

JOINT COUNCIL OF ACTION OF INCOME TAX ASSOCIATIONS, WEST BENGAL

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Joint Convenors : Sayantan Banerjee, Sumit Kumar Bose & Manmohan Nayak

Date: 14.03.2017.

To
The Principal Chief Commissioner of Income Tax,
West Bengal & Sikkim,
Kolkata.

Sir,

Sub: Unbearable Stresses faced by our members while working – matter regarding

Kindly refer to the above.

Consequent upon the demonetization policy, the Government of India introduced Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana (PMGKY), 2016 on 17.12.2016- which will remain valid till 31.03.2017, providing an opportunity to the persons having undisclosed income in the form of cash or deposits to come clean by paying 49.90% tax and 25% compulsory deposit vis-à-vis 77.25% tax along with penalty and prosecution to be faced otherwise. Post demonetization, the Department received expectedly lakhs of cash deposit information, which needs verification. CBDT has issued various Guidelines, Press Releases, FAQs etc. for the depositors and SOP for the assessing officers for online verification of such deposit information.

The spirit behind the entire verification process, what we got from all such Guidelines, Press Releases, FAQs, SOPs etc., is *zero personal interaction*. Naturally, survey operation has been suggested to be conducted in 'appropriate cases' (may read as *rarest of rare cases*). But in reality, our members have been directed to conduct survey in routine manner, at least one survey per week by every assessing officer. Theoretically, it may not appear to be very strenuous. But reality says something else. Normally, no assessing officer conducts survey with his Inspector alone (even if he is lucky enough to have a full time ITI); it is always a team of assessing officers and ITIs from the Range. As a result, almost all the assessing officers and ITIs posted in the field have to participate in survey during all 5 working days in the week and to compensate that exclusive engagement, they have to attend offices at weekends to complete post survey formalities and other important office works.

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Month of March has always been a very tiresome month for taxmen with so many time barring things to be completed. Instead of helping out our members posted in field, various decisions are being taken to make their life more miserable. Last date of processing of brought forward paper returns has been preponed by 15 crucial days. Assessing officers have started receiving plethora of information relating to STRs, where remedial action is getting time barred by this month end. It appears that our appeal during March, 2016 to the DGIT(Inv.), WB, Sikkim & NER and PDIT(Inv.), WB & Sikkim regarding the habit of forwarding information to the assessing officers at the last moment, hasn't brought in any change. This year too, as we observe, the information is being forwarded at the last moment after sitting over for a considerable period and conducting some superficial enquiries.

The domain of grievances is being enhanced enormously without putting any proper filter. As a result, the assessing officers are getting flooded with anything and everything posted in grievance portals, though he has the opportunity to take corrective actions only in few cases. But to complete the formalities adhering to the timeline eats up a considerable period of his daily work hours. But the most alarming is the way our members are being directed to pressurize the depositors during the surveys to fall in line for PMGKY, a stand completely contrary to widely publicized stand of the Government. As all those directions are coming verbally, for any complain, only our hapless members have to face the consequences.

You will appreciate that this is probably the toughest year in recent past for all the employees of the Department working in the field. During the first quarter, they were busy with interim Action Plan targets. Then came the IDS with its tremendous workload in the second quarter. They had to skip celebration during the festive seasons to complete the time barring assessments in the third quarter. And there is literally no breather in the fourth quarter either due to online verifications, PMGKY surveys or other time barring works. Unfortunately, all sorts of leaves have been cancelled, overlooking several tragic consequences in armed forces and paramilitary forces due to cancellation of leaves. We too are scared to think about what are waiting for us in the shelves considering the unbearable stresses. Last but not the least in this regard, the lesser we talk about the manpower and infrastructure, the better.

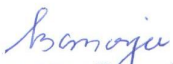
Sir, we strongly believe that it's upto you to nurture, protect and effectively utilize your most precious manpower and you are very much at your job. Still we wish to suggest the following steps to kindly be taken up immediately:


1. To sensitize the supervisory officers below to conduct all the surveys strictly adhering to the guidelines and that only in extremely necessary cases instead of giving weekly quotas to the assessing officers.
2. To take up the issue of PMGKY with the Board proposing its extension, as no justice can be done to so many information within such a short period.
3. To ask the supervisory officers below to desist from calling unnecessary or avoidable reports from the field in short intervals.

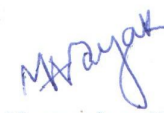
4. To take up the issue of completion of processing of time barring paper returns 15 days earlier with the Board.
5. To take up the issue with investigation wing to ensure that the information to be passed on only after conducting proper enquiry and allowing considerable time to the assessing officers to act.
6. To take up the issue of Grievance portals with the Board proposing to put some appropriate filter so that the field offices get rid of unconnected grievances.
7. To deploy the available manpower such a manner to assist the field offices more effectively and to enhance the infrastructural facilities on all aspects.

Sir, we wish to reiterate our concerns regarding the unbearable stress under which our members are working and request to your goodself to take immediate action before occurring of any serious damage.

Yours faithfully,

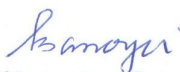

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Copy forwarded for kind information to:

1. All CCsIT under WB & Sikkim region and DGIT (Inv.), WB, Sikkim & NER.
2. All PCsIT under WB & Sikkim region and PDIT (Inv.), WB & Sikkim.


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