



IRAS OFFICERS' ASSOCIATION

28 August 2018

To

Shri Ashwani Lohani
Chairman, Railway Board

Shri Anup Kumar Prasad
Financial Commissioner (Railways)

Rail Bhawan, Rafi Marg
New Delhi – 110 001

Subject: Negative impact on career prospects of the IRAS of certain decisions of the Government of India; Representation regarding

Dear Sir

IRAS is one of the oldest and prestigious Central Services of Government of India which has played a pivotal role in the efficient management of Accounting and Finance functions of IR for the last 89 years.

The Members of the service strongly feel that despite the yeoman service rendered by its members certain recent decisions of the Government of India including the Ministry of Railway have negatively impacted the career prospects of the members of the service.

In this regard, in its meeting held on 09 August 2018, the General Body of the IRAS Association passed two resolutions on two specific issues placed before it, the details of which are placed below:

1. Qualification for posts of Director (Finance) in PSUs of Indian Railways (IR)

1.1. Presently, in all PESB selections for the post of Director (Finance) of any PSU, the candidate is required to have a professional qualification such as CA/ ICWA/ MBA.

1.1.1. With this prerequisite, no weightage is being given to the long years of experience of IRAS officers in various capacities as Accounts and Finance

Officers on the Indian Railways. This requirement is inherently biased against the members of the IRAS who have working experience of both financial scrutiny and accounting like no other Accounts service of the Government of India.

- 1.1.2. We would like to point out that IRAS Officers have held these posts in many PSUs of the Government of India and of State Governments and have gone to head such institutions with considerable success. Most Railway PSUs work primarily for the Railways and further the business of rail transportation; as such, an IRAS officer is most suited to understand and further the interests of the PSU as well as the IR.
- 1.1.3. The recent failure of the PESB in finding a suitable candidate for IRCTC, RVNL and DFCCIL because of the very specific job requirements in these organisations, is a definite pointer to the relevance of IRAS in Railway organisations.
- 1.2. Even the requirement of full-time MBA is flawed in its present form.
 - 1.2.1. The MBA qualification is mandated to be a full-time MBA. This requirement is arbitrary and is not borne out by the actual effort made by a working executive while acquiring such a degree. After all, attending classes beyond normal working hours and on weekends, as well as doing all the attendant course work and submission of assignments and appearing for examinations entails considerable effort and sacrifice on the part of the executive.
 - 1.2.2. Additionally, the mandatory qualification does not make any distinction between MBA of a highly rated business school and any other comparatively lower rated institution. Thus, the requirement is not only arbitrary but also treats the qualification as just a degree without any consideration for the quality thereof.
 - 1.2.3. In fact a part-time MBA with requirement of compulsory attendance of classes from a highly rated business school (say Universities of Chennai, Delhi or Mumbai) or IITs (such as Mumbai and Delhi) have very high market recognition at par with their regular MBAs. Further, an MBA with compulsory attendance requirement cannot be considered non-qualifying. After all, even CAs and ICWAs pursue their professional qualifications while working as articled clerks.
 - 1.2.4. The UGC and the Government of India recognise distance education as an effective method of continuing education and an acceptable approach to skill upgradation. To rule out an MBA from any of the recognised distance education schools (such as IGNOU) as a valid qualification is arbitrary and bad in law.

- 1.2.5. Even CAs and ICWAs, who would currently meet the criterion of length of time as experience for the posts of Directors (Finance), would have obtained their qualifications not only working as articled clerks while taking the relevant exams, but were also permitted under their professional rules prevalent till about a decade ago to study fulltime for their graduation and other courses and take the CA/ ICWA exams, even before starting to work as professional accountants.
- 1.3. All such Director/Finance posts of PSUs of Indian Railways should be opened to IRAS officers without the criteria of an MBA being attached as a qualification.
- 1.4. **The General Body of the IRAS Association registered its protest against the prejudicial manner in which a full-time MBA has been added as the sole mandatory educational qualification for the post of Director (Finance) in all PSUs, without taking into consideration the overriding experience of the IRAS as the premier Accounts and Finance Service of the Government of India. The Association decided to petition the IR Management to strongly take up this matter with the Department of Public Enterprises to seek to alter the qualification requirements for the posts of Director (Finance) in all CPSEs, especially the Railway PSUs, and give due consideration to candidature of IRAS officers to such posts based upon their job profile and professional experience.**

2. Delay in promotion of IRAS Officers to JAG on both ad hoc and regular basis.

- 2.1. Promotion of IRAS Officers to JAG on confirmed and on *ad hoc* bases is badly delayed. As on date, promotion of 16 Officers of the 2008 Batch of IRAS officers is held up despite provisions in the recruitment rules which lay down that promotion to JAG would be by way of selection on completion of 5 years service in Senior Scale. This situation has come to pass ostensibly because of a case pending before the Supreme Court. Given the facts of the case, there does not appear to be any bar on or risk of contempt of court, if promotion of these officers is effected.
- 2.1.1. Directly inducted IRAS Officers come into service after successfully qualifying through one of the toughest recruitment examinations in the world. They join the service and the IR with many hopes and aspirations.
- 2.1.2. As compared to them, the Group B Officers of IR, including of Accounts Department, are never recruited directly from the Market. They are inducted first of all as Group C or D functionaries and then rise through the ranks after competing through a much smaller catchment.

2.1.3. In fact, the selection to Group B is not even on a pan-Indian Railways level and as such is only a local examination, irrespective of whether it is a General Departmental Competitive Examination (GDCE) or a Limited Departmental Competitive Examination (LDCE).

2.1.4. The effort to lay claim of parity with IRAS Officers recruited directly through Civil Services Examination conducted by the Union Public Service Commission, in seniority is founded on false logic and needs to be rejected summarily. JAG confirmation of IRAS officers should not be held up on the plea that a court case is going on.


2.2. The General Body of the IRAS Association expressed its resentment at denial of promotion to its members to JAG on confirmed and *ad hoc* bases, on account of claim to *inter se* seniority by promotee officers from Group 'B' cadres, and decided to strongly petition the IR Management to withdraw discriminating orders issued due to incorrect interpretation of rules and facts.

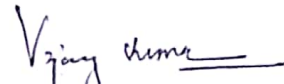
The two issues discussed above are of paramount importance to the IRAS and reflect the genuine aspirations of its members.

We are confident of your consideration and support and hope that you will use your good offices to have these issues raised by the IRAS Association addressed adequately by the concerned authorities.

Thank you

Yours sincerely


(Dr. Madhukhar Sinha)
Secretary General


(Vijay Kumar)
President

New Delhi