

MAJOR SOFTWARE UPDATES FOR THE YEAR 2018-2019

SPARK team is involved in continuous research to identify the minutest of the shot falls in the system and to make the system a perfect one. For this, SPARK PMU has conscripted a group of trained employees to study the current trends in technology and analyze how these methodologies can apply in our system to fine tune each and every module so as to ensure the smooth processing of the HR and pay roll management procedures through SPARK system, working in the below described areas to implement / improve those modules for the smooth functioning of the state's financial disbursement system. As part of our regular efforts to make the system more user-friendly and error free, this year also SPARK PMU has done some software updates on the system. The below mentioned changes have been made in SPARK during the year 2018 – 2019.

ONLINE TRANSFER MODULE

In accordance with the orders issued vide G.O. (P)No.3/2017/P&AR Dated 25/02/2017, G.O.(MS)No.18/2017/ 2017/P&ARD dated 29/08/2017 and G.O (MS) No.10/2018/P&ARD dated 05/04/2018, SPARK PMU, incorporated online general transfer processing modules in SPARK, for confining all the transfer processing through the system. After initializing the start date and end date for submitting applications by SPARK PMU, the employees in the respective department can submit online applications for general transfer through this online transfer module. Applicant can view the status of submitted application through this option, and can able to check whether it is being processed under District Level officer (DLO) or State Level Officer (SLO), accepted or rejected by the approving authority.

Online transfer DLO/SLO details updating option

State/District Level Offices option enabled in 'Online general transfer processing' module to update state level and district level offices in-charge of approving/processing online transfer requests. The option is activated only for 'C' access user (Controller of SPARK). For setting the SLO/DLO details in SPARK, the authorized official has to forward a formal request, mentioning the cadre details to SPARK PMU office.

Online transfer front end application

A front-end has been developed for the online general transfer module. Agriculture, Medical Education, Health and Homeopathy departments used the general transfer processing module in SPARK

ONLINE LEAVE MANAGEMENT MODULE

SPARK has enabled leave management module for managing the leave details of state government employees enrolled in SPARK system. Employees can apply any type of leave through this on-line Leave Management Module. Options for accessing leave management module is facilitated to users based on the SPARK user privileges assigned to them. Any employee who has been enrolled in SPARK system (having PEN) can apply leave online through the Leave management module proffered at the SPARK login page. Here login to the system using user name and password is not required. Instead, mobile authentication is used using one time password (OTP). Employees having SPARK user privileges can apply leave.

Leave management & Attendance management

Software update done on Leave management module in order to fine tune the options and improvise the services through this option.

- **Punching status seen in individual's page:** Earlier the attendance status was displayed as 'Present' in individual page, for single punch recorded in punching system, now software update given for correcting the status in individual's page as 'Absent' for single punch recorded in the system.
- **Auto SMS will be sent to employees who have not punched:** Software modification done to send SMS alert messages to employees who have not punched on that day.

Online Outstation duty intimation

Employees on authorized outstation duty can intimate outstation duty details to their Reporting Officers through the option 'Outside intimation'. Any state government employee who has been enrolled in SPARK system (having PEN) can use this option. Similarly higher officials can approve the outstation duty requirements in advance using this module. Currently it is being piloted in Government Secretariat.

Punching data

SPARK in association with KELTRON, tracks punching data of employees. Facilities have been activated in SPARK system to record the punching details. Also each employee's daily punching details will be sent to them as SMS, the SMS messages will be passed to employee's contact number that has been updated in SPARK Data Base.

Punching data monitoring facility for Nodal officers

Nodal officers have been provided with an additional option for checking the punching data of employees coming under their purview. Two options enabled under this punching data monitoring facility, that is Attendance Details of Department & Attendance Details of Individual. Through the 'Attendance Details of Department' option, the Nodal officers can take department wise punching details data and the latter option is meant for viewing employee wise punching details from Nodal officer login. Nodal officers have been given only viewing facility, data editing is not allowed through Nodal Officers login.

ADMINISTRATION MODULE

Locked/Unlocked Details

A new option has included in SPARK for generating the locked and unlocked status report of employees in the office, the locked/unlocked employee status report can be generated in PDF format. The option is available under *Administration* → '*Locked/unlocked Details*' option. This option can be used to monitor the employee data verification and locking status for various purposes including online general transfer application processing.

DSC registration/renewal form

DSC registration/renewal facility is activated in SPARK, under the menu Administration → DSC registration /Renewal form. Prerequisite for registering DSC is the installation of DSC signer tool and provision for downloading DSC signer tool for Windows, Ubuntu and MacOS separately is also made available in this option. After the installation of DSC signer tool, the users can register their DSC in SPARK on clicking 'New DSC Registration/Renewal' button.

SERVICE MATTERS

LEAVE OPTION

Previously DDOs had the privilege to edit/ delete the leave details of the employee if salary not processed based on that entry.

Leave editing/Deleting option activated for DDO's

When the new Leave module implemented, SPARK PMU has suspended this leave editing/ deleting privileges for a while. As per the demand of SPARK users, PMU has reinstated this facility for DDO's, now DDO's can edit / enter the leave details, if salary for the employee not worked out based on this leave entry.

Option for changing Approving authority for pending requests of Leave/OD/COff: ‘

Change Reporting Officer/Approving authority’ option facilitated in individual login for pending requests of Leave/OD/COff.

Change Approving authority provision given for Reporting officer.

OD cancellation/C. Off cancellation

Recently SPARK has enabled an option in user’s login to cancel the Outside duty/Compensatory Off request. Previously once the OD and C.Off application have been sent to their higher authorities, there was no option to cancel the forwarded application from the users end. Now through this newly activated facility, the user can cancel the application before it got approved by their competent authorities. It will be useful for departments that enabled attendance management through SPARK.

Module for C.Off enabled for gazetted officers

Module for gazetted officers C.Off processing option enabled in Secretariat Departments like GAD, Finance, Law, Information and Public relation. Through this option gazetted employees can do online submission of their compensatory off to their higher authority, Also they can view the status of submitted application through their login, the submitted C.Off application will be available in higher authority’s login for approval.

PF number with special character '&'

Previously SPARK cannot handle the cases of PF number including Special character ‘&’, Recently our software team has modified the program and equipped the system to accept the Special character ‘&’ included in PF number details.

INCREMENT OPTION

At present, SPARK does not provide facility to users for cancelling the mistakenly sanctioned increment. Once increment sanctioned for an employee, it cannot be reverted by the users and they have to send requests to SPARK PMU to correct the Basic pay and last pay change date. To avoid such difficulties, SPARK PMU has been working on the Increment module to include a new option to cancel the wrongly sanctioned increment. This will work only if salary not processed/encashed with wrongly sanctioned increment.

Cancel increment option

Increment cancellation option included in Increment module (Service Matters→ Increment Sanction→Cancel Increment) for cancelling the sanctioned increment, but this option will work only if salary not processed/ encashed with erroneously sanctioned increment.

PROMOTION OPTION

Government employees Promotion/Grade/Reversion procedures and promotion transfer are processed in SPARK through the 'Promotion/Grade/Reversion' option available under 'Service Matters' menu and in the case of Aided school employees the Service matters → Promotion option can be used.

Promotion of gazetted employees

Facility has been enabled in SPARK promotion module for processing gazetted employees' promotion through SPARK. The designation will automatically change on updating the promotion order.

Generation of promotion order with same 'From' and 'To' department and office and to same designation has been restricted

As part of fine tuning the system SPARK PMU is in the process of correcting the minutest of system level issues, and it has been noted that SPARK PMU has been receiving so many request on part correction. One of the major part salary correction needed case is employee joining to new office and then new user mistakenly generates promotion order with same 'From' and 'To' department and office and to same from and to designation and now SPARK software has made updation on this option to restrict the generation of promotion in the above said manner

DEPUTATION OPTION

Deputation is appointment given to a person to act on behalf of another for a stipulated time. To depute is to transfer an employee to a new department or new position for a temporary period with lien in the parent department. After the period of deputation, the employees return to their parent department and continue to hold the same position as held before. In SPARK there are options to update the deputation details and to relieve and join the employees on deputation

Return from Deputation

SPARK has modified the 'Return from Deputation' option under Deputation module, so as to handle the cases of employees relieved from parent office through deputation and part salary processed from parent office, earlier system was inept in processing the re-joining procedures from parent office, Now this has been corrected and parent office can re-join the employees relieved through deputation option through 'Return from Deputation' option.

ANNUAL PROPERTY RETURNS FILING OPTION

The annual property returns filing module in SPARK is complete and is used by many departments. From, the next year onwards, employees of all departments have to be brought under the system

Annual property Returns filing

Annual Property returns filing facility opened for General Administration SS & SC, Finance SS department, Motor Vehicles Department, Directorate of Health Services, Transport Commissioner, Thiruvananthapuram, Law Administrative Department, and Legislature Secretariat. Filing period may be confirmed from the concerned department's filing authority.

SALARY MATTERS

MANUAL BILL PREPARATION (PRE 2/2011) MODULE [Employees Having PEN]

SPARK enabled Manual Bill Preparation Module for generating SPARK bills for the period prior to 02/2011. Through this module, DDO can insert the eligible amount by selecting employee details and e-submit the bills to treasury based on the proceedings or order from a competent authority.

Manual Bill Pre 2/2011 Retired employee Processing

Retired employees' Manual Bill Pre 2/2011 processing option has enabled in SPARK to process the manual bills prior to 2/2011 of retired employees having PEN, this option can be accessed from DDO's login through

Salary Matters → Manual Bill Preparation (Pre 2/2011) → Claim w.r.t employees having PEN (Retired) option

Manual bill preparation (Pre 2/2011) enabled for the bills from the year 1990

SPARK PMU has modified the manual bill preparation (pre 2/2011) option to facilitate the preparation of manual bills starting from the year 1990, with respect to employees having PEN. PF related claims of employees in Panchayat Department, such cases authorization slips are not being updated by AG, user enters sanction order details in claim entry page and inserts the claim. Now user can't insert the sanction order details, the columns for entering PF details seen as inactive.

CMDRF (FLOOD 2018) CONTRIBUTION DETAILS OPTION MODULE

SPARK PMU has updated the CMDRF (Flood 2018) Contribution details option for donating Govt employee's one month's gross salary (amount equivalent to 9/2018 gross salary) to CMDRF fund as per G.O. (P) No.144/2018/Fin dated 11/09/2018. Using this option the concerned DDO/Head of the Department/Establishment user can facilitate employee contribution equivalent to one month gross salary of September 2018 to CMDRF, Payment options facilitated

under “CMDRF (Flood 2018) contribution details” option are as follows; 1. Salary deduction 2. Leave surrender + remaining from Salary 3. PR arrear 4th Instalment + remaining from Salary 4. NRA withdrawal + remaining from Salary’

CMDRF contribution can be updated through;

Salary Matters → CMDRF (Flood 2018) contribution details.

Payment options facilitated under “CMDRF (Flood 2018) contribution details” option are as follows; Salary deduction, 30 days Leave surrender, PR arrear 4th Instalment, NRA withdrawal from PF. DDOs should take utmost care while updating the CMDRF contribution details and preparing the bills and ensure that proper verification is done which include checking of arithmetic accuracy in each bill generated from SPARK as the accuracy of the processed data depends upon the accuracy of data input by processing officials. Data once updated incorrectly and bills get encashed, this cannot be rectified directly through SPARK PMU. You may refer Circular No. 87/2018/Fin dated, 19/09/2018.

Various software issues reported regarding CMDRF contribution options have been corrected through the recent software update given on CMDRF contribution options.

CMDRF willingness can be changed from October 2018’s Salary

SPARK PMU revised 'CMDRF (Flood 2018) Contribution details option as per Circular No 99/2018/Fin dated 31/10/2018. The edit option of willingness to CMDRF deduction is enabled only for employees those who selected the payment option as 'Salary deduction' in CMDRF contribution details. In the case of employees, who have selected other options than Salary deduction, (i.e. NR+ remaining from salary/ PR arrear + remaining from salary/Surrender + remaining from salary), the CMDRF contribution details cannot be edited.

PF NRA withdrawal to CMDRF claim

PR NRA withdrawal to CMDRF claim processing option has activated in SPARK under *Accounts → Claim entry option*. Employees who have opted to contribute their PF NRA withdrawal to CMDRF, such employees GPF authorization details will get updated from Accountant general office and the user can process employees PF NRA withdrawal to CMDRF claim through claim entry page selecting the nature of claim as “PF NRA withdrawal to CMDRF”.

PAY REVISION ARREAR 2014

Employees will be entitled to draw arrears on account of pay revision in four installment, each at 25% of the arrears, in cash on 1/4/2017, 1/10/2017, 1/04/2018 and 01/10/2018 respectively along with the interest on the arrears not drawn as on the above dates at the rate of

interest admissible on their Provident Fund (Rate of interest is calculated based on GO (P) No. 11/2017/FIN dated 30/1/2017)

Pay Revision slip updation option for High court judges

SPARK has activated the 'Update now' button in High Court Judges 'Present Salary Details' page. When AG updates the pay revision related slips of high court judges the 'Update now' button becomes active as in the case of gazetted employees slip updation.

Reprocessing option for second installment of Pay Revision Arrear

For reprocessing the pay revision arrears of excluded employees, who had been excluded through 'Exclude Employee' option due to excess/ short drawal made in the first installment pay revision arrear or by mistake.

Third instalment of Pay Revision Arrear

SPARK PMU has enabled the option for processing the third instalment Pay Revision arrears in accordance with the G.O (P) No. 50/2018/Fin dated 26/03/2016. Government of Kerala has issued this order to draw the amount of third instalment PR arrear on 01/04/2018 along with the interest in the arrears at the rate admissible to the PF.

Exclude option for third installment of Pay Revision Arrear

"Exclude" option has been enabled under *Accounts* → *Make bill from Pay roll option*, to leave out the cases of excess or short drawal made in their previous installments of pay revision arrears, and to allow the employees for processing the bill.

Reprocessing option for third Instalment of Pay Revision Arrear

SPRAK PMU enabled the reprocessing option for third Instalment of pay revision arrears of excluded employees, who had been excluded through 'Exclude Employee' option due to excess/ short drawal made in the previous instalments of pay revision arrear or by mistake.

Before performing Pay Revision Arrear Reprocessing step for the employees, who have had Excess/Short drawal issues in previous instalments of Pay Revision Arrear, the user should ensure that all necessary changes are done in employee details to correct the irregular drawal (Excess/Short drawal) happened in previous instalments of pay revision arrears. It is the responsibly of the DDO to check and confirm the employee details before doing Pay Revision Arrear Reprocessing.

During employee selection step, please avoid those excess drawal cases, for which the second instalment amount not sufficient to adjust the excess drawn amount. If user considers the above said cases along with the reprocessing, system will block such error cases from further processing and will end up with error bill.

Fourth instalment of Pay Revision Arrear

SPARK PMU has enabled the option for processing the fourth instalment of Pay Revision arrears and its interest in accordance with the G.O (P) No. 146/2018/Fin dated 16/09/2016. On preparing and e-submitting the fourth instalment of PR arrear bill through PR arrear module, the fourth instalment of PR arrear and interest amount there on will be paid in cash to employees.

Reprocessing option for fourth instalment of Pay Revision Arrear

SPARK PMU activated the reprocessing option for fourth instalment of Pay revision arrears. Users can reprocess the fourth instalment of pay revision arrear excluded cases through this option, *Salary Matters* → *Pay revision 2014* → *Pay revision arrear Reprocessing* option.

New Department : Women and Child Development Department

Based on a request from the newly created Women and Child Development Department, SPARK PMU created a new department in SPARK and completed the process of changing the DDO code of all the offices listed under the new department. All the employees who have got access as DDO have been retained to the new department too. The officers can use the User ID and Password previously used for login to SPARK. The Temporary employees have also been transferred to the new department.

As the department and department code have been changed, the salary and deduction particulars of the temporary employees have to be input again into the system by the related offices. This is a onetime process. Similarly, in the case of gazetted officers, new pay slips from the AG's office are needed for processing their salary.

PR arrear bills of department change cases (ICDS →WCD)

The PR arrear bills processed from ICDS department are now made available in WCD logins. The subsequent instalments of PR arrear bills processed from ICDS Departments will list in 'Make bill from Payroll option' of WCD login account. User can select the bill and generate PR arrear schedules and can e-submit the PR arrear bills.

Re-employment employees salary processing

Earlier SPARK system had issues in handling the salary processing of reemployed employees. SPARK PMU has rectified this issue and now users can update reemployed details and can process their salary without back end editing through SPARK PMU office.

LTC surrender for Judicial Officers in the High court

A Module has been activated under *Salary Matters* → *Leave surrender* → *Leave surrender on LTC* (IAS officers and High Court Judges) to process the LTC surrender for 10 days of the High court judicial service. For processing the LTC surrender, leave surrender order has to be generated as like EL surrender, then only employee will list in LTC surrender processing option

E – TSB

As E TSB made compulsory for the financial transactions in certain departments like Treasury and Secretariat Finance Department, SPARK PMU has made necessary updations on the system to restrict the salary processing of those employees whose E TSB details are not updated in SPARK Data Base. Also system will display alerts to update E TSB details.

Implemented Offline Report Generation procedure

SPARK PMU has implemented offline report generation facility in SPARK which lets the users to view offline reports on clicking the bill generation option with in no time. The reports once generated are automatically saved in the system server, and later on when user gives bill generation request, the system recalls the reports saved in the server and makes bill generation very fast and also this will reduce timeout incidences experienced while loading the bills in past.

Updation for improving Bill generation speed

SPARK PMU has done software updation to increase the speed of Bill generation. Once the bill processing gets over, system put the bills to be generated in a queue and from the queue, bills will be taken one by one and the reports/schedules will be generated and stored in server in pdf form. Once the pdf is generated, the already generated/stored pdf will be shown to the user whenever the user tries to open the report again. But for yesteryears old reports, reports will be generated as in earlier way.

ACCOUNTS MODULE

TERMINAL SURRENDER OPTION

Terminal Surrender arrear (PR 2014) module updated in SPARK for processing retired employees' Terminal surrender (PR 2014) arrear. In connection with that SPARK has enabled "Manual drawn terminal surrender" option for updating manually drawn terminal surrender details. If retired employee's terminal surrender processed as NONSPARK bill, then manually drawn terminal surrender details should be updated through "Manually drawn terminal surrender" option for taking the PR arrears of terminal surrender.

Third instalment of Terminal Surrender Arrear (PR 2014)

SPARK PMU has facilitated the option for preparing the third Instalment of Terminal Surrender Arrear (PR 2014), If retired employees' first and second instalments of Terminal surrender arrear (PR 2014) encashed properly, then the third instalment of Terminal Surrender Arrear (PR 2014) will be listed under the option *Accounts → Bills → 'Make bill from Approved claim'* to prepare the claim bill for the third instalment of Terminal surrender Arrear (PR 2014).

Fourth instalment of Terminal Surrender Arrear (PR 2014)

SPARK PMU has facilitated the preparation of fourth instalment of Terminal surrender arrear (PR 2014) claim bills through *Accounts → 'Make bill from approved claim'*. The TSP claim details of employees, who have encashed up to their third instalment of terminal surrender arrear (PR 2014), will be listed in 'Make bill from approved claim', User can prepare the claim bill through the aforesaid option and can e-submit the bill.

Option for entering manual drawn Terminal Surrender arrear details

Module for entering manual drawn details of terminal surrender has already been made available in SPARK since last year, but provision for updating manual drawn details of terminal surrender arrear was not enabled in that option. If an employee's terminal surrender arrear processed as NON SPARK bill (manually), and again arrears are pending to be drawn based on employee's terminal surrender and this manually drawn terminal surrender arrear, in such cases, the pending terminal surrender arrear processing through SPARK will end up with error bills. So to rectify such issues, SPARK has added an option in 'Manually drawn Terminal Surrender' under 'Accounts' menu to enter manually drawn terminal surrender arrear details in SPARK.

Terminal surrender PR arrear claim bills of department change cases (ICDS → WCD)

SPARK Software team rectified the issues regarding the ICDS → WCD, department change cases. SPARK PMU already gave software update for listing the instalments of terminal surrender PR arrear bills in WCD department.

DSC authentication enabled for bill e submission

SPARK PMU implemented DSC authentication for bill e-submission, in order to ensure additional security for online financial transactions through SPARK. At first this facility has activated only in Finance department and treasury Department and the option is enabled under the menu *Accounts → E-submission* option. For using this facility the user has to register DSC in BIMS, DSC registration link is provided in the home page of BIMS, <https://treasury.kerala.gov.in/bims>

E submission with DSC for Salary and Claim bills

SPARK PMU has already enabled DSC registration/renewal facility for DSC implemented departments. Now SPARK has also facilitated the e-submission of Salary Bills and claim bills with Digital signature by the DDO /The head of the institution concerned. E-submission of Salary bills with DSC facility was already there for Finance Department and Treasury Department now this facility has extended to all the DSC implemented departments and in addition to the salary bills, now claim bills can also be e-submitted with DSC.

Nil Bill e-submission of salary bills

Earlier, e-submission of nil bills has been restricted in SPARK system. SPARK PMU has now given software update enabling the Nil bill e-submission based on G.O. (P) No. 155/2018/Fin dated 04/10/2018.

TEMPORARY EMPLOYEE OPTION

Temporary Employee module enabled in SPARK. SPARK PMU has activated the temporary employee module for registering the employee details, disbursing the salary, wages etc of daily wages/contract/temporary employees through the SPARK system as per GO (P) NO 109/2016/Fin dated 29/07/2016. After passing the bill, the salary/allowance is directly credited to the bank/treasury account of the employees concerned.

PART bill (PAT claim) for Temporary employees

Provision for processing part bills has been facilitated in PAT claim processing option. In the case of temporary employees terminated from an office, and joined in another office in the same month, in such cases employees part bills from both the offices can now be processed through SPARK, with the condition that first part bill has to be taken from the first office and second part from the newly joined office

Change Name/Date of Birth of temporary employee option

Option for correcting temporary employee's Name/Date of Birth, 'Change Name/DoB of temporary Employee option', has updated in SPARK system, under 'Accounts' menu. On selecting the employee through this option, employee's Name, Date of Birth and Aadhar updated in SPARK will be displayed on the screen. Name and Date of Birth fields will be in editable format; DDO can make corrections on these fields and has to click on 'Verify Aadhar' button. If name and Date of birth entered found matching with the data in aadhar, details gets verified and then DDO has to click on 'Update' button to save the changes made in Name/Date of Birth.

Vendor Registrations

Recently SPARK PMU has added the vendor 'Tamil Nadu State Transport Corporation, Coimbatore'. Vendor registration option incorporated in SPARK to facilitate vendor payment

through SPARK system. At present vendor wages and TA claims are paid through this option. SPARK PMU registers the vendor details in SPARK system as per the requests submitted by the vendors, for making payment the concerned office has to process the claims through SPARK. As of now, the vendor claims made available in SPARK are 'Vendor Travel cost' and 'Vendor Wages cost'. The registered vendors will alone be listed in claim entry page for processing these claims, the authorized officer from the concerned office can select the Vendor and then process the claim, and on e-submission the claim amount will be credited to vendor's bank account updated in SPARK. In addition to Tamil Nadu State Transport Corporation, Coimbatore', the details of vendors already registered through SPARK are as follows; Kexcon, ODEPC, KSRTC, Superintendent of Central Prison, KURTC, State Express Transport Corporation Tamil Nadu LTD, Puducherry Road Transport Corporation Ltd.

Processing of TA bills from other officers to where the employees assigned for duty

TA claim bills of employees who got assigned to do duty in other offices, in such cases at present there is no option in SPARK to process their TA claim bill from the office where they got stationed for duty on those days. Provision for processing such TA claims will be soon activated in SPARK under Accounts → Claim entry option.

LTC final and TA final claims

SPARK has made software modification to submit zero settlement bills in live, now e-submission of zero bills can be done through SPARK.

INCOME TAX MODULE

Revised the income tax module by updating the basic slab limits and Tax exemption under Section 80G (2) for CMDRF contribution also handled in the module.

QUERIES

Retired employee search option

Retired employees' PEN search option has enabled in 'U' access user login through the option *Queries → Employee Search option*. Using this option retired employee's details can be easily fetched from the SPARK Database.