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Govt. of India
Ministry of Personnel, P.G. & Pensions
Department of Pension & Pensioners' Welfare

Lok Nayak Bhawan,
Khan Market, New Delhi
Dated: 25.03.2011

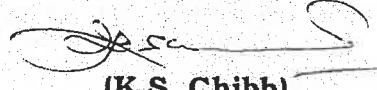
OFFICE MEMORANDUM

Sub: **Guidelines for holding of Pension Adalats - reg.**

The undersigned is directed to state that the Department of Pension & Pensioners' Welfare, Ministry of Personnel, P.G. & Pensions, is the nodal Department for the formulation of general policy relating to pension and other retirement related benefits of Central Government employees covered under CCS (Pension) Rules, 1972. Besides, it also seeks to promote pensioners welfare and serves as a forum for the redressal of pensioners' grievances.

2. At present, some Ministries/Departments like Defence, Railways and Posts have been conducting Pension Adalats from time to time wherein on-the-spot decisions are taken for a prompt resolution of pensioners' grievances. However, keeping in view the rising spate of pensioners' grievances, the cooperation and involvement of all Ministries/Departments in redressing these grievances through various fora (i.e. Pension Adalats, etc.) is considered necessary.

3. The Department of Pension & Pensioners' Welfare has been considering for sometime framing of some sort of guidelines/framework for holding of Pension Adalats. Based on the interaction with Ministries/Departments of Defence, Railways and Posts and the feedback received from Banks with regard to holding of Pension Adalats, this Department has formulated guidelines for holding of Pension Adalats by various Ministries/Departments/ Organisations, including the Pension disbursing Banks. A copy of these guidelines is enclosed herewith for perusal. The Ministries/Departments/ Organisations may like to organise Pension Adalats for pensioners as considered appropriate by them. These guidelines are not mandatory in nature and suitable changes could be effected, wherever required, keeping in view the overall objective of prompt and quick redressal of pensioners' grievances.


(K.S. Chibb)
Director (P)

To,

All Ministries/Departments/Banks

Guidelines for conducting Pension Adalats

1. Objective

The intention of conducting Pension Adalats is to look into the grievances of Pensioners so as to redress the same by taking on-the-spot decisions thereby reducing the delays, if any, in the settlement of their legitimate dues. This kind of interaction with the Pensioners would instill in them a sense of being cared for and attended to, thus, dispelling their feelings of isolation and neglect. It will also give an idea of the kind of problems/difficulties that are being faced by the pensioners and help in identifying the areas of concern in policy that require our urgent attention for amendment, etc.

2. Frequency, Date and Time

2.1 Pensioners' Adalats may be held twice around January and July every year. Venue and date will be fixed by the concerned organization in consultation with the stakeholders and notified through advertisements in leading newspapers/other media. For this purpose, the following time frame may be adopted:

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| (a) | Issue of notice by respective organisations through print and visual media and other means about holding of Pension Adalats indicating date, venue, time of Adalat and the name of Officer to whom the grievances have to be submitted. | At least 4 months in advance of the proposed date of Adalat. |
| (b) | Last date for submission of grievances by Pensioners, which should be indicated in the Notification mentioned above. | Within 90 days from the date of issue of notice |

2.2 About 4 to 6 weeks time is considered adequate to investigate most of the complaints/representations though some cases may take a little longer. However, keeping in view the fact that the aim of the Adalat is to promote credibility and generate confidence amongst the pensioners, the last date for receiving the complaints/representations to be heard in the Adalat may be

suitably fixed and announced at the time of giving the publicity. Only one officer will be nominated to receive the complaints/representations. The officer to whom the complaints/representations should be sent will also be indicated in the advertisement.

3. Publicity for the Adalat

3.1 Wide and adequate publicity through print and visual media and other means like posters at prominent places, may be given in advance to enable the pensioners to send their cases in time for consideration in such Adalats. Doordarshan and A.I.R. can also be requested to telecast/broadcast the same through appropriate programmes. This is considered necessary, as reference to various records is very often essential before a grievance can be considered/redressed.

3.2 The most important aspect of the publicity campaign is to reach out to the individual pensioners. For this purpose a set of hand outs, posters and press releases may be prepared and sent to the following agencies three months in advance.

- Bank branches, Post Offices and Treasury Offices for display at their respective premises.
- Respective organizations at regional level for display at their premises and other crucial points.
- Pensioner's Associations & Leagues of pensioners at the station of the Adalat and its adjoining states for dissemination of information to the pensioners.
- Special efforts for publicity in the interior villages may be made by the respective organizations located at the station of the Adalat, which are also expected to liaise with the local print and electronic media
- For publicity of the Adalat for the information of Pensioners, press releases be issued in various print and electronic media in local/regional languages.
- The above exercise may be repeated through several rounds of press releases to above mentioned agencies.

4. Admissibility of cases in Pension Adalats

4.1 Cases involving purely legal points e.g. succession, etc., cannot be taken up in the Adalat. This aspect need to be adequately publicized.

4.2 Grievances involving policy matters need not be taken up in such Adalats.

4.3 In the cases of grievances not being tenable, the Pensioners may be suitably advised in writing.

4.4 Normally, no case should be held up for the sake of consideration/decision in the Adalat unless the delay is absolutely inescapable.

5. Advance action

5.1 The representations/grievances of Pensioners may be acknowledged indicating the date, venue and time of Pension Adalat.

5.2 The concerned Officers will examine the grievances/representations admitted and submit necessary reports at least two weeks before the Adalat meets, to the members of the Adalat. The grievances/representations may be examined in detail and prompt action to finalize the cases be taken. Wherever necessary, liaison may be done with other concerned agencies for prompt settlements of the grievances. The cases which do not fall within the scope of the Adalat, will be required to be communicated to complainants indicating the result of enquiry/investigation, etc, and the decision taken thereon.

6. Representation in Pension Adalats

6.1 All Officers dealing with pension viz. Senior Officers of Personnel/Administrative Branch and Accounts Department and Managers of the pension-disbursing Banks from Zonal or Divisional Headquarters should be present with all the relevant records so that decisions are not postponed for the sake of referring to the records.

6.2 The Officers present in the Pension Adalats should be able to take decisions on the spot to redress the grievances. In this connection it is pertinent to note that such meetings are not to take up policy matters but they should deal with specific grievances of the individual pensioner, when represented by him personally or by a family member of the Pensioner.

6.3 The authorized representatives of the Standing Committee of Voluntary Agencies (SCOVA) and the recognized Trade Unions/Pensioner Associations may also be invited to attend the Pension Adalats. But they should not be permitted to present the grievances of the Pensioners.

6.4 However, in the case of illiterate Pensioners, widows, minors etc. it may not be possible for them to effectively prepare and present cases before the Adalat. In such cases, if the pensioner/family pensioner seeks the assistance of the representatives of the SCOVA/Pensioners Associations attending the Adalat, the SCOVA/Pensioners Associations representatives may be permitted

to present the grievances of such pensioners/family pensioners. It may so happen that the Office bearers of the SCOVA/Trade Union/Pensioners Associations may not be available when Pension Adalats are held on different dates, at different places. In such cases even the representatives of SCOVA/Trade Unions/Pensioners Association, as authorized by the SCOVA/Trade Unions/Pensioners Associations and whose credentials are sent in advance to the concerned Organization, may be allowed to attend the Pension Adalats and to present the cases, if necessary.

6.5 It needs to be ensured that all the cases which are tenable are settled at the time of Pension Adalat itself. But in cases where it is not possible to settle the same on the spot, it should be settled and finalized within a period of approx. three months from the date of holding the Pension Adalat.

7. Composition and conduct of Pension Adalat

7.1 The Adalat will comprise of concerned stakeholders at the Regional level, which may have minimum five members chaired by the Head of the concerned Organization/Bank. The Head of the Pension Adalat would be assisted by the concerned officer of the Region concerned. The other three members will be one each from the Operational Wing and Finance Wings and the Bank/Post office (pension disbursing authority). It may also have a representative of DoP&PW. However, modification in the composition of the members can be made if the Head of the respective Organization/ Pension Adalat feels so in the circumstances.

7.2 The business of the Adalat is conducted through benches which comprise of experts in pension matters from various authorities. The Pension Adalat would be more beneficial if the representatives of DoP&W and all the concerned stakeholders are included in it.

7.3 The Pension Adalats should be conducted at the level of very senior Officers including Officers of Personnel, Accounts, Finance and other Departments concerned. The representatives of Banks/other Pension Disbursing Authorities should also be co-opted in the Pension Adalats. The officers comprising the Adalat should be those who have been authorized to take decisions on the various aspects of pension.

8. Jurisdiction and Venue

The Adalats are generally held at places where there is large concentration of Pensioners who draw their pensions from Public Sector Banks, Post offices and Treasuries. There will be one Adalat at least at regional level

which will cover a wide range of organizations/stakeholders. The Adalats may be held at the Headquarters Station of the Regional Office of the respective organization.

9. Evaluation & Monitoring

9.1 A Summary of outstanding cases may be compiled at the end of the Adalat and the unsettled cases referred to the concerned agencies for appropriate action in a time bound manner. A periodical review of outstanding cases is conducted and follow up action is taken with the internal and external agencies.

9.2 A review of the performance of the Adalat may be completed within 3 months of the ADALAT DAY. The items for evaluation could be

- (a) Total no. of grievances/cases.
- (b) number of cases decided on-the-spot.
- (b) disposal of cases where decision could not be given on-the-spot and another date has been given.
- (c) Users satisfaction generated through the Adalat.

9.3 An evaluation report after the first Adalat meeting may be prepared by the Head of the Pension Adalat assisted by the concerned officer at regional level clearly indicating further steps, if any, required for improvement, and the same submitted within a month from the date of Adalat to senior officers of the respective organization

9.4 Efforts should always be made to make payment of settlement dues immediately on retirement as per normal practice. No case should be held up for decision in Pension Adalats unless the delay is absolutely inescapable.

9.5 As the conduct of Pension Adalat is being monitored at the highest level of the respective organization including stakeholders, the guidelines should be followed scrupulously to ensure that the grievances of Pensioners/ Family Pensioners are settled promptly without giving any room for complaint whatsoever.
