

Legislative Assembly
National Capital Territory of Delhi

Press Release

Delhi, 06 October, 2015: The independent *Committee of Experts* set up to recommend revision of pay and allowances for Members of Delhi Assembly completed its task and presented a 21 page unanimous report to the Hon'ble Speaker Shri Ram Niwas Goel in his office, today.

Over five lengthy sittings, the Committee went through data of pay and allowances - both of the various State assemblies in the country and also Parliaments in Commonwealth countries as well as the U S Congress.

The Committee was fully conscious of the fact that it has the onerous responsibility of making recommendations that balance the interests of the people consistent with the role and responsibilities of an elected representative both towards the society in general and the constituents in particular. At the same time it is incumbent upon the Committee to recommend an increase in pay and allowances that is adequate so that the elected representatives can be moderately compensated for the work they put in. This is necessary to ensure that the public spirited individuals and professionals are not put to disadvantage for choosing to take up the role of an elected representative.

The guiding principle for the Committee was to take a constructive, logical and scientific path and recommend measures that will help build the ***Office of Legislator***, an institutional concept not approached so far, formally, anywhere in the country.

This key recommendation is central to the theme of pay and allowances. It is a baby step towards making institutional arrangement for efficient working of a modern day elected representative and is in tune with the best international practices.

In making the recommendations, the Committee also suggested introduction of reporting to the Secretariat of Assembly certain components of expenditure with the aim to further the concept of transparency and accountability to the people.

While making recommendations for reasonable hike for MLAs under different heads, the Committee made a clear distinction between the *Salary* and *Allowances*. With the proposed hike in salary, the Committee felt that there is no need for additional provision to meet the expenses incurred by MLAs on account of domestic consumption of power and water. Similarly, the Committee also felt that there is no need to provide MLAs with either rent free official accommodation or house rent allowance, provision of which is a standard practice in every Legislature in the country.

It may please be noted that these recommendations are limited to the proposed revision of pay and allowances for MLAs only and are not, in any manner, related to the benefits that are due to Ministers, Speaker, Deputy Speaker, Chief Whip and Leader of Opposition.

The Committee in its report said *“When we started this exercise, there were three options before us (i) to follow the traditional, conventional path of revision which means a bit of increase in everything, but the total will be kept disappointingly low; (ii) to follow a radical path and suggest something substantial so that the MLAs could breathe easy; or (iii) follow a middle path which means neither the traditional nor the radical, but somewhere in between. We opted for the radical path as we believed that our legislators should be adequately paid in order to be effective.”*

The Committee also observed that *“The governments in India have by and large taken a very conservative approach on it and kept the salary and allowances at an unreasonably low level.”* and went on to add *“We are not suggesting that what we have recommended is the most ideal salary structure. There may be scope for further improvement. But we have tried to address this problem with the seriousness it deserves. Our recommendations take care of hitherto neglected aspects of legislators’ needs.”*

The recommendations are:

1. Salary

At present the MLAs of Delhi are getting a salary of Rs. 12000/-. Keeping in view the cost of living in Delhi and given the fact that there is no provision being made for housing allowance or for reimbursement of bills for amenities such as electricity and water, the Committee recommends that the salary be raised from the present level of Rs. 12000/- p.m. to Rs. 50000/- p.m. Applying the yardstick of reasonableness and adequacy, the Committee feels that at present this amount is reasonably adequate as salary.

2. Allowances:

(i) Constituency Allowance

The Constituency Allowance is meant essentially for meeting a variety of expenses in connection with a legislator’s work in his constituency. The MLAs in Delhi are, at present, getting Rs. 18000/- p.m. as Constituency Allowance which, the Committee feels, is grossly inadequate. The average population in a constituency in Delhi is 2.40 lakhs as per the Census, 2011. Considering the ever increasing cost of various services in Delhi, the Committee feels that a reasonable increase in the Constituency Allowance is necessary. Accordingly the Committee recommends that the Constituency Allowance be raised to Rs. 50000/- p.m.

(ii) Allowance for Secretarial, Research and Office Assistance:

The Committee is convinced of the need for an MLA to have an efficient office for improving the quality of his/her performance and moving towards institutionalizing the office of an elected representatives. This is also a practice which is in vogue in modern democracies around the world. An MLA needs to have a researcher to do research in matters which come up in the Assembly and supply him with necessary

material. Similarly, IT facilities are an essential part of an office set up which requires the help of skilled operators.

Keeping all these in view we recommend a monthly allowances of Rs.70000/- out of which Rs.30000/- may be spent on a computer operator and an office assistant, Rs.30000/- may be spent on a researcher and Rs.10,000/- on an office attendant.

At present an MLA in Delhi is getting reimbursed Rs.30,000/- p.m. for two data entry operators. We want it to be stepped up to Rs.70,000/- as stated above, because for the first time, arrangement for an independent office in each constituency is being made.

To bring in greater accountability the Committee recommends that the amounts recommended above are reimbursable against production of receipts from the staff thus employed. The staff will necessarily have to be paid by cheque or electronic clearance by MLA.

(iii) Allowance for office rental and related utilities:

The Committee recommends payment of up to Rs.25,000/- p.m. to meet the expenses in connection with office rental and utilities. Those who opt for space and essential amenities provided by the public agencies or those who choose to function from their own residences/premises shall not be eligible for this allowance.

(iv) Communication allowance:

It covers telephone, internet, fax etc. The Committee recommends an allowance of Rs.10,000/- per month.

(v) Conveyance allowance:

The Committee recommends a monthly allowance of Rs.30,000/- as conveyance allowance. This figure is arrived by calculating the daily average hire charge of a taxi-cab in Delhi which is around Rs.1000/- for eight hours. On the other hand if the Member buys a car, the fuel cost and the salary of the driver etc. will also almost come to this amount.

(vi) Daily allowance:

This allowance is paid to a Member of the legislature for every sitting of the House or its committees or for attending any other business connected with the House. Different states are paying different rates with some states paying at the rate of Rs.2000/-. The Committee recommends that daily allowance in the Delhi Assembly which is Rs.1000/- be raised to Rs.2000/-. We also recommend that the limit of 40 days be done away with.

3. One time allowances during the tenure of each legislator

(i) Allowance for furnishing the office:

The Committee recommends an onetime allowance of Rs.1,00,000/- for this purpose.

(ii) Allowance for buying office equipment:

The Committee recommends Rs.60000/- for buying all essential office equipment for making the office fully functional.

(iii) Laptop/PC/Tab/Mobile handset etc:

The General Administration Department of the Delhi Government reimburses an amount upto Rs. 1,00,000 (for each tenure) to the MLAs for purchase of computers, laptops or printer. The Committee recommends no increase in this amount. How-

ever this allowance should be made part of the Members Salary and Allowances Act.

4. Loan/Advances:

(i) **Vehicle loan:** The Committee recommends upto Rs.12,00,000/- as vehicle loan.

5. Pension Package:

(i) **Pension:**

At present a pension of Rs. 7,500/-p.m. for the first term of his/her membership and an additional pension of Rs. 1,000/- p.m for every successive year of his/her membership beyond the first term is being paid. The Committee recommend Rs.15,000/- as monthly pension and retention of the provision that Rs.1,000/- be added for every year of subsequent terms.

(ii) **Family Pension**

The Committee recommend a family pension at the rate of 50% of the pension to which the deceased ex-Member/ Member was entitled to.

6. Travel facilities

The practice in all the democratic countries is to allow their legislators to travel out so as to widen their perspective on men and matters and enrich their knowledge. Keeping this practice in view the Committee recommends that a maximum amount of Rs.3,00,000/- per annum be paid to a Member for travel along with dependents by air/road/rail/steamer (reimbursement of actual expenses).

7. Future revision of salary

The Committee feels that the revised salary and allowances should be effective for one term. These will, however, continue till further revision is done. We recommend that the salary be raised by 10% of the basic salary i.e. Rs. 5,000 every 12 months from the date on which the new pay and allowances comes into force. We are making these recommendations to neutralise the impact of inflation.

For full text of the report, please visit: <http://www.delhiassembly.nic.in>