



INDIAN

Bureaucracy continues to plague Indian pubcaster Prasar Bharati



Today, most of the Doordarshan (DD) Kendras and AIR Stations are without Station Directors, which is the major cause for poor content and crash in TV audience of DD. The

dynamic efforts of CEO, Prasar Bharati (PB) to induct media professionals into PB to checkmate stiffly competing private players has fallen on deaf ears of conservative and unimaginative bureaucracy.

Despite the impetus AIR got through patronisation from the new Government in power through 'Mann Ki Baat' and DD getting the first right of coverage of high profile Government events at home and abroad, personnel issues continue to be in the dark almirahs of 'babudom'.

The good news is AIR continues to be number one with improved listenership in the audio universe as also with its newer additions in web streaming and mobile apps for eight of its radio channels to include Vividh Bharati, Urdu Service, FM Gold and FM Rainbow.

In the absence of Prasar Bharati Recruitment and Services Board, PB has not been able to fill up even the GOM approved Group A posts of 580 Assistant Station Directors (Programmers-265 and Engineers-315) out of 3452 posts of different categories, which is the real cutting edge.

In fact, even Staff Selection Commission itself which is not tasked to recruit above Group B, fell short of its target of 252 Programme Executives by 82 posts due to not being able to get suitable candidates. In any case, the Union Public Service Commission has expressed its inability to recruit Group A posts for PB, an autonomous body, since all the posts stand transferred from Government to PB under an amendment to Section 11 of PB Act 1990 from 1 April, 2000.

The most important issue of non promotion of Programmers and similarly placed employees is yet not resolved by the Government although PB Board gave some interim relief through ad hoc promotions to Programme cadre employees well appreciated by all the Employees Associations.

The promotion issue is still hanging fire without Government approval, compelling the promotion deprived employees to rush and knock at the doors of justice. In a recent case filed by Gurmail Chand from the Audience Research Wing of Prasar Bharati, Honourable CAT, Delhi categorically ruled endorsing PB's competence to hold Departmental Promotion Committee meetings for all similarly placed categories.

The only issue involved therefore is the onus on Government to dispel apprehension in the minds of employees of organised services viz., Indian Broadcast (Programme) Service and Indian Broadcast (Engineering) Service that they may be denied all the authorised promotional emoluments as Government servants on deemed deputation holding the posts that belong to PB.

Further, the Government approved new inductees in PB numbering about 2000 need to be extended all the perquisites like CGHS, KV admissions etc to avoid future legal recourse in an autonomous PB where there are about 1000 court cases already on Conditions of Service alone.

Hence , the most urgent need is to resolve personnel issues and raise the rock bottom morale of PB employees, who were once the media moguls with monopoly. But in PB, Jawhar Sircar continues his optimism while voicing concerns and rolling out ideas with brilliance. Is someone listening? Jai Hind.

(The views expressed here are purely personal views of Prasar Bharati principal advisor, personnel and administration VAM Hussain and Indiantelelevision.com does not necessarily subscribe to them.)

