

Minutes of the 34th SCOVA meeting held under the Chairmanship of Hon'ble MOS(PP) on 11.03.2025, at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi: DoP&PW O.M. dated 25.03.2025

No. 4/14/2025-P&PW(D)/E-10522
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: – 25.03.2025

To

All the Pensioners' Associations included in SCOVA
Vide Resolution dated 26.09.2023

Sub: Minutes of the 34th SCOVA meeting held under the Chairmanship of Hon'ble MOS(PP) on 11.03.2025, at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi-reg

Please find enclosed herewith the minutes of the 34th Meeting of Standing Committee of Voluntary Agencies (SCOVA) held under the Chairmanship of Hon'ble MoS (PP) on 11.03.2025 at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi for compliance and necessary action.

Encl: As above

Sd/-
(Dilip Kumar Sanu)
Under Secretary to the Govt. of India

To

- (1) DG, CGHS, M/o H&FW, Nirman Bhawan, Rajpath Area, Central Secretariat, New Delhi-110001
- (2) Jt. CGD (Pension) CGHDA, Ulan Batar, Rao Tularam Marg, Sport View, Palam, New Delhi-110010
- (3) Jt. CGHCA, D/o Telecommunications, MTNL Building, 3rd&4th Floor, Jawahar Lal Nehru Marg, New Delhi-110002
- (4) DDG Estt. D/o Posts, Dak Bhawan, New Delhi-110001

Copy to: -

- (i) Desk-H in respect of items No. III(ii) and IV(i)

Copy for information: -

- (i) PS to MOS(PP)
- (ii) PSO to Secretary (Pension)
- (iii) PPS too JS (Pension)
- (iv) All Directors and all Desks in DoPPW

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 34TH SCOVA HELD ON 11.03.2025 UNDER THE CHAIRMANSHIP OF HON'BLE MOS (PP) AT VIGYAN BHAWAN (ANNEXE)

34th meeting of the Standing Committee of Voluntary Agencies (SCOVA) was held on 11.03.2025 under the Chairmanship of Hon'ble MOS (PP) at Vigyan Bhawan (Annexe) with members of Pensioners' Welfare Associations and representatives of different Ministries/Departments. List of participants is annexed.

2. The meeting was attended by Secretary (pension), Controller General of Accounts and other senior officers from various Ministries/Departments including Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Railways, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Department of Expenditure, Department of Personnel and Training, Department of Telecommunications, Department of Posts, Department of Financial Services, CPAO, bank officials from J&K bank and Indian bank, officials from DoPPW and members of 13 Pensioners' Welfare Associations.

3. At the outset, Secretary (Pension) welcomed the Hon'ble Minister and other participants in the SCOVA meeting for a fruitful discussion on agenda items for the meeting.

4 Joint Secretary (Pension) made a brief presentation on the various initiatives taken by the DoPPW for casing the difficulties faced by the pensioners and their general welfare including the 100 days' action plan of the Department and other achievements during the last one year. He also presented the future road map of the Department which includes digital empowerment of Pensioners, integration of Bhavishya portal with eHRMS and CGHS and timely redressal of Pensioners' grievances.

5. Thereafter, the deliberations were initiated on the new agenda items categorised into four parts viz. CGHS facilities, SPARSH portal of MoD, Pension Policy and other issues etc. which were taken up one by one for discussion by the SCOVA members.

I. CGHS ISSUES

Issue – CGHS-Infrastructure and Posting of Manpower

Pensioners' Associations from Pune, Jammu, Bengaluru, Chennai, Balasore and Nagpur raised various issues related to CGHS which include:

- ✓ Adequate manpower posting at all Wellness Centers (WCs)
- ✓ Opening of new WCs at Pune, Bengaluru, Balasore, Nagpur, Chennai, Puducherry and Jammu
- ✓ Opening of a polyclinic at Jammu with testing lab facilities
- ✓ In addition to the empanelled labs already available, setting up of a diagnostic lab
- ✓ Timely payment of bills of the vendors

- ✓ Empanelment of private hospitals at the district H.Q. (Pune and other places) under CGHS
- ✓ Continuous supply of life saving medicines
- ✓ Extending the services of CGHS to employees of the Central Government offices which may have been closed on account of administrative restructuring
- ✓ Reduction of delay in release of medical reimbursement claims
- ✓ Improvement of the existing infrastructure like buildings and facilities of WCs (Chennai, Bengaluru and Nagpur)

Discussion/Decision on agenda item

- ✓ DG CGHS informed that the proposal for recruitment of manpower for CGHS Wellness Centres is in active consideration through Staff Selection Commission (SSC) and the issue of manpower shortage would be resolved soon.
- ✓ DG CGHS was requested to consider the issues related to upgradation of existing WCs, improvement of infrastructure and manpower on priority as per the availability of resources
- ✓ The issue of empanelment of private hospitals without opening of WCs, being a policy matter was decided to be examined separately.
- ✓ CGHS was requested to examine the need of opening of new WCs in States/UTs after assessing the requirement based on the present population/beneficiaries at a place. CGHS was requested to consider opening of a Polyclinic with a testing lab facility at Jammu.
- ✓ Emphasis was given to consider maintaining continuous supply of life saving drugs in the WCs based on previous demands rather than just based on demand of indent.

(Action: Ministry of Health and Family Welfare/CGHS)

II. SPARSH PORTAL RELATED ISSUES

Ex-Servicemen Welfare League, Pensioners' Associations from Pune and Chennai raised the issues being faced by Defence pensioners after migration of pension accounts from bank to SPARSH portal of MoD. The issues of payment of additional pension, restoration of commutation of pension etc. were highlighted. The issue related to Digital Life Certificates (DLCs) especially for pensioners residing in foreign countries was raised. The Pensioners also raised the issue of One Rank One Pension (OROP).

Discussion/Decision on agenda item

- ✓ Jt. CGDA, MOD briefed about the benefits of SPARSII and its hassle-free transition for the new pension cases. She however, agreed that difficulties were being faced in the older cases where incomplete data was maintained with the banks. It was

informed that the existing physical method of submission of DLC is also available along with other digital modes for Pensioners. It was also informed that for those Pensioners residing abroad, the provision for submission of DIC through Indian Embassies is already available. However, the matter of facilitation of submission of DI-Cs through other digital modes is also being explored.

- ✓ It was directed to MOD to issue FAQs on the issues being raised by Pensioners migration of their pension disbursement from bank to SPARSH to increase their awareness and redressal of their grievances.
- ✓ It was decided that OROP related policy matters may be taken up separately with Department of Expenditure.

(Action: MOD/Controller General of Defence Accounts)

III. PENSION POLICY

(i) Issue: Restoration of commutation period from 15 years to 12 years:

The 5th Central Pay Commission (CPC) and various state governments recommended for reducing the recovery period for commuted pension from 15 years to 12 years to align with changing economic conditions. With the decrease in RBI interest rates, the current 15-year recovery period leads to excess recovery. Reducing the period to 12 years will ensure fairness and better matches the impact of lower interest rates on pension calculations.

Discussion/Decision on agenda item

It was informed by Department of Expenditure that this issue may be included in the Terms of Reference (TOR) of 8th Pay Commission.

In view of the above, the item was closed.

(ii) Issue: Laying down Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for streamlining the process of starting of Family Pension:

Pensioners' Association raised the issue of difficulties being faced by family pensioners for grant of family pension after death of pensioner/family pensioner. They, therefore, requested to issue a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for streamlining the process of starting of Family Pension.

Discussion/Decision on agenda item

It was informed by DoPPW that comments have been sought from banks, CPAO and other concerned Ministries/Departments on the question of a Standard Operating Procedure for grant of family pension.

DoPPW in consultation with other stakeholders will issue instructions in this regard.

(Action: DoPPW)

(iii) Issue: Notional Increment in pursuant to Judgement of Hon'ble SC:

The notional increment granted on 1st July/1st January for pension calculations, as per the Supreme Court/CAT decision, should be extended to all eligible employees,

including those who retired on 30th June 2006 or 31st December 2006. This group of Pensioners, who had the requisite qualifying service, should not be excluded from receiving the benefit of the notional increment. A new Office Memorandum (OM) is requested to ensure the implementation of this provision for these retirees.

Discussion/Decision on agenda item

It was informed that necessary instructions have been issued by DOPT on grant of Notional Increment due from 1st Jan / 1st July to those who retired on 30th June or 31st December respectively after its finalisation by Hon'ble Supreme Court.

In view of the above, the item was closed.

IV. OTHER ISSUES

(i) Issue: Increase in the Grant-in-Aid to PWAs:

Requests have been made for an increase in the annual budget to account for inflation and rising operational costs. This includes adjusting the salary of the computer operator to align with Jharkhand Government rates (Rs. 16,000/- to Rs. 18,000/-), as well as providing additional funding for electricity bills, stationery, computer maintenance, and the salary of an office boy. The proposal highlights the valuable social welfare initiatives being provided, particularly those supporting tribal women and environmental work.

Some Associations raised the issue of including the TA expenditure in heads of expenditure from GIA.

Discussion/Decision on agenda item

It was informed that the proposal of increasing the Grant-in-aid from existing Rs. 75000/- to Rs. 5,00,000/- per annum per association has been approved by DOE/IFD.

The process for payment for enhanced grant in aid to PWAs from next financial year is being finalised.

It was informed that the heads of expenditure from GIA is also being discussed by a committee and this would be kept flexible.

(Action: DoPPW)

(ii) Issue: Physical verification at the time of starting of Additional Pension by J&K Bank:

The issue was raised by Pensioners' Association of Jammu that Pensioners in J&K are required to appear in person for verification before receiving additional pensions after 80 years, unlike other nationalized banks. Additionally, the process for changing pension banks is slow and needs simplification.

Discussion/Decision on agenda item

It was informed by the Representative of J&K bank that the existing process being followed at district Treasury was on account of the instructions by the state government prior to 2016.

In order to facilitate the Pensioners, J&K bank further informed that they had already provided the services of Bank employees making personal visits to the respective pensioner and furnish details to the treasury in order to avoid physical presence.

However, the Treasury has now agreed to delegate the power to the banks to certify and henceforth, in J&K, the same procedure as followed in other states with regard to verification will be followed.

In view of the above, the item was closed.

(iii) Issue: Integration of Indian Bank with Bhavishya Portal:

Pensioners' Association, Chennai raised the issue of integration of Indian bank with Bhavishya portal which is preventing the pensioners from downloading pension slips and Form 16.

Discussion/Decision on agenda item

It was informed that DoPPW is already in the process to integrate all bank portals with Bhavishya. Some banks have already been integrated.

The Indian Bank representatives informed that the matter of integration with Bhavishya portal is under active consideration and would be completed soon.

In view of the above, the item was closed.

(iv) Issue: Fixed Medical Allowance (FMA):

Increase in the Fixed Medical Allowance (FMA) to Rs. 3000 per month, as the current allowance is insufficient due to rising medical costs, as recommended by the Parliamentary Standing Committee.

Discussion/Decision on agenda item

It was informed by Department of Expenditure that this issue may be included in the Terms of Reference (TOR) of 8th Pay Commission.

In view of the above, the item was closed.

(v) Issue: SAMPANN portal of DoT

Pensioners' Associations from Pune and Odisha raised that the implementation of the Comprehensive Pension Management System (SAMPANN) should also be extended to Postal pensioners, as it has already been implemented for DOT pensioners.

Associations also raised the concern of reminders sent for updation of DLCs periodically almost every month in the SAMPANN instead of a fixed month which is creating confusion to some of the Pensioners.

Discussion/Decision on agenda item

Jt. CGCA, DOT informed that DoT had already written to Department of Posts (DoP) in January offering extension of SAMPANN to Postal employees and some other state governments also. Some of the state governments have responded in affirmation. However, response from Department of Posts is awaited.

DoP informed that the issue of migration to SAMPANN portal is being examined in the Department.

Secretary (P) also suggested to DoP to convene a meeting to resolve the issue of migration to SAMPANN or Bhavishya portal as the case may be.

Regarding updation of DLCs, it was clarified by Jt. CGCA, DOT that an additional facility is being provided to the Pensioners to update their DLC in any month of the year as per their convenience. It is only a reminder SMS which is sent periodically to the Pensioners.

Nevertheless, it was suggested that the concerns with respect to any technical difficulties faced by the Pensioners may be looked into.

(Action: Department of Posts/Department of Telecom)

6. The meeting ended with a vote of thanks to the Chair and all the participants.
