC: 1:10.7
 - ◆ 6th CPC: 1:11.42
 - ◆ 7th CPC: 1:13.88
- ◆ BPS demands a ratio of 1:9 or lower to align with global wage equity standards.

3. Updating the Aykroyd Formula

The Aykroyd formula, used for determining the minimum salary, is outdated, gender-biased, and fails to address modern economic needs.

BPS Proposes:

Modify the formula to include modern necessities (internet, digital services).

Eliminate gender bias (equal consumption units for men and women).

Account for dependent parents (as per CrPC 125 & Senior Citizens Act).

BPS Demands:

₹40,000 minimum basic salary + ₹5,000 per dependent parent as special pay for MTS (Multi-Tasking Staff) employees.

4. Key Issues Faced by BSNL Pensioners

1. Unjust Conditions for Hospital Empanelment

BSNL mandates hospitals to provide business to BSNL for empanelment.

BPS Demands: Empanelment should be based on service quality and CGHS rates compliance.

2. Lack of Transparency in Pension Adalats

CCAs do not issue minutes of pension Adalats, reducing transparency.

BPS Demands: Minutes should be publicly available.

3. **Delayed Medical Reimbursements**

BSNL pensioners face long delays in medical reimbursements.

BPS Demands: Fixed medical advances should be released regularly.

4. **Lack of a Grievance Redressal System**

BSNL pensioners do not have a structured grievance mechanism.

BPS Demands: CGMs must directly address pensioners' issues.

5. Allocation of Office Space for Pensioners' Association

BSNL has ample space but does not allocate it for pensioners' associations

BPS Demands: Pensioners' associations should be given nominal rent-based space.

6. **Discontinuation of Monthly DLC Expiry Lists by CCCAs**

Earlier: CCAs issued DLC expiry lists, helping pensioners renew certificates. Now: This practice has been discontinued after SAMPANN implementation.

BPS Demands: Restoration of DLC expiry lists.

7. **Recognition of Pensioners' Efforts in DLC Issuance**

BDPA (I) pensioners issue thousands of DLCs but do not receive recognition.

BPS Demands: Formal acknowledgment of BDPA (I) 's contribution.

8. **Financial Burden of Switching to CGHS**

BSNL pensioners must surrender their medical ID and pay a high CGHS subscription upfront.

BPS Demands: BSNL should directly pay CGHS subscriptions for pensioners.

9. **Non-Recognition of BSNL Pensioners at District Level**

District General Managers (GMs) do not recognize BSNL pensioners, making grievance redressal difficult.

BPS Demands: BSNL must issue formal recognition guidelines for pensioners' associations.

Conclusion & Call to Action

BSNL and MTNL pensioners dedicated their lives to public service. We must ensure their well being in retirement.

BPS Urges the Government to:

Include BSNL/MTNL pensioners in the 8th CPC pension revision.

Ensure fair wages and pensions that align with inflation.

Implement systematic fiscal reforms to promote wage equity.

Address key issues faced by BSNL pensioners, including medical reimbursements, grievance redressal, and hospital empanelment.

A Nation That Honors Its Employees and Pensioners, Honors Its Future!

Thank you. Let us stand together for the rights and welfare of our pensioners.

Pension-revision

For the sake of brevity, each issue/point has been outlined briefly. A detailed explanation will be provided by Bharat Pensioners Samaj during oral evidence before the commission.

Civil Service Pension Reform for pre 2004 recruited retirees: Ensuring Fairness and Financial Security

Supreme Court Observations on Pension

The Supreme Court has emphasized that pension is a statutory right, not a discretionary benefit, ensuring socio-economic justice for retired employees. The landmark Nakra judgment states that pensioners must be able to live:

1. Free from want, with decency, independence, and self-respect.
2. At a standard equivalent to their pre-retirement level.

Impact of Inflation and Cost of Living

Since the last revision of Central Government pensions on 1st January 2016, inflation has significantly eroded the purchasing power of pensioners, necessitating an urgent revision. The rising cost of essential and non-essential goods, along with increased medical expenses, has made it difficult for pensioners to maintain a decent standard of living.

Proposed Reforms in Pension Structure

1. **Minimum Pension Revision:** Minimum pension should be 100% of the 8th CPC revised minimum salary of the lowest-rank central government employee, aligning with the principle of need-based fare wages.
2. **Pension Rate Revision:** Pension should not be less than 65% of 8th CPC notional pay, (in pay scale or the average of the last 10 months' emoluments, whichever is more beneficial, as recommended by TECS (Tata Economic Consultancy Services 5th CPC Report (Para 127.9, Vol III).and family pension should be 45% of the last pay in pay scale or the average of the last 10 months' emoluments, whichever is more beneficial,

Global Pension Comparison

Global Pension Comparisons

Several countries provide higher pension benefits, including:

·France	: 75% of last six months' average salary
·Belgium	: 75% of last five years' average salary
·Cyprus	: 67% of final salary
·Malta	: 80% of best 15 years' average salary

Developing Countries

Country	**Pension Calculation*
Brazil	85%
South Africa	75%
Mexico	60%
Turkey	60%
Vietnam	75%
Argentina	70%

3. **Additional Age-Based Pension Increments**

(as recommended in Para 3.24 to 3.28 of the 110th report of DRPSC):

▼	65 years	–	5% of revised pension
▼	70 years	–	10% of revised pension
▼	75 years	–	15% of revised pension
▼	80 years	–	20% of revised pension
▼	85 years	–	30% of revised pension
▼	90 years	–	40% of revised pension
▼	95 years	–	50% of revised pension
▼	100 years	–	100% of revised pension

Merger of Dearness Relief (DR)

DR should be merged with the pension once it crosses 25%, ((Para 138.17 5th CPC recommendations), similar to allowances for serving employees.

Alignment of CCS Pension Rules 2021 with HAMA 1956

To ensure compliance with the Hindu Adoption and Maintenance Act (HAMA) 1956, the definition of ‘family’ under CCS Pension Rules should be revised to include widowed dependent daughters-in-law. Parity Between Past and Future Pensioners

To eliminate disparities between pre- and post-2016 retirees, pensions should be updated based on notional salary under post-2016 rules, ensuring equality similar to the ‘One Rank One Pension’ scheme for Armed Forces and parity among Supreme Court and High Court judges.

Family Pension Enhancement

- ▼ Increase family pension from 30% to 45% of last pay drawn (LPD)
- ▼ Uniform enhanced family pension for all cases of death (whether in service or after retirement).
- ▼ Eliminate abrupt reduction of 40% in spousal pension to ensure financial stability for surviving family members. Alternative Dispute Resolution

Summary of DEPARTMENT-RELATED PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES, LAW AND JUSTICE Report 110 Para 2.31 to 2.33 :

The Department of Pension & Pensioners’ Welfare (DoPPW) has reported that around 310 pension related cases are pending in various courts and tribunals, being contested by the respective Administrative Ministries/Departments. However, DoPPW has not issued any guidelines for resolving pensioners’ grievances through Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR), such as pre-litigation conciliation.

Most cases involve delayed or incorrect pension payments, non-revision of pension, or retirement benefits.

While the concerned Ministry/Department is responsible for handling court cases related to their pensioners, DoPPW provides advice when the issue concerns central policies. Currently, DoPPW is directly contesting six such cases involving multiple Ministries.

The Committee believes that delayed justice is a denial of justice, especially for the elderly. It strongly recommends that the Department explore the feasibility of an ADR mechanism to resolve pension-related grievances before litigation, ensuring pensioners do not have to go to court to claim their rightful entitlements.

All Pensioners to be under DOP & PW :

Summary of DEPARTMENT-RELATED PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES, LAW AND JUSTICE Report 113 Para3.30-3.32-Integration of Pensioners Under DoPPW :

The Department of Pension & Pensioners’ Welfare (DoPPW) primarily oversees pensioners from Ministries/ Departments under the Controller General of Accounts, MoF, but Defence, Railways, Telecom, and Postal pensioners are governed by separate rules and fall outside its jurisdiction.

The Committee notes that this fragmentation leads to confusion and duplication in pension policies. However, recent steps such as merging the Railway Budget with the General Budget and integrating the CPENGRAMS grievance portal indicate a move towards consolidation.

Therefore, the Committee recommends exploring the feasibility of integrating all Central Government pensioners under DoPPW to create a unified pension administration. It has directed the Department to submit a concept paper on this proposal within three months.

Ensuring Pension Parity for BSNL/MTNL Absorbed Pensioners:

Bharat Pensioners Samaj plea is that all pensioners/family pensioners paid from the Central Govt budget are covered by the terms of reference of 8th CPC as such same Fitment Formula should apply for Absorbed BSNL Pensioners

- Background of BSNL/MTNL Absorbed Pensioners
- The employees of the Department of Telecommunications (DoT), who were absorbed into Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) and Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Limited (MTNL), continue to be governed under the Central Civil Services (Pension) Rules, 2021 (earlier 1972). Unlike other CPSE retirees, their pensions are funded directly from Central Civil Estimates.
- Recognizing this distinct status, the Union Cabinet, under the Hon'ble Prime Minister's leadership, decided in 2016 to bear 100% pension and family pension liability of BSNL/MTNL absorbed employees from government funds. This was a landmark decision reinforcing the commitment of the government to these pensioners.
- Despite clear provisions and financial backing from the Government of India, BSNL/MTNL absorbed pensioners so far have been excluded from automatic pension revisions under successive Central Pay Commissions. Instead, their pension revision process has remained uncertain, subject to separate Cabinet approvals, which results in:
- Delays in Pension Revision: Unlike other central government pensioners who receive timely revisions under Pay Commissions, BSNL/MTNL pensioners face prolonged delays, sometimes waiting years for parity.
- Disparity in Pensionary Benefits: The exclusion creates unjust discrimination between BSNL/MTNL absorbed pensioners and other central government retirees covered under the same pension rules.
- Financial Hardships for Pensioners: The uncertainty and delays force lakhs of retired employees and their families into unnecessary financial distress, impacting their post-retirement stability.
- BPS strongly urges the Government of India and the 8th Central Pay Commission to explicitly include BSNL / MTNL absorbed pensioners in their recommendations for pension revision alongside other central government pensioners. This inclusion will eliminate uncertainty, ensure pension parity, and provide long-overdue financial justice. A fair and sustainable pension structure is crucial for ensuring financial security, dignity, and independence for retired government employees. The proposed reforms aim to align pension policies with economic realities, ensuring adequate support for pensioners and their families while upholding the principles of social justice.

Correction in Pension Calculation for Railway Loco Running Staff/Loco Pilots:

- Their notional pay should be recalculated correctly, as 55% of their basic pay is added to their last drawn pay at superannuation to determine their pension.
- However, the 7th CPC incorrectly used their last basic pay instead of the emoluments that include the 55% addition.
- This error has led to recurring financial losses for them and must be corrected in the 8th CPC.

Statutory bodies / Autonomous bodies:

The Coffee Board, Tea Board, Coal Board, and similar statutory bodies or autonomous organizations who align their pay structures and pension benefits with the Central Pay Commission recommendations, However, each board have to take separate orders from the administrative ministry even for periodical Dearness relief. This often results in delays causing avoidable anxiety and financial hard ship. With their pension benefits follow the

central government model. To avoid duplicacy and delays. BPS pleads that the system of Administrative Ministry should be abolished in all those cases where accepted recommendations apply to them.

1. We, the Bharat Pensioners Samaj (BPS), respectfully submit the following plea concerning the system followed by certain statutory bodies and autonomous organizations, such as the Coffee Board, Tea Board, Coal Board, and others, regarding their pay structures, pension benefits, and dearness relief:

1. Current System and Delays:

It is well acknowledged that these statutory and autonomous bodies align their pay structures and pension benefits with the Central Pay Commission (CPC) recommendations. This alignment ensures parity with central government employees and provides financial stability to the employees of these organizations.

However, the present system mandates that these bodies seek separate orders from the respective administrative ministry to implement periodic adjustments such as Dearness Relief (DR), which are essential for keeping pace with inflation and maintaining the purchasing power of pensioners.

This additional administrative step introduces unnecessary delays, leading to avoidable anxiety and financial hardship for employees and pensioners who rely on these payments for their livelihood.

2. Need for Streamlining the Process

The delay in the disbursement of Dearness Relief or adjustments to pay scales and pension benefits due to the intervention of the administrative ministry is not only inefficient but also creates a situation where pensioners and employees are left in financial uncertainty.

Given that these boards and organizations already follow the accepted recommendations of the Central Pay Commission, it is only logical to eliminate the duplicative role of the administrative ministry in approving such routine adjustments.

3. BPS's Plea:

We strongly urge the 8th Central Pay Commission to recommend that the current requirement for the intervention of the administrative ministry be abolished in all cases where the Central Pay Commission's recommendations are accepted and directly applied to the concerned boards and organizations.

By doing so, the implementation of pay structures, pension benefits, and Dearness Relief would be automatic and timely, thus alleviating the financial distress and ensuring the well-being of pensioners and employees in these organizations.

1. Conclusion:

2. Resolve Existing disparities and anomalies:

3. Fixation Issues for Pre-2006 Retirees

Pre-2006 retirees receive lower pensions than post-2006 retirees despite similar service records:

· Supreme Court rulings uphold pension parity, but government reluctance persists.

· Pension Anomalies in Survey of India

· Pre-1989 retirees were denied due pension benefits, violating policy directives.

Abolishing the requirement for periodic approvals from the administrative ministry would bring about a much-needed streamlining of the process, ensuring that employees and pensioners receive their rightful dues without unnecessary delays.

This change would also reduce the administrative burden on ministries and improve the efficiency of implementing the Central Pay Commission's recommendations.

We respectfully request the 8th CPC to consider this representation favorably and make the necessary recommendations to ensure that employees and pensioners of these statutory bodies and autonomous organizations are treated with fairness, dignity, and timely financial support.

2. Parity for Para-Military Forces:

They serve as the first line of defence, facing enemy at borders and terrorist inside.

They should be granted One Rank One Pension (OROP) at par with the Armed Forces.

They should be classified as ex-servicemen after retirement.

3. **Parity for MES Personnel :**

MES personnel stand shoulder to shoulder with combat forces in war and peace.

They should be granted One Rank One Pension and ex-servicemen status after retirement.

Pension for post 2004 retirees under UPS : May be arrived as per UPS .How ever Bharat Pensioners Samaj demands, minimum pension equal to the minimum pension of pre 2004 recruited retirees

Other Essential Benefits:

1. Fixed Medical Allowance (FMA): Increased to 15,000 per month.

Conclusion

A fair and sustainable pension structure is crucial for ensuring financial security, dignity, and independence for retired government employees. The proposed reforms aim to align pension policies with economic realities, ensuring adequate support for pensioners and their families while upholding the principles of social justice.

Key Note Address delivered by Shri S.C. Maheshwari, SG BPS on 05.03.2025 in 6th District Conference of BDPA (INDIA) Vadodara.