

## Govt. may axe 52 of 200 allowances found 'haphazard' by pay panel



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Secret allowance, family planning allowance, desk allowance, cash handling allowance, metropolitan allowance and headquarters allowance are among 52 of the nearly 200 allowances which the government could scrap soon.

The Seventh Pay Commission found inadequate the justifications offered by the Ministries for these allowances. The government was asked to suggest rationalisation of a variety of allowances. A committee is examining the Commission's recommendations.

The Commission found the entire system of nearly 200 allowances "haphazard". There are 13 for travel, 14 for additional duty, 51 for risk and hardship, nine for uniform, 4 for good services, 5 sumptuary allowances, 2 for training and 3 for knowledge update. Many were meagre cash payments and lost significance, it concluded.

Rejecting the demand for doubling the family planning allowance — ranging from Rs. 210 to Rs.1,000 a month depending on grade pay — for those who adopt family planning norms after one child, the Commission recommended that it be abolished as a separate allowance was no longer needed.

Also to be abolished is the "meagre and outdated" Rs. 90 a month cycle allowance to postal officials.

The briefcase allowance, paid once in three years and covering expenditure of up to Rs.10,000 on handbags, could be enhanced.

Allowances are paid to employees — both in civil and defence jobs — over and above the basic pay, either as a percentage of it, or as a specified amount, which usually varies with employees' "level or status."

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