



EMPLOYEES' PROVIDENT FUND OFFICERS' ASSOCIATION
EMPLOYEES' PROVIDENT FUND ORGANISATION

Ministry of Labour and Employment, Government of India
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Dated: 04.12.2015

To

The Hon'ble Minister,
Labour & Employment,
Government of India,
Shram Shakti Bhawan,
New Delhi.

Sub: **Report for Organisational Restructuring in EPFO presented before CBT on 24.11.2015 & being circulated through EPF website – non-inclusion of consensually agreed upon points for posts in the report – request for reconsideration – as last resort EPF Officers shall proceed on **Satyagraha** for justice – reg.**

Sir,

As you are aware there are almost non-existent avenues of cadre progression for EPF Officers. The Officers are forced to stagnate on same post & rank for almost 15-20 years and most officers retire at a very junior administrative level even after putting full years of service in the organisation. The situation has become even more desperate since the 1990s, as now, most of the officers joining the organisation are very young and dynamic, whose dynamism & efficiency is slowly sapped out by the frustration of non-existent career growth.

Accordingly, EPF officers have been pursuing the single goal of cadre restructuring since many years. It is our great fortune that you have recognised our situation and have been trying to ensure that the career progression goals of the officers are finally realised. The Committee on Cadre Restructuring, that you had kindly consented to create, so as to study the current situation and submit a proposal for betterment of the organisation, has finally submitted its report to the CBT during its 209th meeting held on 24.11.2015 and it is in this context that we, the EPF Officers' Association (EPFOA), are forced to write to you and request your kind attention to a great injustice that is being meted out to the EPF officers despite your express desire for our progress.

To better understand the situation, please allow me to give a brief background. It is submitted that the Committee for Cadre Restructuring had invited the EPF Officers' Association for making a presentation before it on 27.10.2015. The CPFC, the Additional Secretary (L&E) & the Director (Social Security) had attended the said meeting as members of the Committee. The EPF Officers' Association presented its proposal for Cadre Restructuring whereby certain posts are proposed to be created & others upgraded, so as to bring the EPF Cadre structure in line with the existing cadre structure in the IRS (Income-Tax) department. Cadre structure in line with that in IRS (Income-Tax) has been requested by the EPF Officers' Association as the same has already been approved for EPF Officers by the Executive Committee (EC), CBT, EPF in its 72nd meeting held on 14.07.2011. Besides, the officers of ESIC, which is a sister organisation of EPFO, have already been provided with similar parity with the IRS (Income-tax) by the Ministry of Labour & Employment.

To continue, after the above presentation, a detailed & interactive discussion was held with the Committee members by the EPF Officers' Association, wherein the Committee members agreed to some of our demands, while deferring / modifying others. **Accordingly, a consensus was reached whereby following cadre structure was agreed upon by all present:**

<i>Sl. No.</i>	<i>Pay Band & Grade pay</i>	<i>Proposed Designation</i>	<i>Field of Selection and Minimum Qualifying Service for promotion</i>
1	PB 3 with GP 5400	Assistant PF Commissioner	50% by selection through UPSC, 50% by promotion
2	PB 3 with GP of 6600 / (Non-Functional)	Deputy PF Commissioner	Officers in GP 5400 who have completed 4 yrs of regular service

3	PB 3 with GP of 7600	Regional PF Commissioner, Gr.-II	Officers who have completed 9 yrs of service in Group-A of EPFO
4	PB 4 with GP 8700 / NFSG	Regional PF Commissioner, Gr.-I	Officers who have entered 14th year of service in Group-A
5	PB 4 with GP 10000 (SAG)	Additional Central PF Commissioner (by merger of existing posts of Addl. CPFC-I and Addl. CPFC-II)	Officers who have completed 21/22 years of service in Group-A
6	Rs 67000-79000 (HAG)	Additional Central PF Commissioner (HQ)	Officers who have completed at least 30 years of service in Group-A

Thus, it was understood by all present in the meeting that the above scheme of things shall be incorporated in the final report by the Committee.

However, it has been noted with deep dismay, that in the report of the Committee which was tabled before the CBT on 24.11.2015 as well as which has also been placed on the official website of EPFO, **all of the above mutually agreed upon points have been omitted**. The current report only talks about fixing some impractical norms and thus creating an insignificant number of posts for officers across all levels. The report has completely ignored all the points that were discussed and agreed upon, and thus, denied any benefits whatsoever to an overwhelming majority of the officers.

Even the basis of the norms that have been fixed in the report has not clarified. Such norms should have been fixed after a scientific study of the detailed functioning of the organisation. **EPFO had hired services of the National Productivity Council (NPC) for precisely this purpose, whose report is still awaited & should have been considered before fixing arbitrary norms**. This report proposes to fix an arbitrary norm of 25 claims to be settled per clerk per day for all offices, when the reality is that currently in none of the EPF offices this many claims are being settled. Furthermore, the number of contributory members in each office has been taken to consider the staff strength requirement for accounts work. It is humbly submitted that the report has completely ignored number of inoperative accounts per office so as to calculate the workload, when the fact is that it is in

settlement of inoperative accounts that a more time & effort consuming process has been prescribed by the EPF rules so as to avoid any fraudulent settlements.

Similarly for compliance related work, the report considers the complying establishments as work load, while completely ignoring the covered but non-complying establishments. Here again, it is humbly submitted that the focus of compliance machinery has to be more on non-complying establishments rather than establishments that are already complying, and hence they should have been added to the total work load to arrive at the correct picture. To put it in perspective, there are 6,13,645 ECR registered establishments in the country (i.e. total EPF Act covered establishments that have registered themselves on the online employer portal for depositing PF dues). But, out of these, only 3,92,848 establishments are complying with the EPF Act, i.e. depositing PF dues. That means for over 2,00,000 lakh establishments (i.e. for about one-third of the *total actual workload*) mandatory inspections must be conducted as per the New Inspection Scheme (through *Shram Suvidha Portal* as notified by the present government), and thereafter inquiries must be conducted to assess the pending PF dues, assessed PF dues must be recovered through recovery action, proceedings must be completed for determining the damages & interest payable for belated deposits and, in some cases, prolonged legal battles must be fought so as to recover the pending dues. All this requires more posts to be created, however, as these non-complying establishments have been completely overlooked by the report, this actual workload may never be satisfactorily tackled by EPFO of the future, thus denying social security benefits to a large section.

Continuing on the same thread, for pension related activities, only the number of pensioners being serviced per office has been considered to arrive at total staff strength required in pension wings, while ignoring the fact that for many offices the issuance of Scheme Certificates, to those who may want pension from other offices, is more relevant for assessing required staff strength than the number of pensioners being serviced.

By delineating above points we wish to draw your kind attention to the fact that even the number of posts proposed to be created at various levels has been arrived by drastically underestimating the future workload of the organisation. If this report is accepted as it is, it shall result in a severe shortfall of officers & staff to man key functions in the future and thus nullify all the great work that this organisation has been performing.

Sir, you may please consider that cadre restructuring in EPFO was initiated by your good-self so as to alleviate the poor situation that the officers face currently. However, if by implementing this report as it is, posts are neither created and nor upgraded, esp. those posts which had even been agreed by the Committee earlier, then there is no reason to continue with this facade. This report is in direct violation of your clear-cut directions where you have expressed that EPF officers must get good promotional avenues and hence immediate cadre restructuring must be conducted.

The Department of Personnel & Training (DoPT), Government of India, on its website provides the guidelines to be followed by Cadre Controlling Authorities while formulating proposals for cadre review of Group-A services. One of these guidelines clearly states that, "The existing level of stagnation vis-à-vis that after the proposed cadre review may be brought out clearly." Here, it may be noted by your good-self that this report has completely ignored these guidelines. Had it included these details, as prescribed by the DoPT, it would have been very clear to all concerned that this organisation restructuring report does not actually benefit the EPF Cadre at all. This type of a situation is extremely harmful for the organisation as a whole. The DoPT has recognised this issue and accordingly stated in the section on "Objectives of a Cadre Review" the following,

...It need not be emphasised that a satisfied work force leads to its enhanced efficiency and sense of belongingness and thereby benefits the organisation immensely....

Sir, you may kindly appreciate that EPF officers have been working very hard to fulfil the dream of the Hon'ble Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi ji & this government for economic development of our nation, and have burnt mid-night oil to make national programmes like UAN, Rs 1000 minimum pension, settlement of inoperative accounts, etc. a grand success. In fact, even the Hon'ble PM mentioned this successful performance of EPFO during the recent Parliamentary debate on the occasion of Constitution Day.

It is humbly submitted that we are not asking for any grand benefits or pay-packages that are absurd, and not practically or legally possible for government to sanction. We have not worked so hard for any national recognition or awards, we have worked simply to provide efficient & honest services to our subscribers and thus deliver upon on the promises made by the government. And now all we are asking is that we be sanctioned that which has already been approved for us by the EC, CBT, i.e. structural parity with the IRS (I-T). Even the Finance Ministry has acknowledged the power of CBT, EPF for restructuring of posts upto the Grade Pay

of Rs 8700 in their latest communication to the Ministry of Labour, as has been further communicated to the CPFC, EPFO by the Ministry on 30.11.2015. Now there is no proper justification for denying our rights to us.

Sir, despite being loyal & hard working employees of the CBT and the government, and despite waiting patiently for many years for our due & just benefits, we are being treated in a very shabby manner. This treatment hurts more so when we read national press reports such as that which appeared in the Economic Times & all prominent dailies recently regarding the proposed CBT meeting on 09.12.2015, viz.*EPFO shall go for restructuring, fill thousands of posts, result in early promotions and enhanced packages for all employees....* (Source: Economic Times, 02.12.2015), when in reality no benefits whatsoever are proposed to be given to the vast majority. This is like a cruel joke is being played on EPF Officers.

Therefore, we are forced to bring to your kind attention that as a last resort, we, the EPF Officers, have collectively & jointly decided to launch a nation-wide Satyagraha movement with effect from 01.01.2016 for insisting on acceptance of our just & genuine demand of cadre restructuring in line with IRS (Income-Tax). Due intimations to this effect have already been given to the Hon'ble Secretary (L&E) on 12.10.2015 & again on 30.11.2015. Now, it is our intent to approach the highest administrative office in the country, i.e. of the Hon'ble Prime Minister, if our humble requests are not met in time and thereafter to proceed for a nation-wide Satyagraha by all EPF officers with effect from 01.01.2016.

We request you once again to kindly acknowledge our genuine grievances & ensure true cadre restructuring in EPFO. We have faith that you shall not let us down.

Thanking you.

Yours faithfully,

A. Swami

(Saurabh Swami)
Secretary General