



Association of Land and Land Reforms Officers', West Bengal এ্যাসোসিয়েশন অব ল্যান্ড এন্ড ল্যান্ড রিফর্মস অফিসার্স, ওয়েস্ট বেঙ্গল

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Central Committee

Memo No. 21/ALLO/2024

Date: 06.09.2024

To
The Additional Chief Secretary
&
Land Reforms Commissioner, West Bengal
Department of Land & Land Reforms & Refugee Relief & Rehabilitation
NABANNA, Howrah-711102.



Subject: Issues of Cadres, Infrastructure and other related problems in the L&LR&RR&R Deptt. Govt. of West Bengal

Respected Sir,

We thank you for inviting our Association for a discussion in your chamber on 6th of September, 2024 instant. This exemplary gesture is adorable and will be remembered as a milestone.

On this occasion we would like to raise certain issues that are plaguing the cadres as well as the department, particularly the ISU.

Perspective

On the backdrop of the declaration of service for the cadres, our overall assessment is that, it has created more problems than it has been able to solve.

Our longstanding demand was to create a two-tier service by way of merging the cadres of SRO II and erstwhile SRO I with ROs as sole feeder.

This was most scientific view as Land Reforms is a subject to be practiced in service as there lies no course in undergraduate to study Land Reforms as a whole. Hence the experience of ROs is the only means of building up the expertise.

But for some unknown reason, a fragmented service has been conceived which has raised more questions to be answered due to its birth with distinguishing disability.

Our Association had to cope and deal with this ill-fated service and tried to reframe our demands which was unanimously up held in our Extraordinary General Meeting held on 3rd June, 2023 in Yuva Kendra, Moulali. We were destined to encounter with our future as the awarded service spelt a doom to the base cadre i.e., RO and shrink their prospects of future career. So, obviously our imperative was to safeguard the interest of ROs along with raising our demands harping with our fundamental demand of a two-tier service.

Hence, we endeavor to submit our views in every aspect of our cadre demands as well as how to protect the fruits of Land Reforms along with the ideas to reinforce the infrastructure and to plug in the loopholes, which are lying within the program of digitization of records.

CADRE ISSUES

A. First of all, we would like to state in a nutshell where we stand today cadre wise according to scale of pay: -

Pre-revised Scale of pay	Nomenclature	Cadre Strength	Existing strength	Vacancies	Remarks
14	RO	1585	Around 1430	Around 155	More than 500 ROs enjoy scale 15 through MCAS
15	SRO II	347	278	69	
16	Asst. Director (AD)	440	440	-	
17	Dy. Director (DD)	220	175	45*	Vacancy due to 5 years awaiting time for AD to be eligible to DD
18	Jt. Director (JD)	74	34	40*	Same for DD to be promoted to JD.

Note: It is evident that about $(45+40) = 85$ (more or less) posts are lying vacant i.e., more than 10% of the service strength even after 1½ years of commencement of the service.

This has been dealt with by our Association by raising the demand of lowering the waiting time which will be elaborated later during cadre-wise analysis.

B. CADRE WISE ANALYSIS

i. Revenue Officer

At the very outset we have mentioned that the fate of the ROs have been jeopardized to the extreme. Thus, the onus lies on us to explain in a nutshell to such assessment.

The ratio of RO:SRO II has been brought down to 1585:347 i.e., 5:1. The cascading effect of such bottleneck is cumulatively moved down the line i.e., the feeder of ROs i.e., RIs. The fact remains that no promotion from RO to SRO-II has been given since July, 2022 which made them deprived of getting the benefit of promotional increment in due time causing a permanent financial loss in the career. We demand immediate publication of list of zone of consideration and order of promotion to the post of SRO II with promotional increment from the date of vacancy to that post which the Department is following in case of promotion to the post of JD from DD and to the post of DD from AD.

Further, the status of SRO IIs as feeder to WBCS (Exe) has been subject to challenge by the Jt. BDOs who are also feeder to WBCS (Exe) cadre along with SRO-II.

Under these circumstances, to compensate the huge imbalance we suggested in form of our demand to absorb the cadre of ROs through merging with SRO-IIs. This also imbibes our demand of rewarding highest scale to ROs of the WBCS Gr C i.e., scale no. 15. The charge on the state exchequer is minimal as 1/3rd of the ROs have already been fixed in scale 15 through MCAS. Moreover, through this merger, the non-functional promotion through MCAS will automatically place the ROs to the 3rd higher scale in due course of time.

Further we demand the retention of the 53% of feeder post to WBCS (Exe) for willing SRO-IIs with direct recruitment in the cadre of SRO-II (i.e., SRO-II + RO). This will lead to a two-tier service structure which is the most scientific one.

ii. SRO II

This hapless cadre lost in the storm of bizarre service (WBLRS) is always under threat. Had this cadre been absorbed entirely into the service (WBLRS) as per our demand, then the balance of RO and Service cadre could have been retained and the whining of the Jt. BDOs to PSC, WB could have been countered with fresh demand of claiming the RO cadre to be rewarded the feeder status to WBCS (Exe). Man, pines for what is not.

In present situation the SRO-IIs willing to join WBCS (Exe) or WBLRS had to bite their nails throughout their waiting period. Thus, agony has also been made more acute by the apathy of our department by not preparing and sending the list of eligible SRO IIs to the PSC, WB in time whereas the Jt. BDOs get promotion to WBCS (Exe) in time due to alertness and efficiency of the P&AR Dept. This acrimony of our department can be done away very easily by intervention of your good self. This delay in sending the names is nothing but injustice to the cadre. The standing alibi is the ever-missing SARs and Asset Declarations along with DP/VC reports which obviously gets lost in the quagmire of transportation from district to department. This ill-fated cadre, depleted in cadre strength, balances the entire cadre structure. Normally, the SRO IIs were posted as BLLROs which now has been replaced by the Asst. Directors. Thus, they are also deprived of gathering the necessary experience as BLLROs. Moreover, now onwards they are posted in other wings i.e., LA, ULC, Thika Tenancy along with SDLLRO & DLLRO Offices. They have to deal with knotty files and legal cases which needs a deft hand, matured through years of on-field experience. Neither they are in any position to provide guidance to BLLROs who are as Asst. Directors and as such are much senior to SRO IIs. The entire deployment has gone inverted by placing greenhands on the higher offices of SDLLROs and DLLROs.

C. SERVICE CADRES (AD/DD/JD)

i. Asst. Directors (Strength 440, Scale 16)

This is the only cadre which has seen full employment after promulgation of Service. They are the experienced SRO IIs who have served as BLLROs and came up to the upper-level offices of SDLLRO and DLLRO. Now they are again pushed to serve as BLLROs. The stagnation in this cadre is due to the 5 years waiting period to get promotion to Dy. Director post. A good number of ADs have already attained the scale 16 through CAS/MCAS before absorption in WBLRS.

ii. Deputy Directors (Strength 220, Existing 175, Scale 17)

The dearth in number has its reason for the eligibility time of 5 years of AD. Hence, the perennial vacancy is subsisting.

iii. Joint Directors (Strength 74, Existing 34, Scale 18)

The fate of this cadre is similar to Dy. Directors as there stands a bar of 5 years of continuous service as Dy. Director to be eligible to be promoted to Jt. Directors.

The general demand for promotion to the post of DD and JD is to lower the waiting period from 5 years to 3 years.

D. LACUNA OF WBLRS

WBLRS is a service that is not to be. This is not considered to be a genuinely constituted service. The list of constituted services as published by the Govt. of West Bengal (enclosed) does not mention WBLRS. Obviously, because the cadre Jt. Directors are headed for a 'cul de sac' as there is no provision of their upward movement. Even a large number of cadres of WBLRS has been denied of the MCAS benefit.

The naivety of the creators of WBLRS have refrained them from considering such provisions of creating posts in upper tier, though they have left open the induction of 20% through direct recruitment in the cadre of Asst. Directors. By dint of sheer CAS/MCAS, the direct cadres would reach scale 19 without any functional berth in that scale.

We have dealt this in our charter of demands as resolved and accepted in our EGM on 3rd of June, 2023.

E. Now let us sum up our demands for cadres as per scale and other benefits.

1. a. Absorption of RO into SRO II by way of merging the two cadres in scale no. 15.

b. Nomenclature of the new cadre will be SRO II only.

c. SRO II will retain the status & percentage of feeder to WBCS (Exe) as well as WBLRS.

d. Direct recruitment to SRO II cadre through WBCS examination in Group C held by PSC, WB.

2. Waiting period of Asst. Directors and Dy. Director for promotion to be scaled down from 5 years to 3 years and all the vacant posts in the upper tier to be filled w.e.f. the date of vacancy.

3. Immediate filling up of vacancy in each and every cadre.

4. The WBLRS Cadre to be restructured as follows: -

Pre-revised Scale of Pay	Nomenclature	Sanctioned strength	Existing cadre	Our Demand	Remarks
16	Asst. Director	440	440	650	60% of 1084* 869 (SRO II) + 215 (SRO I) = 1084
17	Dy. Director	220	175	325	30% of 1084
18	Jt. Director	74	34	109	10% of 1084
19	Addl. Director (Ex-officio Jt. Secretary)	-	-	22	20% of 109
20	Addl. Director (Ex-officio Spl. Secretary)	-	-	11	10% of 109
TOTAL		734	649	1117	

Note: The point of departure of our demand for constitution of service is with minimum 1084 cadre strength in combined capacity of SRO-II & SRO-I existing prior to notification. i.e. $869 + 215 = 1084$

We can see that we demand an increase of 383 posts (1117-734) than the existing sanctioned strength of WBLRS.

Now we state our proposal regarding how to balance this increase in posts by way of conversion of same number of posts from the combined cadre of newly formed SRO II i.e., (RO + SRO-II) ($1585 + 347 = 1932$)

Out of 1932 posts of newly formed SRO II 383 posts will be converted to different scale tiers of WBLRS as shown in the last figure.

Hence, the ultimate strength of SRO-II will be $1932 - 383 = 1549$.

We have also dealt with the issue of cost to the state exchequer and it reveals that a bulk of ROs are already enjoying scale 15 and a number of SRO IIs are already enjoying scale 16 by CAS/MCAS. Hence, the cost to exchequer it will be, negligible.

Before venturing to our other demands, we would like to state that since inception, ALLO, WB has always demanded for a constituted service consisting of number of entire SRO I and SRO II posts keeping the WBSLRS Gr - I (RO) as the sole feeder to that service by awarding the highest scale of pay to WBSLRS Gr-I in Gr. C of WBCS examination.

But, the fragmented service with 734 posts has created stagnation for ROs.

Though numerically, left out 347 SRO II is the feeder of WBLRS and WBCS (Exe), but practically strength of 1585 ROs is awaiting and offered 347 posts of SRO II for promotion. Under the changed circumstance ALLO, WB has demanded absorption through merger of RO with the posts of SRO II to create a single feeder cadre with nomenclature of SRO II with pre revised scale of 15, who will be feeder to WBCS (Exe) as well as WBLRS.

Our association, as stated, also demanded as increase of service posts from 734 to 1117 for smooth and normal upliftment of the cadre to higher post as given in the figure above. This will pave the way for construction of a genuinely constituted service in the Department. Similar creation of posts has been made in other constituted services. (Copy enclosed)

OTHER DEMANDS

1. **Infrastructure**: The ISU being the largest wing of the department is chronically suffering from paucity of space particularly at BLLRO level. The footfalls in the BLLRO offices in urban area surpasses the capacity of the built-up area of the offices. These results overcrowding and all other nuisances inside the office. We urge you to kindly pay a visit once in any nearby office like Sonarpur, Bally, Barrackpore any day to avail first-hand experience.

We have a long pending demand, keeping in view of the Vishaka guidelines and subsequently the enactment of sexual harassment of women at workplace (Prevention and Redressal) Act, 2013 that the offices in ISU be revamped and enlarged to provide all such facilities immediately.

Another acute problem in BLLRO offices is generator and providing a car throughout the year. Insufficient water supply, proper electrification, washrooms for the lady employees are also need immediate redressal. Acute shortage of staff like RIs, Amins, UDA, LDA in BLLRO office is creating hindrance in timely discharging of different departmental works.

2. **Transfer & posting of cadres**: Starting from RO to Jt. Directors, transfer guideline must be extended and followed thoroughly by the authority. After serving a distant place for home, they may be given posting nearer to their home. Apart from ROs which is looked after by DLRS & Jt. LRC, WB, all other cadres are controlled by Department itself. We feel that the Department falls far behind the expectation due to lack of motivation and other problems. This also applies for promotion of the cadres.

3. **Mafia attack on BLLROs & ROs**: Often, our cadres at the block level is subjected to the attacks by goons and miscreants particularly during their raid duty against illegal mining of minor minerals. The inadequate police protection is a normal affair. Hence, the

service has become hazardous and we along with the authority in districts run after the occurrence of such heinous incidents. But we think prevention is better than cure.

So, the police must be instructed to provide all round protection to BLLROs/ROs in the office as well as on the fields during raids.

4. SARs, Asset Statement, Service book and gradation list of cadres: As have been stated the SARs, Asset Statements are lost during transit from Districts to Department. Online submission of SARs and Asset Statements with proper security to be provided as soon as possible. Hierarchy to be fixed for the service cadres for SAR.

Service book is still maintained manually. While other departments have introduced online maintenance, ours is as usual far behind. This to be maintained through online WBIFMS portal as per Finance Department's guideline.

5. Stationeries &AMCs of equipment: BLLRO offices are running under acute shortages and dearth in supply of paper, stationery for manual as well as for electronic equipment.

The AMCs are not functioning well in remote Blocks. Thus, the printers and scanners are often goes out of service resulting in public harassment. We find no tangible reason except apathy behind such negligence.

6. Audit, Protection & Development of Banglarbhumi, MRR: The sanctity of the records is the prime concern. The minimal compromise in security is unpardonable.

We demand immediate plugging of loop holes so that any such heinous act can be detected through audit trails and miscreants to be brought to the book.

The speed of the portal Banglarbhumi must be enhanced and developed so that the portal can be accessed easily by everybody to ease up the process of mutation, inheritance, khajna payment etc.

Audit of equipment of MODERN RECORD ROOM (MRR) in each BLLRO offices to be commenced immediately. Along with re-installing the equipment which are not in working condition is a burning necessity along with AMC.

7. **IT related infrastructure**: We demand the increasing the band width from 5 MBPS to 150 MBPS in both Airtel& SWAN.

We also demand increasing of server space including e-Bhuchitra and Banglarbhumi portal.

Thanking you again for allowing or Association to meet for a discussion, which, we hope will lead to certain definite action with positive results. We are proud to announce that only our association had consistently endeavored to establish the ISU during 1980s, which finally took place in 1987, fighting against all odds and vested interests.

It pains us to see ISU going to shreds due to negligence and insecurity of the data.

We vouch ourselves to support any steps taken by the authority to revamp and develop the ISU and other wings and also, we are willing to suggest certain untapped sources of argumentation of revenue earnings in future, if called for.

With Regards,

Encl: As stated above.

Krishanu Deb
06/09/24

(Krishanu Deb)

General Secretary

Association of Land & Land Reforms Officers, West Bengal