

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:448
ANSWERED ON:07.07.2004
COMMITTEE ON FACILITIES TO EXTRA DEPARTMENTAL EMPLOYEES
Acharia Shri Basudeb;Karunakaran Shri P.

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

- (a) the total number of employees both regular and extra departmental in the Department of Posts;
- (b) whether the Government had constituted a committee under the Chairmanship of Justice Talwar for looking into the demands of Extra departmental employees of Department of Posts working in the country;
- (c) if so, the recommendations of the Committee in this regard;
- (d) whether recommendations in regard to basic demands of ED employees such as pension, status, promotion, trade union facilities etc. have not been settled so far;
- (e) if so, the reasons therefor; and
- (f) the action taken so far/proposed to be taken to fulfil their demands as recommended by the Committee?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD)

(a) As on 31.3.2003 the total number of regular employees is 2,62,752 and the number of Extra Departmental Agents now called Gramin Dak Sevaks is 3,03,170.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) to (f) In the context of the setting up of the Fifth Central Pay Commission, the Government set up a one man Committee headed by Justice Charanjit Talwar on 31st March, 1995 to examine the system of Extra Departmental Agency, condition of employment, the wage structure etc. Justice Talwar Committee submitted its report to the Government on 30th April 1997. The recommendations made by the Committee in its report can be classified under the following broad categories;

(i) Status and Nomenclature of Extra Departmental Agents

(ii) Financial Benefits:-
Grant of Pay Scales and increments,
Grant of Pension,
Put off duty allowance, and
Retirement benefits, etc.

(iii) Employment conditions:-
Enhancement of educational qualification,
Age of entry into the service
Working hours.
Transfer liability, and
Leave facility, etc.

(iv) Re-organisation:-
No further creation of posts,
No Extra Departmental Sub Post Office/Branch Post Office to be opened for next 10 years,

Total freeze on filling up of vacant posts, and
Abolition of vacant posts.

(v) Public facility:-

Savings Bank withdrawal limit be increased.

The recommendations of Justice Talwar Committee were considered in the Department. The staff unions were also consulted. Thereafter, the recommendations were carefully considered by the Group of Ministers (GOM), and a package of benefits was issued by the Government, in full and final settlement of the recommendations of Justice Talwar Committee, vide orders dated 17.12.98 extending the following benefits to the Gramin Dak Sevaks:

(i) Raising the basic monthly allowance by a factor of 3.25 for the period of 01.01.96 to 28.02.98.

(ii) Thereafter with effect from 01.03.98 placing them in Time Related Continuity Allowance (TRCA).

(iii) Increasing the maximum amount of Ex-gratia Gratuity from Rs. 6000/- to Rs. 18,000/-

(iv) Increasing the office Maintenance Allowance from Rs. 25/- to Rs. 50/- per month.

(v) Paid leave of 10 days for every half-year without provision of carry forward.

(vi) Provision of Severance Amount of Rs. 30,000/- in case of retirement or death, if the period of continuous employment of GDS employee is minimum 20 years and Rs. 20,000/- if a GDS has completed 15-20 years of continuous employment. On absorption to regular departmental post, the Severance Amount of Rs. 20,000/- is payable after 15 years of continuous employment.

The recommendation regarding grant of pension was not accepted. However element of Severance Amount was introduced. Subsequently, the demand for change of nomenclature of Extra Departmental Agents and the proposal for Social Security Scheme in lieu of severance amount was considered by the Group of Ministers (GOM). The demand for change of nomenclature was accepted by designating them as Gramin Dak Sevaks, but no Government-sponsored social security scheme was found feasible.

The recommendation for grant of status as regular govt. employees to the Gramin Dak Sevaks was not accepted even on re-examination of issue by the Government. Provision are already available for 75% recruitment to Group 'D' level posts and 50% of postmen's posts in the department to be made from among the Gramin Dak Sevaks so that they have an opportunity to better their promotional prospects and enter regular government service.

The Justice Talwar Committee had not made any recommendation with regard to provision of trade union facilities to the Extra Departmental Employees Union. However, All India Postal Extra Departmental Employees Union has already been availing a number of trade union facilities like channel of communications, collection of membership subscription, periodic interview with the management etc. As regards the demand for facilities of Foreign Service and Special Casual Leave, these were examined in consultation with the Department of Personnel and Training, and not accepted. Now the said All India Postal Extra Departmental Employees Union has filed an OA in the Hon'ble Central Administrative Tribunal Bangalore Bench for the grant of facility of Foreign Service, one of the trade union facilities, and the case is sub judice.