

RECRUITMENT RULES OF BSNL MANAGEMENT SERVICES

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BSNL has finally released the Recruitment Rules called as “Recruitment Rules of BSNL Management Services” vide BSNL No. 400-106/2007-Pers I dated 14.07.2009. These Rules begins with the AGM/CAO/DE equivalent levels grade/posts and cover all other higher grades/levels in the hierarchy below the Board level posts. Earlier, BSNL had released Recruitment Rules of Management Trainee level posts which is the feeder cadre for a maximum of 50% of the AGM/CAO/DE equivalent level posts. Apart from these two Recruitment Rules, BSNL earlier issued separate Recruitment Rules for JTOs (Telecom), JTOs (Civil), JTOs (Electrical), JTOs (Architect), JTOs (Telecom Factory), JAOs and other Equivalent grades/level. This was followed by another set of separate Recruitment Rules for SDEs (Telecom), SDEs (Civil), SDEs (Electrical), SDEs (Architect), SDEs (Telecom Factory), AOs etc. Thus, there are now four different sets of Recruitment Rules in BSNL for the below Board Level Executive cadres. Recently, we have come across another Recruitment Rules for DGM grade/level for recruitment of 210 DGMs. Even in DOT, which is a Government Department, there are only three sets of Recruitment Rules. It appears that BSNL Management has not been able to adjust itself with the PSUs' HR policies and is bent upon to retain the legacy of DOT Rules and practice. BSNL Management now can claim a place in the Guinness Book of World, being the only CPSE in India to have highest number of Recruitment Rules for the below Board level Executives as against the only single Recruitment Rules for all below Board level Executives in all other CPSEs. What an unique achievement!

2. BSNL Management can also claim another 'first' by being the only Organization to have notified Recruitment Rules with retrospective effect. The RRs have been *notified on 14.07.2009*, but it has been stated at Para 1.2 of the Rules that "*These rules shall be effective from 11th June 2009*". How this is possible that can be explained by the Management alone. But the intention of the Management appears to be loud and clear. Is it not an attempt to regularise the process that was initiated to recruit 210 DGMs ?

3. The first hand reaction that comes in mind after going through these Recruitment Rules and the provisions made therein is that the BSNL Management has very badly let down the Group B Level Officers of DTO/DTS/DOT who opted for absorption in BSNL and deviated completely from the basic theme of the Promotional Policy that was offered to them through the Terms and Conditions of Service for absorption [vide Annexure IV of BSNL No. BSNL/11/SR-2001 dated 02.09.2003]. The Promotion Policy that was offered made it clear that it would be time bound upgradation to the next higher grades up to JAG Selection Grade and thereafter post based promotions beyond the JAG Selection Grade. Thus the Policy that was to be followed for promotion in BSNL was "**cluster-based**" promotion policy as available in all other CPSEs. But the BSNL Management has introduced a promotion policy through all these Recruitment Rules which is totally post based at all levels. Thus what was offered to them in the terms and conditions for absorption has been totally sidelined. This action of BSNL Management could be termed as breach of trust and also the virtual contract.

4. On going through the Recruitment Rules of BSNL Management Services, it appears that these are the replica of those Recruitment Rules for Group A Officers as available in Department of

Telecommunication - like ITS Group A, IP&TFAS Group A etc. BSNL Management seems to have taken all the care to ensure that the Group A Officers of DOT after their absorption continue to get the same benefits in BSNL which they enjoyed in DOT in respect of grant of Non-functional Selection Grade in JAG level after 13th year of service, promotion to General Manager Grade on completion of 17th year of service and Senior General Manager Grade after 25th year of service etc. But no such consideration has been given to end the sufferings and injustice meted out to the promotee source Officers for years. This is just not the end. These Rules have been prepared in such a way to ensure that the SDE/AO equivalent source AGMs/DEs/CAOs equivalent, though promoted on regular basis and working in the promoted grade/level for years, will not have the opportunity to get promotion to JAG grade on regular basis for years. After all, as per provision in the Rules, promotion to JAG grade/level shall be based on the inter-se seniority fixed between the SDE/AO equivalent source AGMs/DEs/CAOs equivalents and the Management Trainee source AGMs/DEs/CAOs. But delayed/restricted recruitment of Management Trainees and their promotion to AGM/DE/CAO level to fill up only part of their earmarked posts will invite the similar situation that was once prevailing in DOT that the TES Group B Officers duly promoted through UPSC were getting their inter-se seniority fixed with the ADETs of later years' of recruitment and spent most of their promoted career as "hold charge DE" missing the chance for further promotion to JAG on regular basis. These Recruitment Rules also contain certain other provisions which made the RRs of BSNL MS even more worse than the RRs/promotion policy available in Department of Telecommunication. Some of these provisions and other deficiencies could be summarized as follows :-

(1) Mode of Recruitment: It has been stated in Para 2.7(a) that "*Campus Selection*" would be one of the modes of Recruitment. This provision undoubtedly will invite trouble for Management as well. It can be said with total confidence that Management may not be able to withstand the pressure to select the candidates recommended and backed by powerful lobbies through this route. The career advancement of the Executives who are already in service would also be seriously affected as "*Campus Selection*" could be at any level/stage. This provision should not have found a place in the RR of BSNL MS.

(2) Lateral entry: It has been stated in Para 4.1 of the Rules that BSNL Management would resort to "*lateral entry*" at the level higher than that of Management Trainees. This provision will certainly create havoc in the career progression of the Executives and must not have been incorporated in the Rules. The Executives at the level of JTOs/SDEs/DEs equivalents are already reeling under the pressure of acute stagnation. Thus lateral entry at the level of AGMs/DEs/CAOs equivalent or DGMs etc, shall further shrink their career advancement. This provision, if considered as a must, should have been only for the level of CGM/Principal GM Level/Grade and above.

(3) Seniority of Group A Officers recruited after 1.10.2000 and absorbed from ITS Group A and IP&TAFS Group A: It has been provided in second part of Para 6.2 under "Initial constitution" that '*The Group A Officers recruited after 1.10.2000 and absorbed from Indian Telecommunication Service (ITS) Group A and Indian P&T Accounts and Finance Service (IP&TAFS) Group A will also form part of their respective streams in BSNLMS and these entire absorbed Group A Officers shall rank en-block senior in their respective grade, to any executive or Management Trainee and higher levels of respective streams, recruited or promoted by BSNL*

in any grade". It is not understood how the Group A Officers recruited by DOT **after** 1.10.2000 can get absorption in BSNL since the date of absorption is 1.10.2000. Therefore, those who were not born in service on that crucial date cannot be absorbed. Thus, this provision raises some doubts on the intention of the BSNL Management.

(4) Pre revised IDA Pay Scale for Joint General Manager and equivalent (SG JAG) downgraded from the one approved by DOT: The pre-revised IDA pay scale against CDA pay scale of Rs 14300-400-18300 has been shown as Rs 17500-400-22300 at Para 5.1 (sl iv.b), Para 5.2 (sl iv.b) and 5.3 (sl iii.b) of BSNLMS. But DOT, the administrative Ministry, has already approved the pre-revised IDA pay scale of Rs 18500-450-23900 against the CDA pay scale of Rs 14300-400-18300 and offered the same to the Group A Officers while inviting option for absorption in BSNL/MTNL at Para 6.3 (Sl No 3 of the Table showing corresponding IDA pay scales for BSNL) of Annexure-II in the General Terms and Conditions for Exercising option for absorption vide No. A-11013/1/2005-Admn.II/Absorption Cell (ITS/TS/TFS) dated 26.8.2008. How could this pay scale be downgraded by BSNL Management without similar downgradation by DOT in their Terms and Conditions for Exercising option for the Group A Officers?

(5) Consideration of promotion of seniors: It has been stated in Para 12 of the RRs that in case where the juniors have completed their qualifying / eligibility service are being considered for promotions, their seniors would also be considered *provided they are not short of qualifying / eligibility service by more than one year ...* It can be said without any hesitation that this condition of one year's service is quite unjust and unethical. Non-completion of qualifying / eligibility service by the seniors happens mainly on administrative grounds like delayed DPC, sealed cover procedure, non-availability of ACRs, non-inclusion of names in the list of eligible candidates for promotion etc, which are not the faults on the part of the candidates. Thus, they should not be punished for purely administrative lapses. Further, *the DOP&T Rules also do not have any restriction regarding number of years of service for the seniors to be considered for promotion along with their juniors.*

(6) Inbuilt provision for continuation of promotion on adhoc basis: It is unfortunate that the Recruitment Rules for BSNL MS not only speaks for promotion on ad hoc basis, but also has been framed in a such a way so that ad hoc promotion continues for ever. In Schedule 1-A (against Sl No. 1), it has been provided that the posts in DE/CAO/AGM level will be filled up by promotion from SDE/AO level Executives only upto 50% of the posts. The Executives from MT source, will also be promoted to the level/grade of DE/CAO/AGM to the *extent of vacancies decided by BSNL every year subject to maximum of 50% of the posts.* This provision will leave thousands of posts in DE/CAO/AGM level to remain vacant over the years and ad hoc promotion will have to be continued to fill up these posts. The compulsion on the part of the Management for ensuring limited recruitment of Management Trainees every year is well understood. It cannot go for indiscriminate recruitment of MTs, since it would cause acute stagnation to them also. As was in the case of JTS (ADET/ACAO) Officers in DOT, the BSNL Management has shown its intention to ensure that at least those joining BSNL MS through Management Trainee route do not stagnate at any stage. But on that account, there is no justification to keep over thousands of posts at DE/CAO/AGM level vacant and take recourse to ad hoc promotion and thereby deny a little breathing space for the SDE/AO level Executives. In order to avoid large scale ad hoc promotions, 75% of the posts in DE/CAO/AGM level could have been ear marked for the SDE/AO level

Executives and rest 25% of the posts could have been set apart for promotion of the MTs. The age profile of the existing SDE/AO level Executives will confirm that even with this enhanced quota their vertical movement remains very much restricted. But the need for ad hoc promotion could have been virtually ruled out.

(7) Civil / Electrical /Architecture Wing Executives discriminated: In Note 2 below Schedule 1-A, while making a provision for future promotion to DE/CAO/AGM level posts only to the Degree holders for Telecom Operations and Graduates or Equivalent in respect of Finance of BSNLMS, a **dispensation** has been given to the extent that the *existing incumbents holding the posts of Executives on regular basis on the date of notification of these RRs shall continue to be eligible for promotion to the grade of DE/AGM/CAO. Same dispensation is also available in Note 2 below Schedule 1-C for Telecom Factory Organization.* **But no such dispensation has been given to the existing incumbents holding the posts of Executives for promotion to the grade of Assistant General Manager/EE/Arch as could be seen in Note 2 below schedule 1-B. It is pertinent to mention here that many of these Diploma holder Executives, being eligible as per the DOT RR, are already promoted to the AGM/EE level/grade in Electrical and Civil Wing. Thus there is no reason to deny the same benefit to the existing incumbents holding the posts of Executives in Civil and Electrical Wing as has been extended to the similar categories of Executives of other streams in Schedule 1-A and Schedule 1-C.**

(8) Total blocking of career progression of non-degree holder Executives at the level of JTO/SDE equivalents in Telecom Operation Service, Civil/Electrical/ Architectural and Telecom Factory Wing and also non-graduates in other services: The Recruitment Rules for BSNLMS has totally banned further promotion of the non-degree holder Executives at the level of JTOs who would join this grade on regular basis after 14.07.2009 i.e. after the notification of the Recruitment Rules of BSNL MS. There are many M.Sc/B.Sc (Electronics), MCA, Diploma Holders etc, among them. The Telecom Technical Assistants cadre, which has got many highly qualified persons, will suffer the most. In respect of other disciplines, similar is the case. Any attempt to deny them promotion to AGM/DE equivalent level posts is unjustified. When recruited in the non-Executive feeder cadres for promotion to JTO equivalent posts, they were never told that their career advancement would stop at the stage of SDE equivalent only. This is certainly a disincentive to the non-Executive cadres. By this act, the Management is inviting a new problem. There could be a demand for reservation of posts at AGM equivalent level posts and above from the non-Executives or even separate channel for promotion, if this provision in the RR of BSNLMS is not withdrawn. Once some one is promoted to the level of SDE equivalent, he must be allowed for further promotion to the AGM/DE equivalent posts on his own merit.

(9) PSU Promotion Policy totally violated: These Recruitment Rules for BSNL MS starts from the level/grade of AGMs/DEs/CAO equivalent Executives. There are already separate Recruitment Rules in BSNL for the Executives at the level/grade of JTOs/JAOs equivalent, SDE/AOs equivalent and even Management Trainees. In the PSUs, apart from following the cluster based promotion policy, there is only one comprehensive recruitment/promotion rule for all below Board Level Executives. But it is only the BSNL, though now a CPSE, which is trying to keep the DOT Rules and legacy in place and create divisions within the Executives based on their erstwhile classification as Group A, B, C and D. This is certainly unfortunate and speaks of the wrong mind set of the Management.

(10) Uniformity and equal opportunity to the Executives of all disciplines in the promotion policy given up: In the Promotion Policy that was annexed to the Terms and Conditions for absorption of Group B Officers of DOT in BSNL, it was categorically assured that the promotion policy would be uniform for all the disciplines. But the RRs of BSNL MS completely violate the same. MT route for recruitment has been prescribed for Telecom Operations Service and Telecom Finance Service alone. Further, availability of posts in the hierarchy is not proportionate to the strength in the feeder cadres which will cause imbalance in career advancement from one stream to other. Stagnation will therefore remain a serious cause of concern. Cluster based promotion policy as followed in all CPSEs and also offered in the Terms and Conditions for absorption to the Group B Officers of DOT/DTO/DTS would have been the best solution to such issues.

(11) HR Stream neglected: In all Organizations, HR is considered as an important stream and efforts are always made to strengthen this stream by HR integration and selecting proper personnel to manage the functions etc. But the RRs of BSNL MS has totally neglected this stream. There is a strong need to give a proper place to HR in BSNL by spelling out its structure, mode of manning the positions etc

5. It is time that the Executives of BSNL rise to the occasion. They must unite and collectively fight for their right. The impact of the Rules has to be analysed threadbare. Collective interest must get priority over individual interest. Otherwise, future of the Executives entering at the JTO/JAO equivalent level will be doomed for ever.