



**RAJEEV CHANDRASEKHAR**  
**MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT**  
**RAJYA SABHA**

Member of Standing Committee on Defence  
Member of Consultative Committee on Defence  
Member of Central Advisory Committee for the National Cadet Corps  
Co-Chairman, Vigilance & Monitoring Committee, Bangalore Urban District

04 November 2016

**Open letter to Rahul Gandhi about the four decade-long struggle for One Rank, One Pension of our Veterans**

Dear Rahul,

Most Indians are anguished about the sad and tragic suicide of Veteran Subedar Ram Kishan Grewal of 105 Inf. Btn TA and DSC. I suspect you were trying to convey your deep feeling and concern by visiting the family of the Veteran at Ram Manohar Lohia hospital along with an entourage shouting "*Rahul Gandhi ki Jai*".

However, may I respectfully suggest that going with an entourage shouting "*Rahul Gandhi ki Jai*" to a hospital full of patients and worrying relatives may not be the best way to show your recently discovered concern for Veterans.

I say recently discovered because you and your successive UPA Government's actions and conduct on One Rank, One Pension (OROP) are there in the public domain and worth reiterating.



Let me jog your memory, while I have raised the demand for OROP since I stepped into Parliament in 2006, it was during the terms of Congress led UPA-1 and UPA -2 that I wrote several letters to and had several meetings on the matter with the then Prime Minister, Defence Minister, Chairperson UPA and also to you urging for implementation of the long pending OROP. All of them were met with either a "can't do it" or a stony silence. There was even a Parliamentary committee of Petitions under Shri Koshiyari that studied a petition that I was instrumental in submitting and even its report submitted in 2011 was ignored by the UPA government.

I had first written to you on OROP and other Armed Forces related issues way back in 2011, but you neither replied to it nor took any action. (Letter enclosed) It probably wasn't politically 'interesting' enough for you then. It took you years to even mention and get to that issue – and even then it was only before Elections 2014 as a pre-poll election stunt.

It was then I wrote to you in February 2014 where I lauded your belated interest, reminding you of how belated it was with a list of all my letters written to then Prime Minister, Defence Minister, Congress Chairperson and yourself requesting you to address the serious issue and prevent further alienation and disenchantment in the Veteran community. (Letter enclosed). Even when the OROP was hurriedly announced by your Government prior to Elections, adding insult to injury was your Finance Minister allocating a mere Rs 500 crore – a cruel joke which would not have been enough for enhanced pensions for even 10% of the Veterans.

It took the current Government, despite serious objections from the Finance Ministry about the fiscal implications, to announce and implement OROP - costing almost Rs 8300 crore per annum and a onetime cost of more than Rs 20,000 crore – correcting a four-decade old injustice perpetrated on our Veterans. Because, as its worth reminding you, in 1972-73 it was Smt. Indira Gandhi, then Prime Minister who in one stroke terminated OROP after the 1971 Indo Pak War. In 2002, Congress President Sonia Gandhi spoke and advocated



for OROP at a political rally, but then followed it up with being in power until 2014 and not having it implemented. The Congress in 2004 even included the OROP in its manifesto promising a solution, but spent the entire term and then the next denying the same to the Veterans.

Perhaps you also need to be reminded that in 2008 the then Defence Minister Shri A K Antony stated that the UPA Government had not found the OROP demand acceptable! The UPA Government, had rejected the OROP demand, holding that it would be a huge financial cost of over Rs 3,500 crore then.

When I joined the Veterans in their protest in December 2008 as they sat for a relay fast at Jantar Mantar or when the Veterans marched to Rashtrapati Bhawan in 2009 surrendering their medals to the President for non-implementation of OROP, I do not recall you or anyone in your party saying a word in support or doing anything about it.

You may want to be reminded that it was this refusal to implement OROP by the Congress led UPA Government that led me to facilitate a petition by citizens and Veterans to the Committee of Petitions, Rajya Sabha that resulted in the Koshiyari Committee report of 2011, tabled in Parliament only to have your UPA Government respond thus – “Not possible because administrative, financial and legal complications in implementation of the OROP scheme.”

My repeated letters and interventions in Parliament continued through the regime of Congress led UPA -1 and UPA -2 and never once do I recall you showing solidarity with the struggle of the Veterans. In August 2010 I declined to accept the salary hike given to MP's until the OROP issue was settled completely.

There's much to be reminded of on the larger aspect of welfare of Armed Forces and Veterans – like the UPA Government's track record on welfare and key issues like - lack of Voting rights for Armed Forces, lack of adequate housing for serving forces and families etc. or maybe these are issues that are not currently politically interesting enough.





Rahul – I accept the premise that yours may be a case of belated wisdom and compassion dawning. That is a good thing. But it's a bit trite to assume that past records of political parties will be forgotten and that the country doesn't realise how far we have come in the cause of serving and repaying our Veterans in the past two years compared to the past four decades.

Yes, there are some pending complex issues in OROP including some fundamental issues to ensure consistency with the definition of One Rank, One Pension. These were referred to the One Man Judicial Committee set up to look after these anomalies. This committee has only recently submitted its report and we should look to them.

The death of Subedar Grewal is a terrible blot on a Nation that takes pride in its Armed Forces and the tradition of service and sacrifice they represent. It is indisputable that over the past several decades, the Defence Ministry and bureaucracy has become apathetic and uncaring to the plight of our Veterans, widows and serving forces and their families. There is no doubt that this needs changing and transforming and that must be where the genuine political anger if any must be focussed. Grandstanding and political opportunism tends to stale rapidly and hypocrisy even faster.

Sincerely,

RAJEEV CHANDRASEKHAR

Encl:

- 1: Letter to Rahul Gandhi dated 15 September 2011
- 2: Letter to Rahul Gandhi dated 14 February 2014



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RAJEEV CHANDRASEKHAR  
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT  
RAJYA SABHA

Member of Standing Committee on Finance  
Member of Consultative Committee on Finance  
Member of Parliamentary Forum on Youth  
Co-Chairman, Vigilance & Monitoring Committee, Bangalore Urban District  
Vice Chairman, National Military Memorial Management Trust, Bangalore

14 February, 2014

Dear Rahul,

This has reference to media reports dated February 14, 2014 that you are examining the issue of One Rank, One Pension (OROP) for retired armed forces personnel. Thank you for examining the issue, albeit belatedly.

I have been pursuing and fighting for OROP ever since I entered Parliament in 2006, raising the issue in Parliament and outside on several occasions, including through several letters to the Hon'ble Prime Minister, UPA Chairperson, the Hon'ble Defence Minister, and you. I am enclosing herewith a list of letters that I have sent on this issue as **Annexure I**, along with a copy of all my letters.

On 25 August 2010, I declined and continued to refuse to accept the salary hike given to MPs till the government reexamines the case of One Rank, One Pension. I also facilitated the submission by citizens and veterans, of a petition to the Committee on Petitions, Rajya Sabha, in October 2010 (copies also enclosed). The committee submitted its report December 2011 and unanimously recommended OROP to the Government. However, the government has taken no action on this for the past several years.



I urge you to follow these unanimous recommendations made in December 2011 by the Committee on Petitions, Rajya Sabha, asking the government to implement the long-pending demand of OROP by the retired armed forces personnel, implement OROP in defence forces, and constitute a separate commission to determine the pay, allowance and pension of the defence personnel.

Your interest on this issue, even at this stage, is welcome. I look forward to your action in this matter and I hope you will be able to address this serious issue and prevent further alienation and disenchantment amongst the 25 lakh veteran men and women of the armed forces and their families who have served the nation selflessly and with distinction in the most trying times in the history of our democracy.

Yours Sincerely,

RAJEEV CHANDRASEKHAR

**Shri Rahul Gandhi**  
Hon'ble Member of Parliament  
12, Tughlak Lane  
New Delhi

**Encl:**

1. Annexure I listing out details of my letters on the issue of OROP
2. Copies of my letters and other relevant interventions on the issue of OROP



Annexure I

Details of my Letters on the Issue of OROP

S. No.	Letter addressed to	Date
1	Hon'ble Prime Minister	08 <sup>th</sup> October, 2012
2	Hon'ble Prime Minister	15 <sup>th</sup> September 2011
3	Hon'ble Prime Minister	06 <sup>th</sup> June, 2011
4	Hon'ble Prime Minister	25 <sup>th</sup> August 2010
5	Hon'ble Prime Minister	09 <sup>th</sup> March 2010
6	Hon'ble UPA Chairperson	15 <sup>th</sup> September, 2011
7	Hon'ble UPA Chairperson	11 April, 2011
8	Hon'ble Minister of Defence	08 <sup>th</sup> October, 2012
9	Hon'ble Minister of Defence	15 <sup>th</sup> September, 2011
10	Hon'ble Minister of Defence	06 <sup>th</sup> June, 2011
11	Hon'ble Minister of Defence	09 <sup>th</sup> March, 2010
12	Shri Rahul Gandhi	15 <sup>th</sup> September, 2011





RAJEEV CHANDRASEKHAR  
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT  
RAJYA SABHA

Member of Standing Committee on Information Technology  
Member of Consultative Committee on Finance  
Member of Parliamentary Forum on Youth  
Co-Chairman, Vigilance & Monitoring Committee, Bangalore Urban District

15<sup>th</sup> September, 2011

Dear

Rahul

You are aware of the service and sacrifices made by the Armed forces personnel. However, many of the demands of the Armed Forces Veterans, including better medical assistance, One Rank, One Pension etc. continue to remain unresolved. While the Armed Forces Personnel selflessly guard the nation and protect the country against enemies, there is a feeling that the country does not understand their concerns and that they do not have a forceful platform to voice their demands. The time has come for the nation to address this concern.

To facilitate this, the Government should consider giving an independent, non-political voice to the Armed Forces veterans by reserving one Parliament Seat – anywhere in India - for a representative of the Armed Forces veterans. Alternatively, the Government must nominate one representative from the veterans to the Lok Sabha or Rajya Sabha who can be the voice of the over 26 lakh ex-servicemen and their families.

Our founding fathers have recognized the need for giving representation to distinguished citizens such as artists, poets etc. in Parliament and a nomination of one distinguished Armed Forces veteran will be perfectly consistent with this tradition.

I urge you to support the idea of giving representation to the veterans in Parliament. This will send a message to the armed forces personnel and their families that the nation understands and accords the highest priority to their welfare.

Yours Sincerely,

RAJEEV CHANDRASEKHAR

Shri Rahul Gandhi  
Hon'ble Member of Parliament  
12, Tughlak Lane  
New Delhi