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Request for designating Akashvani & Doordarshan staff as frontline CORONA workers and Ex-gratia payment and Compassionate Appointment for Covid-19 victims in AIR & Doordarshan

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ASSOCIATION OF RADIO AND TELEVISION ENGINEERING EMPLOYEES (ARTEE)

Largest Employees Welfare Association of Electronic Media
Affiliated to Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh
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ARTEE/P/02/2020-21/68

Dated: 05-05-2021

Shri Prakash Javadekar,
Hon'ble Minister of Information and Broadcasting,
5 th Floor, Shastri Bhawan,
New Delhi – 110001

SUB : Request for :

- a) Ex-gratia payment and Compassionate Appointment for Covid-19 victims in AIR & Doordarshan,
- b) Designating Akashvani & Doordarshan staff as frontline corona workers as they are engaged in covering Covid-19 related news and exposing themselves to high infection risks,
- c) COVID Tests for all AIR & Doordarshan Staff, and
- d) Formulating a comprehensive Insurance Scheme for AIR & Doordarshan staff, – reg.

[Ref : Our email letter No. ARTEE/MIB/01/09/2020 dated 24.09.2020 to your kind self on the same subject.]

Honourable sir,

In continuation to our earlier letter referred above, we are distressed to inform your kind self that dozens of Akashvani & Doordarshan staff from all over the country have fallen victims to the dreaded corona virus in the line of duty. In some Kendras the rate of corona infections is so high that it is becoming increasingly difficult to maintain even skeletal staff on duty.

Recently, while covering the various state assembly elections, mass infections have occurred among staff. Some of the affected staff have succumbed to the virus. Staff members who are coming to office against all the odds are apprehensive of their life.

(We are trying to compile data of the deceased staff from all over the country and shall submit to the authorities shortly.)

As submitted earlier, we, the technical staff of AIR and Doordarshan, have unflinchingly responded to government's call for continuous uninterrupted service during the pandemic, unmindful of any personal risk. Employees of AIR and Doordarshan are active in the frontline of India's fight against the Corona Virus outbreak. We are working round the clock disseminating authentic information through several languages so that the efforts of government under our Honourable Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi Ji, reach the entire population. AIR & DD have been very effective in creating awareness of COVID and keeping the morale of the people up during the lockdown.

The nation wants to protect those working to control COVID 19. Under the guidance of Honourable Prime Minister Sri Narendra Modi ji, the Government has already announced a nationwide comprehensive health insurance scheme for the frontline workers of the health services, Aasha workers, etc. This shows that the government is fully aware of the fighting spirit of these workers and the hazards they face. There is an urgent need to bring AIR&DD staff under it's purview.

Here it must be noted that the stations have failed to test employees even where deaths have been reported. Every day new cases are being reported. This is creating panic and unrest among the employees. This may eventually impair our fight against the COVID-19 pandemic as the working of the stations itself is affected.

In response to our earlier representations, Prasar Bharati issued a Letter dated 07 January 2021 asking the Cadre Controlling Authority (DG-AIR & DG-DD) to work out the modalities of paying ex-gratia compensation. Based on this, DG-DD issued a letter dated 26 March 2021 to zonal offices seeking details of those staff who died due to Covid-19 between 25 March 2020 to 30 September 2020.

However, most surprisingly, in a letter dated 28 April 2021, the letter of 26 March 2021 was withdrawn.

This is a negative development. On one hand, the letter of 26 March 2021 covers only the period upto September 2020, whereas the bulk of deaths due to Covid-19 have occurred only recently. Hence, the covered period needs to be extended. On the other hand, that letter itself stands withdrawn now.

Sir, it is to bring your kind attention that many of the deceased staff of AIR & Doordarshan succumbed due to COVID-19 are not covered under Government Pension Scheme also. Such NPS(New Pension Scheme)employees lost their lives due to fatal CoronaVirus at a very young age in the line of the duty and their bereaved families may not get sufficient gratuity or monthly pension as per NPS rulings.

Hence we humbly request to your good self to:

- formulate a comprehensive Life Insurance Scheme for employees of AIR and Doordarshan to cover against loss of life due to any untoward incident, like natural calamities, terrorist strike, border clashes, Covid 19 etc .
- Sanction Rs 1 Crore Ex- gratia to staff deceased due to COVID 19
- Ensure appointment on Compassionate ground to the kin of the such employees and
- instruct all stations to arrange COVID TEST for the employees regularly and to properly disinfect the stations regularly.

We also request you to kindly ensure that our employees are brought under the Health Insurance Scheme devised by the government for the Health workers, considering these employees as the frontline workers in the fight against the COVID 19.

With Highest Regards,

M.P.Chaudhari, President ,ARTEE Mob-09415759575 artepresident2020@gmail.com	Manoj Kumar Gupta, General Secretary, ARTEE Mob: 9868344894
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Copy for Kind information to:

1. Shri Amit Khare ,IAS, Secretary, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, Shastri Bhawan New Delhi-110001
2. Shri Shashi S. Vempati , CEO,PB, Prasar Bharati House New Delhi
3. Shri Rajeev Singh, Member (Finance),PB, Prasar Bharati House New Delhi
4. Shri Mayank Agrawal, Director General,Doordarshan ,Doordarshan Bhawan ,New Delhi
5. Shri. C.B.S. Maurya, Engineer-in-Chief ,Doordarshan, Doordarshan Bhawan ,New Delhi
6. Shri Manish Chugh, ADG(A),PB, Prasar Bharati House New Delhi
7. Ms. Mukta Goel,ADG(HR),PB, Prasar Bharati House New Delhi