

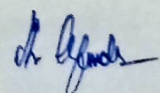
Minutes of the Meeting under the Chairmanship of DC – cum - Pr. Secretary (Finance) with the Senior Accounts Officers (SAOs) and Junior Accounts Officers (JAOs) held on 10-05-2022 at 10 A.M. in the Conference Hall of the Chief Secretariat, Puducherry.

Present: Thiru Prashant Goyal, Dev. Commissioner-cum-Pr. Secy (Fin)
Thiru K. Govindarajan, Under Secretary (Fin)-II
Thiru Arjun Ramakrishnan, Under Secretary (Fin)-I
Tmt. S. Prabavady, DAT
Thiru U. Ilango, Budget Officer
SAOs/DDATs and JAOs of Puducherry, Karaikal, Mahe and Yanam regions

Thiru Arjun Ramakrishnan, Under Secretary (Fin)-I, welcomed the gathering. Before the commencement of the meeting, copies of the recently published book "Compendium of the extant Orders/Circulars/Instructions (as on 25-04-2022) of the Finance Department, Govt. of Puducherry" were distributed to all the SAOs and JAOs.

2. In his address, DC-cum-Pr. Secretary (Fin), while explaining the role of an Accounts Officers (AOs), expressed his concern over the manner in which files are being sent to FD, viz., lack of proper examination of files by the AOs and not ensuring compliance with the rules/norms and orders/instructions of FD. The DC-cum-Pr. Secretary (Fin) emphasized that the AOs should make use of the Compendium, and use it as a reference manual along with GFR and DFPR to ensure financial propriety. The AOs were also instructed to bring the publication of Compendium to the knowledge of their HODs. Further, DC-cum-Pr. Secretary (Fin) pointed out that the files returned by the Finance Department with queries seeking clarification are not being resubmitted for months together, and this needs to be remedied. He further instructed the AOs to avoid sending proposals seeking ex post facto sanctions, as far as possible, and to ensure due care and diligence in finalizing the budget allocation under various Sub-Heads of the Departments in order to avoid seeking modification of funds by the Departments in an arbitrary manner.

3. DC-cum-Pr. Secretary (Fin) assured the Accounts Officers that with the recent changes brought in by the Finance Department relating to the Annual Performance Appraisal Reports (APARs) of the AOs, they can express their honest and forthright views on the files without heed for any undue pressure from the Departments. (Now the Finance Secretary has been designated as the Accepting Authority for the APARs of the AOs).



4. DC-cum-Pr. Secretary (Fin) reminded all the Accounts Officers that they are first and foremost extensions of the Finance Department in the Administrative Departments, and therefore shall function as an Oversight Officer of the Finance Department, rather than become part of the Department concerned.

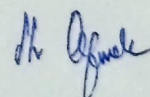
5. In his address, the Under Secretary (Fin)-II, informed the gathering that every Accounts Officer should strictly adhere with the General Financial Rules and the Delegation of Financial Powers, monitoring of OBA pendency and timely reply to Audit paras, since C&AG office has been repeatedly sending letters for settlement of audit paras. He advised the AOs to follow three manuals viz.,

- a) Manual for Procurement of Goods 2017
- b) Manual for Procurement of Consultancy and other Services 2017
- c) Manual for Procurement of Works 2019

6. Under Secretary (Fin)-II further pointed out that due to lack of proper examination of proposals by the Departments, the Finance Department has no option but to return such proposals. This leads to delay and invites unwarranted public criticism of the Finance Department. It is the Accounts Officers, as the arm of the FD in the Department, which must display due accountability in this regard.

7. The Director of Accounts and Treasuries stated that the Directorate tends to receive the pay bills from certain Department beyond the time specified, and this needs to be addressed. The Director further advised all departments to comply with the extant provisions of the delegation of financial powers when submitting contingent bills for settlement to the DAT. With respect to the proposals of counting of 50% service for pensionary benefits, files are being referred to DAT, despite getting DP&AR opinion. As DP&AR is the cadre controlling authority for the MTS cadre, their concurrence is sufficient on such proposals. DC-cum-Pr. Secretary (Fin) requested the Director, DAT, to consolidate the points raised by the Directorate, and issue a circular to all Departments in this regard.

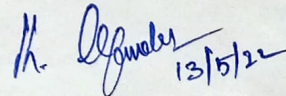
8. Thiru Narayanan, DDAT, stated that many Departments are sending files to the DAT for views and clarification, by totally bypassing the Accounts Officers posted in such Departments. DC-cum-Pr. Secretary (Fin) emphasized that any file submitted in this manner by bypassing the Accounts Officer shall be summarily returned to the Department by Finance/DAT/Budget Sections at their level itself.



9. The Budget Officer requested the AOs to go through the Chapters 2 & 3 of GFR, 2017 and Rule 10 of DFPR, 1978, before sending modification of funds proposal to the Budget Section. Further, he has stated that BEAMS could be opened on 15th of every month for easing the procedure to submit the pay bills in time.

10. In conclusion, a questionnaire was circulated to all the Accounts Officers to be duly filled in and submitted to the Finance Department within the time prescribed. As the questionnaire details the various aspects which Accounts Officers must be mindful of, while discharging their duties, it can also be used as a checklist. DC-cum-Pr. Secretary (Fin) cautioned the Accounts Officers to fill the questionnaire in a forthright manner, lest the files received from the Department give a contrary picture of the manner of functioning of the Accounts Officer concerned.

11. The meeting ended with the Finance Secretary thanking all the participants for their presence.



(K. GOVINDARAJAN)
UNDER SECRETARY (FINANCE-II)