



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

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Dated : 15.09.2017

To,

Dr. V. P. Joy, IAS
Central Provident Fund Commissioner
Employees Provident Fund Organization
Bhavishya Nidhi Bhawan
Bhikaji Cama Place,
New Delhi

Subject: **Provisioning of adequate infrastructure and devolution of appropriate functions for ensuring smooth functioning, achieving organizational goals and preventing wastage of organizational resources - reg.**

Reference:

- 1. EPFOA's Letter dated 21.03.2017 on the subject**
- 2. Head Office Order dated 22.03.2017 on the subject**

Respected Sir,

Please refer to the subject cited above. The 117 District Offices headed by APFCs as Office in-Charge had been notified vide EPFO Office Order No. HRM-I/D-1(1)2017/CR/49 dated 27.01.2017 as per approved organizational & cadre restructuring in EPFO and thereafter APFCs were posted in most of the District Offices. Posted-

-officers include officers of APFCs of 2012 batch, new batch Direct Recruit, and newly promoted APFCs.

Your kind attention is invited to EPFOA's earlier letter dated 21.03.2017, wherein need and detailed reasoning for appropriate devolution of function and infrastructure to new District Offices were highlighted. It was also brought to your kind attention as how profile of District Offices was thought to be strengthened in various reports relating to Organizational and Cadre restructuring. Three basic pillars - **Convenience to members, Increasing Ease of doing business for employers & establishments and Better hassle free compliance** – were also suggested for consideration of your goodself for operationalization of District Offices.

However, it is painful to inform that all suggestions made in this regard were sidelined and order vide No. HRM-I/D-1(1)2017 /CR dated 22.03.2017 was issued having vague criteria about functions. Further, it was a sheer irony that no benchmark infrastructure norms were laid for achieving even these vague functions delineated through above office order.

Concerns and ground realities relating to devolved functions and infrastructure is being highlighted for better appreciation of chaotic conditions of District offices.

1. Devolution of functions

The severity of the situation can be comprehended with the situation that officer posted in District offices are not even in a position to tell visiting members about their PF balance, status of name correction, DOB correction, and transfer of claim or status in respect of KYC seeding. If District Office Incharge can't update/inform a visiting member about claim status, KYC seeding status or member credential change status, then he is a mere toothless functionary doing more damage to image of organization rather than protecting and serving interest of members and achieving organizational goals. A visiting member would expect from a District Office Incharge to resolve the grievances on the spot, however, seeing the helplessness of District Office, his scepticism about deliverables by EPFO strengthen and trust reposed in EPFO gets a further beating. Currently, Enforcement officers posted in DOs report to concerned Branch officer entrusted for compliance of the district office jurisdiction. And therefore, with negligible support staff, and no functional control over EO, District Office In-charge is, therefore, a toothless functionary at best. With

completion of Enrolment campaign, even task of enrolment mentioned in devolved functions of the said order stand nullified.

2. Provisioning of adequate infrastructure

The task of infrastructure creation for District Offices was left to Zonal Offices and Regional Offices. At a time when Zonal Offices were themselves going into transformative mode due to restructuring of zones, posting of new/additional Zonal ACCs and additional RPFC-1 in Zonal Offices, provisioning of requisite staff, support personnel and infrastructure for District Offices easily slipped through radar in most cases. Lack of infrastructure in any District office should have been an exception; however, we are pained to inform that now pathetic infrastructure is the norm in most of District Offices and adequate infrastructure are exception. In social media, such pathetic pictures of EPFO district offices has been doing the round, making caricature of EPFO as an organization and badly hitting image of the organization. The situation in District Offices has attained to laughable proportions that the District Office In-charge can't buy even a pen as per devolved administrative powers.

It is a sheer irony that at a time when the Head Office is creating Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for claim settlement and laying uniform guidelines for dealing with 7A inquiries, it deem fit to relegate task of shaping of District Offices to Regional Office. The world over, a popular and most tested management tool for increasing efficiency and effectiveness is "**Benchmarking**" which promotes best practices, brings uniformity, and eliminates arbitrariness and errors. Instead, Head Office has preferred the easier option of evading the responsibilities by asking Regional Offices for needful task without even providing a uniform framework.

Sir, I shall take this opportunity to reiterate the principled position of EPFOA right since start which has been conveyed to management either during meetings or through letters. It was principled position of the EPFOA that adequate infrastructure was ***sine qua non*** for placing APFCs in District Offices & therefore request was made to not operationalise APFC headed District Offices without proper infrastructure and till such time APFCs could have started functioning from respective Regional Offices. Prior to posting of APFCs in DOs, it was submitted that some rationale criteria be followed for placing APFCs, giving due consideration to their preferences for posting. Randomised posting of APFCs in DOs brought undesirable aspects together in a bundled offer – **infrastructure barrier, functionality barrier, language barrier and distance barrier**. An officer faces enormous hardship in an office having language barrier. New officers were posted in far off places from their

home, having different local languages with almost non-existent infrastructure, support-staff and almost no function to work. With no exaggeration and with all humility, in the opinion of a rationalist, and from human resource & management perspective, possibly, this was the worst treatment that could have meted to young minds.

Following are the serious repercussions of current prevailing conditions of District Offices:

- New APFCs (Directly Recruited or Promoted) are devoid of learning about system, processes and functions of their own organization and therefore rather than nurturing inquisitive minds, our organization is wasting their talents, creating a sense of frustration and therefore avoidable but unpleasant example is being set.
- Rather than projecting District Offices as Model Service Centres and resolving grievances on the spot, toothless District Offices are bringing disillusionment to employees and employers as their smallest works instead of being completed, are only being couriered to Regional Offices and thus adding another bureaucratic layer.
- As envisaged deliverables are hardly being achieved via District Offices, at least Rs. 60 lakhs/month of organization is being wasted in pecuniary terms in salaries of officers posted as District In-charge
- A situation is created wherein APFCs in Regional Offices are overburdened and APFCs in District Offices are unutilized or at best underutilized and thus ***the waste of plenty is the source of scarcity.***

Sir, in view of above to bring alarming situation under control, the undersigned requests for your urgent intervention and issuing appropriate directions considering suggestions submitted through EPFOA letter dated 21.03.2017 in this respect. Some suggestions are being reiterated for ready reference.

- Uniform infrastructure norms based on binding framework issued from Head Office including but not limited to hygienic office space, drinking water, piped water facility, electricity/generator, sufficient number of computers, printers and scanners based on number of accounts/ establishments, reliable internet connections, etc.

- Sufficient functional devolution – especially Claim Settlement, Grievance Handling, Compliance including 7A hearings, Damages & Recovery, Awareness Generation & Facilitation is carried out.
- Provisioning of adequate requisite staff and support personnel
- Appropriate administrative and financial powers to APFCs In-charge of District Offices for carrying out day to day operations

Sir, it is requested to urgently issue detailed directions to field offices so that a uniform norm and rational approach can be adopted across the various district offices and their utility can be salvaged at least from now on.

Thanking You.

Yours Sincerely,



(Abhaya Nand Tiwari)
Secretary General