



EMPLOYEES' PROVIDENT FUND OFFICERS' ASSOCIATION
EMPLOYEES' PROVIDENT FUND ORGANISATION
MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT, GOVT. OF INDIA
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Deepak Narwal
AssistantPF
Commissioner

July 25th, 2022

To,

**Hon'ble Member,
Central Board of Trustees,
Employees' Provident Fund**

**Subject: Request for kind intervention on urgent issues
affecting all stake-holders of EPFO - Regarding**

Sir,

As CBT-EPF is the governing body of EPFO, we the representative service association of EPFO commissioner-cadre officers request your kind intervention on certain urgent matters that have direct bearing on all stakeholders of EPFO, particularly, the subscribers / members of EPFO-administered schemes.

EPFO APPLICATION SOFTWARE PROBLEMS

2. It is submitted that the software that EPFO offices are using for settlement of members' claims has become archaic and extremely erratic over time. The software speed slows down considerably during working hours which has direct impact on the number of claims that EPFO Staff and Officers process during the day.

The problem is extremely severe in larger offices of EPFO located in metro cities which cater to most of the EPFO members. This regular system slowness increases claim settlement time and this in turn increases members' grievances. Most of large offices are regularly functioning on Saturdays and holidays but are still unable to reduce their claim pendency. For one of world's largest social security organisation, EPFO suffers from a serious lack of IT infrastructure and manpower. We have come to this sorry state of affairs due to continuous indecision over last few years. Although the problem is known to all the same has not been resolved till now. If we do not act soon to address this problem, EPFO will lose all the goodwill and trust that has been earned in recent years. We submit with regret that approvals accorded by CBT for upgradation of software have still not been implemented. This needs to be fast tracked immediately. Further, we request the CBT to allow and direct emergent acquisition of hardware and engagement of necessary technical personnel on contractual basis to handle the situation.

MISUSE OF EPFO RESOURCES FOR PM-SYM SCHEME

3. The Government of India had launched the Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maandhan (PM-SYM) — a pension scheme for unorganised workers in the year 2019. It is a central sector scheme administered by the Ministry of Labour & Employment (MOL&E) and implemented through the Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) and the CSC e-Governance Services India Limited (CSC SPV). A member of the EPF Scheme has been specifically barred from being a member of the PM-SYM, and actually EPFO has no role to play in propagation or implementation of this scheme. Despite this EPFO was roped in during the launch of the scheme. EPF Officers' Association (EPFOA) had raised the issue of misuse of EPFO official machinery and finances for a non-EPF Act scheme at that point of time.

4. However, now EPFO machinery is once again being misused for enrolling members in PM-SYM by tasking many Regional Offices to achieve daily targets of enrolment in PM-SYM. As CBT member, it is requested that following relevant questions may be raised in this issue:-

(a) How can EPFO justify the salary of our officers & staff towards man-hours spent on this non-EPFO scheme? We are not Govt. employees whose salaries are paid by taxes, our salaries are paid for by the contributions collected from employers for providing specific services under the EPF Act.

(b) All expenses of EPFO are met from administration account of EPF Scheme. That money is collected from employers of covered establishments for administering the EPF Scheme 1952, EPS 1995 and EDLI Scheme 1976. Is it not illegal and breach of trust to utilise that money for propagation of a third-party scheme such as PM-SYM?

(c) When most of our field offices are already over-burdened due to shortage of staff and non-responsive application software, and furthermore are working even on holidays and week-ends in an attempt to provide timely service to subscribers, is it not

completely unjustifiable & immoral towards our members/subscribers to divert our precious man-hours from above official duties to enrolment of UW in a LIC Scheme?

NO PROMOTIONS FOR PAST 2 YEARS DESPITE VACANCIES

5. It is submitted that despite the existing clear-cut vacancies in ACC(HQ) and ACC cadre there has been no promotions of eligible officers for the past 2 years. Not only it is demoralising for the EPFO officers but also this has resulted in many important posts being run through additional charge to other officers thus over-burdening them. We are given to understand that the said promotions have been unnecessarily and without any basis in rules put on hold by directing completion of 56J proceedings (premature retirement of officers) as a pre-condition for conducting DPC proceedings. As the CBT-EPF has the powers to appoint officers up to the rank of ACC(HQ), it is sincerely requested to kindly look into this matter.

CONTINUOUS DELAY IN ANNUAL GENERAL TRANSFERS 2022

6. It is submitted that EPFO has framed a new transfer policy for the conduct of annual general transfers of EPFO officers this year. The said policy was approved by the CBT in its 230th meeting held on 11th & 12th March 2022. As per the said policy, a detailed time frame has been specified for the completion of the transfer process. As the policy has been launched this year, it has been stated that the time frame for this year shall be separately notified. Unfortunately, despite repeated letters to EPFO management from EPFOA, no time frame has been notified for this year till now, and no transfers have been conducted even though over 4 months have passed since CBT approval. Due to this ongoing delay, most of the officers who are due for transfers are in a major dilemma over their children's education as schools have opened long time back.

Besides mental anguish, these officers will also suffer financial loss due to double payment of school fee of their children at their present place of posting as well as their future place of posting.

7. It is the sincere request of all EPFO officers to Hon'ble CBT members in the capacity of our employers to ensure that the transfers are effected without further delay. It is also requested that EPFO management be directed to henceforth place before CBT all details of transfers effected as per the approved transfer policy as well as reasons for delay, etc. for the information of CBT-EPF (on similar lines as placed before CBT for appointments, etc.).

REQUEST FOR INVITING EPFOA AS SPECIAL INVITEE AT CBT MEETINGS

8. The CBT, EPF is a tripartite body with representatives from employers, employees and the Govt. The CBT meetings are forums where CBT members are made aware of the happenings in EPFO and make decisions for its effective functioning. It is in all stakeholders' best interests if EPFOA is also heard at these meetings so that the Hon'ble Members are well aware of all aspects of any issue being discussed. The EPFOA with its on-ground experience in running of EPFO would be an invaluable asset if invited to all the CBT meetings as a special invitee. It may kindly be considered as there is precedent that Banks Officers' Association being even part of their Boards.

9. Group A officers in EPFO constitute just about 5% of the total sanctioned staff strength. In most Government organisations and departments including in Ministry of Labour & Employment this ratio is about 15%. There is an urgent need to rectify this anomaly. This would also align the structural ratio in accordance with recommendations of Second Administrative Reforms Commission, Government of India. It is submitted that the EPFOA is the sole representative body of EPFO Commissioner-cadre officers and we have been writing to EPFO management regarding above issues for some time now. It is in our best interest that EPFO scales greater and greater heights in the field of social security. However, despite repeated requests for grant of an appointment so that an agenda-based discussion on these urgent matters may be held, our pleas have fallen on deaf ears. Now, as the final decision-making authority for EPFO, we sincerely request you for your kind intervention in respect of above serious issues.

Thanking you.

Yours sincerely,

A. Swami

**[Saurabh Swami]
Secretary-General**