

Brief report on meeting with Member Staff Railway Board

New Delhi 13.09.2019

Railway Pensioner brothers & Sisters,

I wish to share with you the issues I discussed. Shri Manoj Pandey, Member Staff Rly Board on 13.09.2019. In Fact BPS had requested an appointment with CRB submitting the Agenda followed by a point by point detailed note on 31.7.2019 with copies to MS and DG (Personnel) On 05.09.2019 I received a call from PPS of Shri Manoj Pandey confirming an appointment with him on 13.9.2019 .

M S a perfect gentleman, very cordial & receptive. We were touched when he stood up to receive BPS delegation in his Chamber which included. S C Maheshwari Secy Genl BPS, Sh R S Antrole former Chief Engineer western Railway, R K Nanda, Editor 'Bharat Pensioner' & Shri Rameshwar Kumar Treasurer BPS.

M S gave patient hearing for about 40 minutes during which each of the issue I am now sharing was discussed in detail.

1) Medical facilities to RELHS beneficiaries to be at par with CGHS beneficiaries. : CGHS is the mother of RELHS Scheme as almost every provision in RELHS is based on CGHS e.g.

(i) Contribution to join RELHS in sync with MOHF (Rly Bd No.2017/H/28/1 dated: 23.10.2017. In fact, it is more than CGHS as additional money to the tune of Rs. 30000/ is charged for CTSE Smart card for cashless treatment in emergencies where as in CGHS no extra contribution is charged for the similar PAN India Plastic smart card.

(ii) Private Hospital empanelment as per CGHS rates.

(iii) Ward entitlement corresponding to CGHS.

(iv) Diet Charges corresponding to CGHS etc etc.

But facilities are not at Par with CGHS e.g. following facilities are not available to RELHS beneficiaries:

i. Preferential treatment & personal attention of Doctors to super senior citizens,

ii. For 75yrs and above beneficiaries, facility of specialist consultation and treatment at private empaneled hospital without referral.,

(iii) facility of obtaining online appointment with doctors.

(iv) facility of SMS alerts for online appointment and dispensation of medicines.

(v) Online registration to consult Medical officers at wellness centre to bring down the waiting period.

(vi) Free annual Health Check-up of 75 yrs and above at empaneled Hospitals. This discrimination in healthcare to homogenous group of C G Pensioners is violative of Articles 14 & 21 of the constitution of India.

No doubt Railway has its own Primary, secondary & tertiary system of health care. But for Sr citizens these systems are useful only to those residing within a reasonable distance from these facilities. For those 75yrs plus beneficiaries who are placed miles & miles away Private empaneled hospitals nearer to them are more convenient and within easy reach.

MS reaction was very positive, and we expect some positive result.

2. Glitches & ground level problems related to CTSE Smart card:

i) Additional money to the tune of Rs 30000/ is charged for CTSE Smart card for cashless treatment in emergencies. But at present no empaneled private hospital accepts this card for want of username & password to log in to UTIITSL website/ card reading as per Annexure-1(flow process) to CTSE policy document dated 14.7.2016. The CTSE Card holders thus stand cheated.

ii) Registration is online which is beyond reach of those who are not computer savvy and Divisions are not friendly enough to do it for Pensioners

iii) 14-digit revised PPO is required for registration. Over one lac pensioners are still waiting for their revised PPOS

iv) Difficulty in uploading documents for registration continues.

v) Site is annoyingly slow.

vi) It takes up to 6 months to generate the card.

vii) Following provisions of **RAILWAY BOARD No.2016/H-I/II/69/Hospital recognition of 23.12.2016 have not yet been implemented even after passage of almost 3 yrs which is affecting transparency:**

I) Once a hospital is recognized/empaneled by any unit of Railway it will be empaneled for whole of Indian Railway . Every unit shall be uploading the list of hospitals on the web site maintained by M/S UTIITSL where anybody can pursue it.

II) The referral letters can also be generated by the authorized persons of Railway: Medical department through the website after following the due procedure as per extant rules.

III) The bill processing system has been streamlined by involving M/s UTIITSL as the bill processing agency (BPA) which will develop an online system of clearing the bills. This is affecting transparency.

Similarly, the following provisions of CTSE Policy letter 14.7. 2016 are not implemented:

Para h. page 8. A CTSE beneficiary in an emergency can go to any of the nearby private empaneled hospital (list accessible at the M/S UTIITSL website) Rly health units are still maintaining two separate lists i.e. one for CTSE & one for others. When PAN India common MOU for hospital recognition is in force list of all recognized private hospitals without any exception should be available on CTSE Portal & in all these hospitals CTSE card should be accepted.

Provisions of Rly Board No. 2018/Trans Cell/Health/CGHS dated 26.10.2018 regarding recognition of CGHS empaneled Hospitals & Diagnostic Centres for Railway Medical beneficiaries and Referral & domiciliary care of Railway Medical beneficiaries for Physiotherapy, Occupational Therapy and Speech Therapy too are not being implemented correctly because of subjective & selective approach of the concerned Medical officers.

Problem in scanning/reading biometrics linking Aadhar Card. Common PAN India MOU for recognition of Hospitals by Railway health units provide only reading of finger Biometrics. In case of Sr citizens due to old age finger biometric cannot be read because of obliteration of figure skin. In such cases IRISH scanners are essential as such common PAN India MOU for Hospitals be amended accordingly. CTSE made PAN India vide Board letter No 2019/H/28/CTSE Scheme dated 28.1.2019 but still it is not available in several of 'Y' category cities.

3. Glitches & ground level problems related to UMID Smart card and KAIZALA :

The project UMID launched in April 2019 by CRB for replacement of existing RELHS cards is an online project which is beyond reach of those who are not computer savvy. Divisions are not friendly enough to help pensioners. Even for those who are computer savvy initiation and submission of application and editing it, is tedious and time consuming as website is not user friendly & is annoyingly slow. Uploading of Photos & other documents for wife not possible as links for uploading do not appear. ii) It needs 14-digit PPO for registration which is still not available to over lac of RELHS beneficiaries. iii) Recently another compulsory document i.e. latest Pension slip has been added. Most of the banks are not issuing pension slips instead they send SMS only giving pension details. iv) Here again reading finger Biometrics in case of Sr Citizens will be problem as such provision of IRISH scanner is needed. v) Still there is no provision of Kiosks in hospitals to take out OPD slips using UMID smart card. vi) UMID website fetches pensioners data from ARPAN which is still not up to date with correct & complete data of all the pensioners. vii) Aadhar card is must have item but in North East Lacs of Rly pensioners have not been provided with Aadhar card. viii). Several Divisions are still not UMID enable for registration. ix) After rejection of application there is no provision for resubmission x) 'Kaizala' is of no use unless Doctors are sensitized to join it and to respond to the beneficiaries.

M S assured that he is very much concerned and will do whatever possible for the success and improvement of CTSE & UMID.

4. Online facility for Issuing post retirement passes including online reservation on post retirement passes: BPS represented that:-

i) Septuagenarian and octogenarian Rly pensioners who due to old age vagaries often need a companion (which is a luxury not easily available to them) have to travel to PRC pass issuing authority more than once which is in most of the cases are located at quite a distance from their residence. Applying for pass & getting it through Post is not only time consuming but is riddled with the risk of loss in transit which is not uncommon.

ii) Indian Railway has one of the best digital infrastructures in the country with highly intelligent IT personnel on its command. They can easily without significant financial implication can create a Portal to provide Pan India facility to register, receive online pass application and not only to deliver passes online on the pattern of E tickets but can also provide online reservation facility to the beneficiaries. This way not only the lives of elderly in their last days can be made a little more comfortable but will ensure that there is no misuse. Will save many working minutes of the staff attending to visiting beneficiaries. Thus, it will be financially viable.

MS fully agreed with the views expressed by BPS and informed that he is in discussion with concerned officers at different levels.

5. Difficulties faced by family pensioners other than spouse. BPS has represented that :-

M/O personnel, PG & Pensions -DOP & PW is the nodal ministry for pension matters. It is said that the administrative Ministry of Railways follow in toto the circulars/clarifications/instruction/Notifications issued by DOP & PW. However, inspite of clear circulars on eligibility, documents to be submitted for sanction of family pension. Unmarried/divorced and widowed dependent daughters face undue harassment at divisional level for the sanction of family pension in their favour on their turn. Every division interpret the circulars/instructions as per their own convenience. BPS has received many complains where the applicants in such cases are asked to submit:

- i) Income certificate & family members certificates from Revenue authorities,
- ii) Declaration on indemnity bond of Rs 100/ with sureties of two serving employees with their supervisor signature.
- iii) Some ask for solvency certificate from revenue authority.
- iv) Quite often legal heir certificate from court is asked even after submission of all the relevant documents & proof.
- v) File is returned again & again and every time with a new objection. This way these poor helpless ladies are harassed and exploited.
- vi) They hardly find any rescue in pension Adalats too.

Therefore, urgently, all the instructions/circulars etc need to be streamlined, consolidated and converted into rules with a timeline & provision of penalizing those who violate these rules.

MS listened patiently and took note of it.

6. Revision of Pension of pre- 2016 Rly Running staff Pensioners:

It is over 18 months this simple issue is under examination of Rly Board shuttling the file between DOP&PW, DOE & the Board. Notional pay PC to PC for pensioners is worked out assuming that the person has not retired, as such in their case too basic rule for fixation of pay PC to PC as is done for the Running Staff in service need to be followed as has been done in the case of all others pre 2016 pensioners.

MS had certain misconceptions which were satisfactorily explained. He was requested to get the case decided early.

7. Benefit of Charge allowance in 7th CPC Pension revision:

According to Rly. Board No F(E) III/94/PNI/26dtd 23.06.1995 & PC IV/86/DA/1 dated : 04.03.1996 Charge allowance should be reckoned as Pay for the purpose of pension, gratuity, DA/HR as defined in Rule 1303 (FR 9)(21)(a)(i)R-II(6th edition).

Whereas, according to Rly Bd No PC-VII/2017/I/7/5/8 dated 25.10.2018 admissibility of Charge allowance in **7th CPC pay structure and grant of benefits like DA, HR etc. is under examination of DOPT. We fail to understand/appreciate the need for examination by DOPT when in this regard Board's letter no. PCIV/86/DA/1 dated 4.3.1996-** is very clear and **conclusive**. In the Sixth Pay Commission period, pensioners had the benefit of charge allowance being included in the revision of their pension. This without any specific treatment of Charge Allowance in the Sixth Pay Commission report. When Charge Allowance is part of FR, we fail to see any justification in Rly. Bd. making a reference to DOPT and waiting for its decision. This has resulted in many pensioners, most of whom in their '80s, being deprived of their due.

During discussion MS was informed that the recent orders issued vide RBE No 127/ 2019 dated 08.08.2019 regarding adoption of instructions issued by DOPT relating to restrictions of officiating pay under FR-35(Rule 1329 IREC Vol II) in the context of RS(RP)Rules, 2016 in lieu of charge allowance. Are effective from 01.01.2017 and that it is silent about those retired earlier.

MS took note of it.

8. Pension Adalat: BPS requests that instead of permitting only SCOVA members/ their representatives to attend Pension Adalat. Scope should be widened to permit representatives of all Identified Associations of DOP & PW

MS took note of it.

With regards

S C Maheshwari

Secy. Genl. Bharat Pensioners Samaj