**Diary No.** DNO/26/CCPD/7005 **Dated:** 22/10/2026

**In the matter of**

**Ms. Kusum Lata**
Complainant

**Vs.**

**The Chairman**
**Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority**
Respondent

**1. Background of the Case**

1.1 The Complainant, a person with 50 % hearing impairment, stated that she intended to apply for the post of Officer Grade 'A' (Assistant Manager) in the Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA) under Advertisement No. 03/2026 dated 03.09.2026, for which the upper age limit is reckoned as on 31.07.2026. She submitted that, after the cumulative relaxation for Scheduled Caste and persons with benchmark disability, the upper age limit stands at 45 years, and that she was above this limit on the cut-off date.

1.2 The Complainant further stated that the Central Government advertisements of DRDO (UPSC Advertisement No. 04/2026) and EPFO (Special Advertisement No. 52/2026) for comparable entry-level Group 'A' posts permit higher age limits of 50 and 56 years respectively for similarly placed candidates, and that PFRDA also provides pre-examination training to SC, ST and PwBD candidates. She submitted that strict enforcement of the 45-year limit would defeat the inclusive spirit of the framework and block disabled candidates who enter public service late in life, and that she had also raised the matter through CPGRAMS.

**2. Notice of Admissibility**

2.1 A notice dated 01.10.2026 under Sections 75 and 77 of the RPwD Act, 2016, was issued to the Respondent for a hearing on 09.10.2026 to determine the admissibility of the case and find out if this can be resolved without further quasi-judicial intervention of this Court.

**3. Respondent's Submission**

3.1 The Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA), the Respondent, submitted that it

is a body corporate established under Section 3 of the PFRDA Act, 2013, and that recruitment of officers is governed by the PFRDA (Employees' Service) Regulations, 2015, and the terms of the advertisement. It stated that the advertisement fixes the upper age limit at 30 years as on 31.07.2026, relaxable by 5 years for Scheduled Caste and by 10 years for persons with benchmark disability (15 years for SC/ST persons with benchmark disability), making a cumulative ceiling of 45 years, which is exactly the relaxation prescribed by the Central Government through the DoPT consolidated instructions dated 06.09.2022, and that no further or larger relaxation is authorised under those instructions. It also stated that four Scheduled Caste vacancies and one vacancy for deaf and hard of hearing are reserved, and that SC/ST/PwBD candidates are exempt from the application fee.

3.2 The Respondent submitted that the complaint discloses no deprivation of any right conferred by the RPwD Act, 2016, or non-implementation of any law, and seeks only a concession over and above the policy; that the DRDO and EPFO advertisements carry the same 15-year relaxation, the difference in the final limit arising solely from the different base age limit of 35 years for those posts as against 30 years for PFRDA, and the figure of 56 years in the EPFO advertisement being an overall maximum age limit and not a relaxation; and that pre-examination training does not alter eligibility conditions as to age. It further submitted that relaxation is a matter of Central Government policy applicable uniformly to all establishments, cannot be granted ad hoc to one candidate after the advertisement has been published and the application window closed, and that the Complainant has not been treated less favourably than any other candidate. It also submitted that the interim relief has become infructuous, as the online window closed on 24.09.2026 and the Phase I examination is scheduled for 15.10.2026, and requested an opportunity of being heard before any recommendation is finalised.

**4. Hearing**

4.1 A preliminary hearing was conducted on 09.10.2026. The following parties/representatives were present during the hearing:

| Sl.No. | Name of the parties/Representatives | For Complainant/Respondent | Mode of Attendance |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Ms. Kusum Lata | Complainant | Online |
| 2 | Mr. Naveen Kumar (brother of the Complainant) | On behalf of Complainant | Online |

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| 3 | Shri Vishal Chourasia, DGM and Shri Rajat Goel, Assistant Manager, PFRDA | Respondent | Physically present |
| 4 | Ms. Ruchita Yadav, Assistant Manager, PFRDA | Respondent | Online |

**5. Record of Proceedings**

5.1 The Respondent reiterated that the maximum age limit of 30 years for Officer Grade 'A' is prescribed in its Employees' Service Regulations, 2015, which are its recruitment rules, and that relaxation of 5 years for Scheduled Caste and 10 years for persons with disabilities has been granted, making a cumulative relaxation of 15 years and a maximum age limit of 45 years. The Complainant submitted that she relies on Sections 3, 34 and 75 of the RPwD Act, 2016, including equal opportunity and reasonable accommodation, and on the higher limits in the DRDO and EPFO advertisements, and requested that she at least be allowed to apply through manual registration.

5.2 The Court asked the Complainant to state the specific right, provision, rule or Office Memorandum under which further relaxation is claimed. The Complainant stated that she was not aware of any specific guideline and made a humble request. The Court observed that the Respondent has already extended relaxation of 10 years for persons with disabilities along with 5 years for Scheduled Caste; that nothing had been cited prescribing relaxation up to 50 or 56 years for the Respondent's recruitment; that Section 75 of the RPwD Act, 2016, does not provide for relaxation of age limit; that relaxation cannot be individualized and has to be a common one; and that the Court could not stop the examination without any basis. The Complainant was given an opportunity to submit in writing any rule, Office Memorandum or guideline supporting further relaxation, which the Court would examine.

5.3 By an email dated 12.10.2026, the Complainant submitted DoPT Office Memorandum No. DOPT-1667569393892 dated 06.09.2022 on relaxation of upper age limit for direct recruitment to Central civil services/posts, along with the DRDO and EPFO advertisements. She stated that the Office Memorandum provides cumulative relaxation of 15 years for SC persons with benchmark disability with an upper ceiling of 56 years, and prayed for an ad-interim recommendation to the Respondent to provisionally issue a manual admit card for the Phase I examination on 15.10.2026, subject to the final outcome of the case.

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**6. Observations & Recommendations**

6.1 The Court has examined the material on record. The Office Memorandum dated 06.09.2022 provides age relaxation of 10 years (15 years for SC/ST) to persons with specified disabilities, including speech and hearing impairment, in direct recruitment to Central Government civil posts identified suitable for them, subject to the maximum age of 56 years on the crucial date. The Respondent has applied the same relaxation, resulting in a limit of 45 years against a base age limit of 30 years. Para 1 of the said Office Memorandum states that its instructions apply to Central Government civilian employees holding civil posts and do not suo-motu apply to employees of autonomous/statutory bodies, among others, and the Respondent is a statutory body whose recruitment is governed by its own Employees' Service Regulations. The ceiling of 56 years in the Office Memorandum is an overall maximum and not a relaxation over and above the 15 years already extended. The DRDO and EPFO advertisements, having a different base age limit, do not by themselves entitle the Complainant to a higher limit in the Respondent's recruitment, and no rule, instruction or guideline has been brought on record permitting individual relaxation beyond the prescribed limit.

6.2 In view of the above, this Court finds no avenue to recommend further relaxation of the upper age limit, or provisional acceptance of the application of the Complainant through manual registration or otherwise, as sought in the complaint. The Complainant has sought age relaxation up to 48 or 50 years and an urgent ad-interim recommendation for provisional acceptance of her application; as the Respondent has granted the maximum relaxation admissible under the prescribed instructions, the relief sought cannot be recommended. The case is accordingly closed.

**Yours faithfully,**

**(S. Govindaraj)**
**Commissioner**