



ALL INDIA CENTRAL EXCISE INSPECTORS' ASSOCIATION

Mandir Road, Puranhat, PO- Burnpur Dist- Burdwan (West), West Bengal - 713325

(Affiliated to the Confederation of Central Government Employees & Workers)

Recognized by the Ministry of Finance, Govt. of India

[vide F.No.B.12017/01/2017-Ad.IV A dated 25.01.2017]

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F.No. AICEIA/ADMIN/2020-21/ 04

Date:18.05.2020

To

Smt Nirmala Sitharaman
Hon'ble Minister Of Finance
Government Of India
North Block, New Delhi

Respected Madam,

**Subject: Optimum Utilisation of Government Funds in the wake of COVID-19
Pandemic – reg.**

The global pandemic like COVID-19 that has emerged as a major threat to the lives, economies and material progress requires no ordinary and imprudent responses. The lockdown measures have put half of the world population inside their homes. The businesses have shut down and many of our fellow citizens are struggling for meeting their basic physiological needs. In this extraordinary time, the Association believes that the expenses which are not directly or indirectly related to imparting of quality public service may be done away with; in a simple word we cannot afford luxuries and comforts. The Association is sure that your goodself is in resonance with our view and would take all the possible steps to minimize the expenditure of the government without compromising the effectiveness of the department. The resources which are being spent unnecessarily in unproductive purposes may be deployed in the area which can increase the productivity and efficiency of the department.

We know it is as much as an economic disaster as it is a health crisis. The Government, along with the every sector is struggling hard with the paucity of funds. We are aware of a DGHRD(CBIC) letter communicated vide F.No. 8/B/10(1) HRD/EMC/2020 dated 27.04.2020 providing monthly limits for the B.E. 2020-21 and subsequent letters dated 29.04.2020 and 06.05.2020 providing more guidelines on expenditure. Again, we have seen the Government has already denied our additional instalment of DA from 01.01.2020 to 30.06.2021. This decision has come as surprise blow to our members who are fighting the current crisis alongwith the fellow citizens. Our members are generously contributing to PM CARES Fund from the very beginning. At this juncture sudden freezing of DA i.e a considerable amount of salary will jeopardize their daily-need expenses and other financial commitments. For this the family of our deceased and seriously ill employees will be in great trouble. In another aspect, economy can be revived by increasing the disposable income in the hand of the common people. In this regard, we would like to request your goodself to review the matter of freezing DA and to suggest a few more measures which affects our Cadre positively along with an optimum utilization of Government funds.

In continuance of these lines, the Association is highlighting a few areas/expenses which are not productive, not related to public service, stopping the same may actually

benefit the public service, bringing no revenue loss (it might be increased even) and can also improve the working environment of the department. The list, although not exhaustive, is as under:

1. Deferring of Annual General Transfer (AGT) for this year:

Annual general transfer is being done every year in the month of May-June in this department and a huge public money is being spent to give Transfer Allowance to the transferee officers amounting to Rs. 20,000/- to Rs. 1,00,000/- approx. (as per grade of the Govt. servant). By any stretch of imagination, the Association fails to understand the real purpose of AGT every year and how it is necessary for public service. In a rough calculation, an approximate amount of Rs. 25 Crore in a year may be saved, if we do away with AGT every year. The Association is in strong view that the full-fledged AGT is not required at this difficult time of COVID-19 as it requires movement and handing and taking over charges which may place the officers and members of this Association at risk. It is also pertinent to mention here that many department of central as well as states have deferred the AGT this year through their written office orders due to the unimaginable threat of COVID-19, the Association has same expectation from the CBIC and we are sure that you will not put our officers at the risk of getting infected with Corona. However we have the following aim and expectation from AGT, if any:

- (a) Minimum Disturbance and maximum welfare.
- (b) Efforts should be taken to post all the officers at the place of their residence.
- (c) No section/branch transfer to avoid taking over and handing over of the files.
- (d) Transfer request from one city to another city may be considered on the basis of below mentioned parameters only.
- (e) Priority on transfer requests should be given as follows:
 - (i) On willingness basis (Top most priority to save the expenditure of TTA)
 - (ii) Hardship posting and the officers posted outside their city of residence.
 - (iii) Customs lower formations and periodical rotation in sensitive/hardship postings of Customs formations.
 - (iv) On the legal/DoPT grounds such as spouse ground transfer, Physically Handicapped ground transfer and transfer on the ground of special child.
- (f) It is proposed that in case willing officers could not be found for the mutual transfer against the cases mentioned at point (e), the officer who has stayed longest in the station should be sent outside the city.

The above type of minimum transfers for maximum welfare should be done after consultation with our Local Association for the utmost transparency and satisfaction by way of taking one or two members designated by the Association in Policy Committee and AGT Committee.

Moreover, for the sake of the safety of our members and for the larger interest of nation, the Association would like to suggest that the full-fledged AGT should not be done in next 2 years.

2. Uniform Allowance/Dress Allowance:

It is evident that there is no uniform prescribed in the GST Act. Also, there are no Act/rule/guidelines prescribed for wearing of Khaki Uniform to the officers in this department. The khaki uniform similar to police officials is a definite anachronism in this modern era of taxation. The Group-B Officers and Group-A Officers (upto the Rank of Deputy Commissioner) were wearing Khaki Uniform in the erstwhile

Central Excise era of Inspector Raj. The current Govt.'s motto is being trade friendly and uniform for tax officers holds no relevance in an environment where we are expected to facilitate trade.

Further, the uniform in customs should also be restricted to the port/border areas for identification purpose only and the allowances of the uniform should only be given to those officers who are posted in border/port areas; this will surely be a prudent move to restrict the resources only to serve the public in effective way.

At last, the Uniform is a symbol of harassment to the taxpayers thus, it is suggested and requested that uniform/dress allowance may not be given for the sake of public interest. Accordingly, it is roughly estimated that approx. Rs. 60,00,00,00/- (Rs. 60 Crores) per year can be saved.

3. Curtailment of operational vehicles:

Most of the officers in the department have their own vehicle or are using public transport. The operational vehicles are not being used anymore by the field formations for any official work in GST. Most of the work in GST is system related and doesn't require much movement.

The only times the vehicle is required is:

1. Physical verification of the premises of the taxpayer: This task is majorly done by the Inspectors using their own modes of transport.
2. Search operations: These operations are not frequent and don't require more than 2 – 3 vehicles at a time.

In a Commissionerate there are around 10 – 12 vehicles which are mostly used for non-official purposes. Since now the services of OLA, Uber and other taxi services are available round the clock and at a much lower cost than the cost of hiring these vehicles. Thus, having too many vehicles at disposal seems waste of public money.

If vehicles are curtailed to the 50% of the current operational vehicles, the Govt. would end up saving approx. Rs. 50-60 Crores per year as a rough calculation as per vehicle deployment policy in CBIC. It is also requested that instructions should be passed to hire only GPS enabled vehicles and filling of vehicle logbooks should be done by that GPS chart followed by countersign of the officer who undertakes the journey with clear mention of purpose, so that transparency could be maintained in use of operational vehicles.

4. Implementation of E-office in whole the department:

Central Government had already approved and ordered for implementation of E-office for paperless work in the CBIC. Again, the kind of crisis we are facing compels us to think about changing the work culture of the Central Government departments. While work from home has become a reality, the DoPT has also passed instructions recently for moving towards contactless and paperless mode of internal function by adopting E-office in every Central Government department. This would also avoid the threat of COVID-19 by restricting the physical movement of file. Also, it will change the entire functioning of the government department that can match the idea of public service in this modern era. It is not out of place to mention that once this becomes operation, it would also save huge

expenses on stationary items, paper, ink, Xerox, Xerox machine, printer etc. As per a rough calculation, there may be a huge saving of approx. 50 Crores per year to the Govt. exchequer, if we implement the E-office in the all field formations under the CBIC. Moreover, implementation of E-Office is also essential for proper work distribution between the employees, to ensure high transparency in official work, to wipe out corruption from the department and for time bound disposal of work to facilitate the taxpayers.

Therefore, it is suggested and requested that 100% implementation of E-office should be done in all the field formations of CBIC swiftly and urgently.

5. Full curtailment in meeting expenses:

In the present scenario of CORONA pandemic, where there a common citizen of India has no food to eat even one time in a day and all the State Govt. and Central Govt. is taken vast step for arrangement of two times food to poor people and migrants, it is not fit for we people to take Buffet, lunch, Dinner, Cocktail, High Tea and Snacks in our official meetings.

Office Memorandum issued by the Department of Expenditure, Ministry of Finance, Govt. of India issued under F. No. 7(3)/E-Coord/2013, dated. 6th May, 2015, for Economy in expenditure - serving of refreshments during meetings etc., may be suspended for the period of next 2 years to save a huge amount in the Govt. exchequer. Therefore, it is suggested and requested that above said OM may be suspended in CBIC for the sake of national interest.

Also, in present situation official meetings have been converted to digital conferences and there is also no need to have human gathering in open or closed spaces to avoid this epidemic. So, immediate ban on conferences is required for a time being. This will not only save the conference expenditure but also stop movement of officers from one office to other offices.

6. Review and abolish the non functional posts under CBIC:

In the GST Act, 2017, work assignment between the officers of the department is very clear. There is negligible role of some designated posts in revenue collection as well as administration in the department. Thus, these non-functional posts have no functional value and are merely burden on the Govt. exchequer in terms of the expenses in form of Salary, TA, DA, TTA and other many facilities given to them. If these non functional posts abolished, there will be a huge savings to Govt. exchequer, which is to be spent on them. Accordingly, it is suggested and requested that an urgent review of these non functional posts may be done and after the review, these non-functional posts may be abolished for the sake of national interest.

7. Review of rental premises acquired by the department:

In present pandemic situation, it is suggested that this department may also take review action for accommodations having very high rental costs which is situated in high rental commercial places. As in GST era we are not interacting with taxpayers, therefore, a lower rental cost spaces may be acquired. In present pandemic situation, large sitting space are required for following social distancing norms, for which more rental spaces may be required on lower rental. After implementation of GST, some accommodation acquired by the department which could not be manned

because of having lower taxpayer base etc. may also be review for vacation.

Moreover, it can also be noticed that the opportunity cost of above expenses is huge. We estimate an approximate savings in the tune of INR 500 Crore is these measures are implemented. A few amount of the above spending would be enough to create modern IT infrastructure of the department such as laptops and reimbursement of internet facility to change the face of the department and enhance the quality of services to public. The Association is committed towards the betterment of the department and ready to take every legitimate and other challenges that can enhance the quality of public service and efficiency of department.

Thus we will be highly obliged if you would kindly consider the aforementioned suggestions which can surely help in building an Aatm-Nirbhar Bharat.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely,



(ANUBHUTI CHATTERJEE)

Secretary General

All India Central Excise Inspectors' Association

Copy forwarded for information:

1. The Revenue Secretary, Department of Revenue, Government of India North Block, New Delhi.
2. The Secretary, Department of Expenditure, Government of India, North Block, New Delhi.
3. The Chairman, CBIC, North Block, New Delhi.



(ANUBHUTI CHATTERJEE)

Secretary General

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