

# Synergy 2021

WEST BENGAL STATE ELECTRICITY BOARD OFFICERS' ASSOCIATION

# Synergy 2021

Committed to  
**Power, People and Planet**



- Operating Five Thermal Power Stations at present
- Present Total Installed Power Generating Capacity of 4745 MW
- Power Plant Simulator Training Institute at Bakreswar Thermal Power Station (Recognised by Central Electricity Authority)
- Construction of Unit # 5 (660 MW) First Super Critical Unit in the State at Sagardighi Thermal Power Project is going to commence shortly
- Having Five Captive Coal Mines with reserve of around 600 MT
- Setting up of 10.58 MW Roof Top Solar Power Plant at all the Five Power Stations is going to be commissioned shortly and another 10 MW Ground Mounted Solar Power Plant at Sagardighi Thermal Power Project is under construction

## Existing Power Stations of WBPDC

**Bandel**  
335 MW

**Santaldih**  
500 MW

**Kolaghat**  
1260 MW

**Bakreswar**  
1050 MW

**Sagardighi**  
1600 MW



**WBPDC**

**The West Bengal Power Development Corporation Limited**

(A Government of West Bengal Enterprise)

Bidyut Unnayan Bhaban, Plot No.: 3/C, LA - Block, Sector - III, Bidhannagar, Kolkata - 700106

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(WBSEBOA)**

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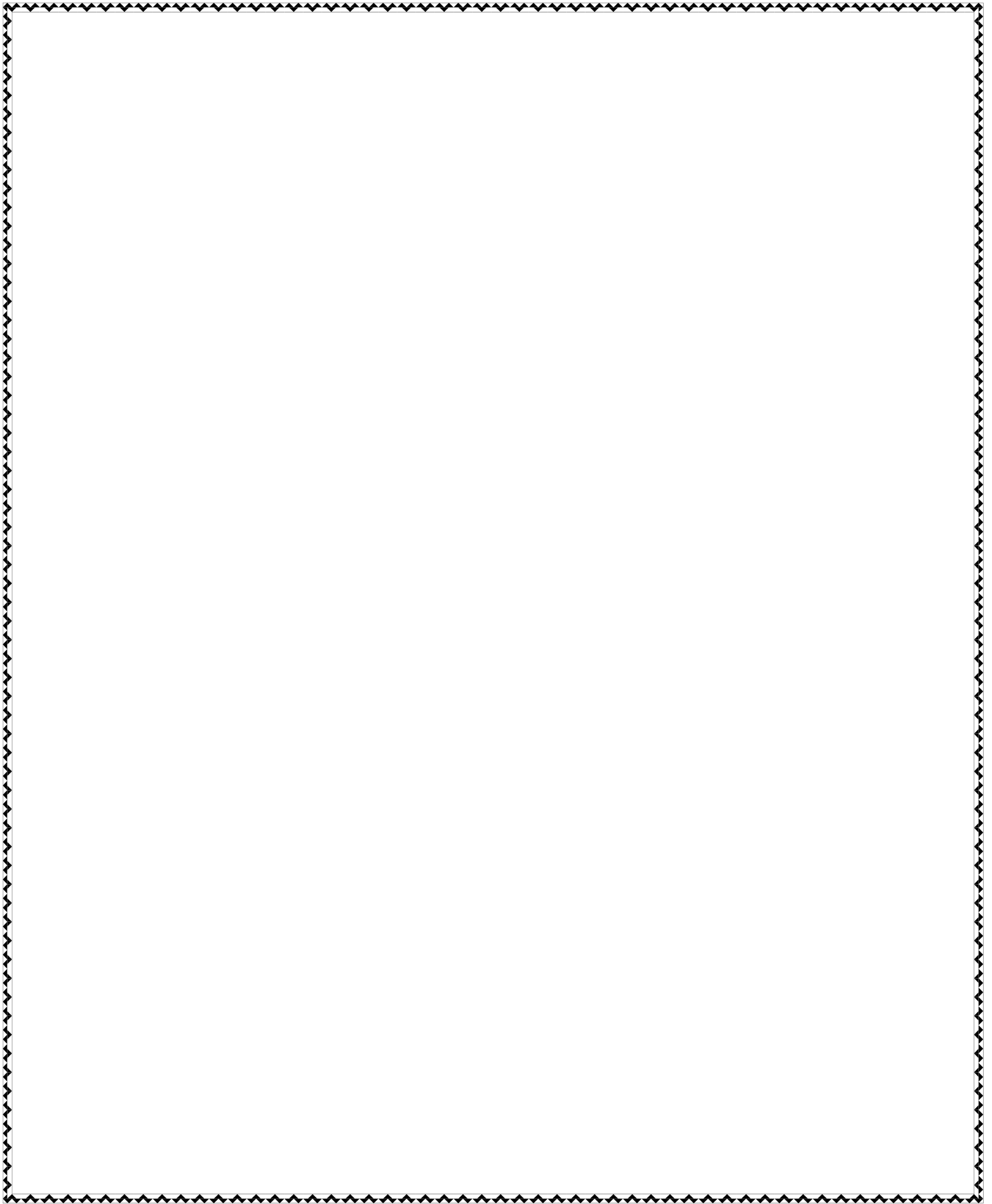
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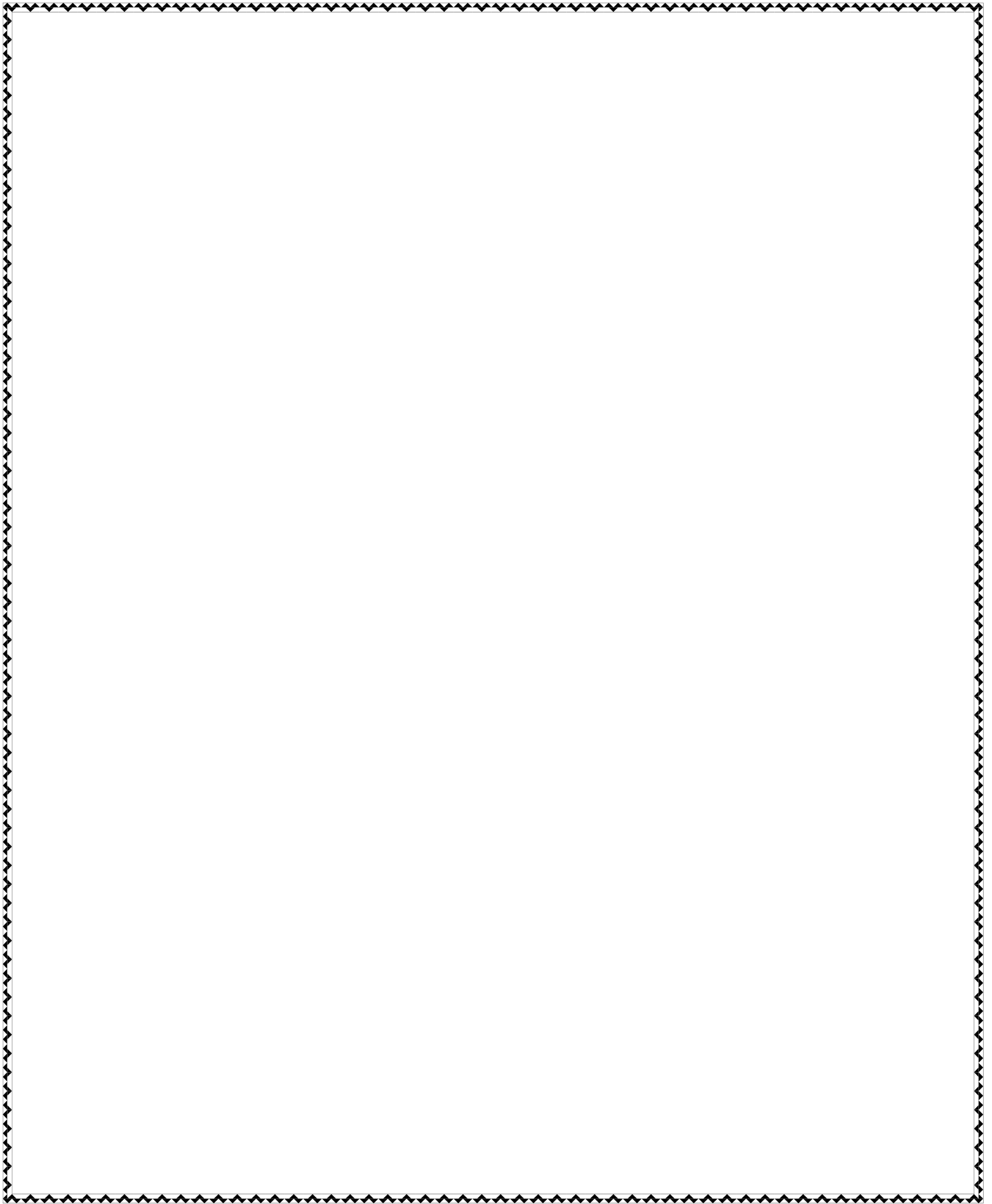


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## Message from the President, WBSEBOA

Sri Sudip Das  
President, WBSEBOA



The pandemic which put the world on pause, unfortunately also delayed the publication of this edition of Synergy. However, it is said that all good things come to those who wait, and since we have all waited long enough, I believe Synergy 2021 will be as enjoyable for the readers as it is enriching.

On behalf of WBSEBOA, I thank the editorial team and other supporting members of Synergy 2021 for making the magazine a medium for voicing ideas and sharing experiences at a time when face-to-face interactions between members has been limited to a bare minimum due to the pandemic. I also take this opportunity to express my appreciation and gratitude to all those who contributed articles for Synergy 2021. Last, but not the least, I thank all the readers, without whom such publication would be meaningless.

Here's wishing WBSEBOA much success and many more wonderful editions of Synergy in the years to come. Happy reading!

*Sudip Das.*

**Sudip Das**  
**President, WBSEBOA.**

**From the Desk of the General Secretary, WBSEBOA**

Sri Siladitya Sengupta  
General Secretary, WBSEBOA



Dear Friends,

On the occasion of publication of the 7<sup>th</sup> Edition of *Synergy*, the mouthpiece of the Association, I would like to share a few words with all of you. As we are all aware, the year 2020 was very crucial for the world, as well as our country, due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Consequently, we could not publish *Synergy* in due time. It was a time when we could not even communicate with each other. However, against all odds we have finally managed to publish it.

I take this opportunity to point out that the Power Sector in the country, as well as in the State, is facing some major challenges during this period due to the Electricity Bill 2020/21. We have voiced our agitation along with other Associations/Unions against such Bill. On the other hand, we have also placed our demands to the Management of all the three organizations on different occasions to safeguard the interests of our members.

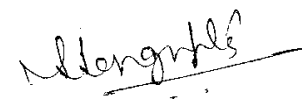
In this context, I, on behalf of the Central Executive Committee of the Association, convey my heartiest thanks to all the members (especially Sri Sayantan Ghosh) who have extended their support in spite of this pandemic situation for publication of this edition of *Synergy*. I also request all the members to come forward and actively participate in the programmes of the Association, and strengthen the platform of the Association so that we can stand up against all odds in the coming days.

I hope this issue of *Synergy* will help in understanding the present level of activity of the Association, and any suggestion from the members for improvement of *Synergy* in future shall be cordially accepted.

Stay safe. Stay healthy.

Best regards.

Date: 08/03/2021



Siladitya Sengupta  
General Secretary, WBSEBOA.

## **Message from the Synergy 2021 Editorial Team**

The year 2020 shall be etched in history for more reasons than one, the most towering of which is the deadly Coronavirus, which has the world cowering in fear. As the days passed, the world attuned itself to the “new normal”, gathering on virtual platforms for almost everything from work to school to celebrations.

As masks, social distancing, and work from home became the norms across industries, the Power Sector witnessed a paradigm shift in maintaining its business continuity.

In this 7<sup>th</sup> issue of Synergy, we have tried to de-mystify, to a certain extent, the **Power Sector of India in a post-Covid-19 World: Changes, Challenges, and the Role of HR**. The articles in this volume cover a wide variety of topics, interweaving the myriad shades of challenges that the Sector has to tide through, with glimpses of what possibly lies ahead as the Sector forays into unknown frontiers, with HR leading from the front.

We express our sincere gratitude to the Central Executive Committee of WBSEBOA, all the writers who have contributed articles, all members of WBSEBOA, and our esteemed sponsors for making this issue of Synergy possible.

We sincerely hope that the readers will enjoy Synergy 2021.

Feedback is welcome at [synergy.wbseboa@gmail.com](mailto:synergy.wbseboa@gmail.com).

## Digitization and the Changing Role of HR Business Partner

Smt. Madhulika Banerjee

Manager (HR & A), Bidhannagar Region, WBSEDCL



HR Business Partner, as a role, is coming under a lot of scrutiny and pressure in the last few years especially with more and more technology being used in HR. The HRBP role has been the role focused on getting things traditionally done within the business unit designed by the different functional verticals, while also representing the business interests in the vertical design process. With the increased use of technology in many of these verticals, this role is likely to undergo a fundamental change from the one of co-ordination to one of value creation driven by the use of technology and data.

### **Today's Scenario:**

The journey from Secretary to Personnel Officer to HR Manager has not only been just a series of changes in designation, but a paradigm shift in the cultural outlook of the organization as to how it values its most valuable asset - its people! The transaction has been a symbiotic one, wherein by attributing more worth to human resources, the organization has gained in terms of better engaged and motivated employees, which has reflected in the Company's balance sheets over the years, and garnered reputation on the national platform amongst many other State utilities.

Starting from the initial days of typing Memos, to taking baby steps to

being involved in the revenue generation process, the role of the HR Officers in the organization can be called transformational from being secretarial to being Human Resource Business Partners (HRBPs).

HRBP's role, as it exists today, does not communicate the importance of the role clearly. It remains mostly the role of someone who is supporting everyone else's initiatives, and is making sure everyone else succeeds; which is great because a good HRBP is a respected and admired individual. However, the change that is staring at us in the last few years will challenge this definition. The organizations have to recognize that the HRBP is no longer merely a partner, but a transformation agent.

The organization has invested in developing HRBP competencies, but individual attributes are only half the picture. Four organizational barriers inhibit the strategic effectiveness of even the most capable HRBPs:

- Application barrier: They are unsure of applying competencies in day-to-day work
- Partnership barrier: In most cases they are asked to provide transactional support over strategic insight
- Functional barrier: Functional group tensions that inhibit collaboration with HR

- Enterprise barrier: Lack of coordination with partners outside the organization

#### **Getting Ahead:**

However, HR of future is about being an expert at leading people and technology together, and not pitting one versus the other.

The following skills would be useful for a HRBP to progress in this changing environment:

- Listening Skills
- Be ready to change - everyone in HR talks of change till the time it affects them personally. Today's changes call for the HR to also be coached and mentored for embracing the kind of change that is happening around them
- Openness to unlearn and re-learn
- Embrace technology
- Invest in upgrading skills, especially in skills like analytics, dashboarding, futuristic HR systems, etc.

#### **Digitization - Adapt or Adopt!**

Digitization is not a passing wave or a need anymore, it will be like oxygen in future. Further, with the entire digitization projects one thing is quite clear - it does not impact any one area. Digitization impacts everything:

- i. **Employee Life Cycle:** Complete cycle that includes acquiring talent,

inducting, engaging, developing KPIs, developing competencies and/or role-related skills, career planning, succession planning, MIS, reporting, etc.

- ii. **Speed:** It can increase speed phenomenally, so HR has to be supremely agile to deal with the increased pace due to digitized solutions at hand
- iii. **Processes and SOPs:** It can change the old and internally preferred logics and SOPs, and therefore, HR has to adapt to a new way of working
- iv. **Measurability:** For ages, HR has got away by saying everything they do cannot be measured. At this point in the organization, everything the HR does is measurable. It is just that we are perhaps not looking forward to being measured. The power of digitization is a supreme force which helps in being able to connect the dots of what we do with the organization's purpose

In the face of various business process remodelling, there are scopes to rethink and reshape techniques for managing talent and ensuring they are aligned with the new strategic objectives of the organisation.

HRBP can use HR Analytics capabilities to make data-driven decisions

or design interventions based on data especially in the following fields:

### 1. Talent Acquisition

From quality of sourcing, screening, filtering criteria, evaluating on competencies, short listing, panel tracking, to final offers, today's tools do all these steps with the help of the amazing science of tracking and reporting actions, personality, profiling, and human psychology being used. The data points can be sliced and diced at any stage vis-à-vis past experience, age, experiences, assessment scores, competency scores, panel lead time to interview, etc.

### 2. Learning & Development

This involves the following:

- Identifying a training need
- Converting that need into a calendar program
- Publishing calendars
- Inviting nominations
- Arranging the training event
- Capturing post training feedbacks
- Tracking the learners after a program for a period of 6 months
- Being assessed on the job after the program
- Collecting and interpreting feedback regarding the learners from the concerned managers, or even 360 degrees

- Collecting data on utilization and impact of the program

All these inputs and aspects can be tracked in a strong analytics backed framework.

#### **HRBP - The EQ Factor**

Robots do not and cannot have a genuine heart. Emotions can be mechanized, but human touch and human feelings cannot. Human feelings and

physical presence are essential elements of us being human. Robotics can and will bring precision, but precision is not a driver of passion. Passion and internal motivation are linked with superior performance. HR can and will do exceedingly well by embracing the digitization wave as a friend and adopting it. Yet, it needs to stay emotionally intelligent to support the motivational and engagement needs of employees in these current disruptive times.

## **The Impact of Pandemic on HR and the New Normal at Work**

Sri Vivek Prasad

AM (HR & A), Diamond Harbour Division, WBSEDCL



For many workers, the impact of Covid-19 has depended greatly on one question: can I work from home, or am I tethered to my workplace? Quarantines, lockdowns, and self-imposed isolation have pushed tens of millions around the world to work from home, accelerating a workplace agreement that had struggled to gain grip before Covid-19 hit. Now, well into the pandemic, the limitations and the benefits of working remotely are clear. The virus has broken through cultural and technological barriers that prevented remote work in the past, setting in motion a structural shift in the location of the workplace (at least for some people).

From the analyses of different institutes, it has been inferred that globally more than 20% of the workforce could

work remotely three to five days a week as effectively as working from an office. If such practice was already existent, the impact on economies might have been less. However, more than half the workforce has little or no opportunity for remote work. Some jobs require collaboration with others, or use of specialized machinery. Some jobs require work to be done on-location, while some tasks have to be performed outside. Many of such jobs entail low wages and high risks. Remote work thus risks accentuating inequalities at a socio-economic level.

Remote work raises a vast array of issues and challenges for employees and employers. Among a host of other questions raised by Covid-19, Companies are now pondering how to best deliver

effective training remotely, and how to configure workspaces to enhance employee safety. Employees are struggling to find the best home-work balance and equip themselves for working and collaborating remotely. The potential for remote work depends on the mix of activities undertaken in each occupation, and on their physical, spatial, and interpersonal context. Many physical or manual activities, as well as those activities which require use of fixed equipments, cannot be done remotely, whereas activities such as information gathering and processing, communicating with others, teaching, coding data, etc. can be done remotely. There are also some tasks that can be done remotely in a crisis, but are more effectively done in person, e. g., coaching, counseling, building customer relationships, etc. Accordingly, a hybrid model that combines some remote work with work in office might be the best option for organizations that can implement the same.

Although India is globally known for its IT and Financial Services industries, the vast majority of its workforce of 464 million is employed in occupations like retail services and agriculture that cannot be done remotely.

Sticking wholly to remote work could have profound impact on urban

economies. More people working remotely means fewer people commuting between home and work every day, residing in cities, or travelling to different locations for work. This could have significant economic consequences on various industries, including transportation, auto sales, restaurants, retail, commercial and residential real estate, as well as on consumption patterns. Organizations will have to adjust their practices to capture potential gains from remote work and HR leaders will play a key role in planning and implementing those practices. Every organization will have their own pros and cons to deal with, and the top management will have to assess their market accordingly to create a win-win situation for all stakeholders. This will require the implementation of many changes, such as investment in digital infrastructure, freeing up office space, etc.

The Government will also have to be watchful in order to keep the economy stable. Some forms of remote work are likely to persist long after Covid-19 is conquered, but it also risks accentuating inequalities and creating new psychological and emotional stress among employees. Most companies will require re-inventing many processes and policies.

## **Court Acquittal and its Bearing on Departmental Proceedings**

Sri Sudip Das

Addl. GM (HR & A), Corporate Vigilance Cell, WBSEDCL



Critical questions of law are raised regarding whether acquittal from charges by criminal court has any bearing on continuation of departmental proceedings against any accused employee. Before answering this question, an understanding of the terms "charges" and "acquittal" is necessary. Explanations for "criminal liability" and "civil liability" are required as well.

### **What is Charge?**

A charge is the precise formulation of the specific accusation made against a person who is entitled to know its nature at the earliest stage. It consists of a notification to the accused of the offence which he is alleged to have committed, and which he is required to plead. The charge must state the offence with which the accused is charged. It is generally formulated after the investigation into the

case is over. It must be specific and timely. In a summary trial of a summons case, framing of formal charge is not necessary, but in warrant cases, formal framing of the charge is necessary.

### **Contents of Charge**

Section 211 to 213 Criminal Procedure code (CrPC) explains what the contents of a charge should be.

Section 211 reads:

“(1) Every charge under this Code shall state the offence with which the accused is charged.

(2) If the law which creates the offence gives it any specific name, the offence may be described in the charge by that name only.

(3) If the law which creates the offence does not give it any specific name, so much of the definition of the offence must be stated

to give the accused notice of the matter with which he is charged.

(4) The law and section of the law against which the offence is said to have been committed shall be mentioned in the charge.

(5) The fact that the charge is made is equivalent to a statement that every legal condition required by law to constitute the offence charged was fulfilled in the particular case.

(6) The charge shall be written in the language of the Court.

(7) If the accused, having been previously convicted of any offence, is liable, by reason of such previous conviction, to enhanced punishment, or to punishment of a different kind, for a subsequent offence, and it is intended to prove such previous conviction for the purpose of affecting the punishment which the Court may think fit to award for the subsequent offence, the fact, date and place of the previous conviction shall be stated in the charge; and if such statement has been omitted, the Court may add it at any time before sentence is passed."

**Particulars as to time, place and person:**

"An accused person is entitled to know, with certainty and accuracy, the exact nature of the charge brought against him. Unless he has this knowledge, he would be seriously prejudiced in his defence"

[Chittaranjan Das, (1963), AIR, SC 1696]

However, where it is not possible for the prosecution to mention particulars precisely having regard to the nature of the information available to the prosecution, failure to mention such particulars may not invalidate the charge.

[Ranchhod Lal (1965), AIR, SC 1248]

Section 212 of CrPC prescribes for the same and reads as under:

"(1) The charge shall contain such particulars as to the time and place of the alleged offence, and the person (if any) against whom or the things (if any) in respect of which it was committed, as are reasonably sufficient to give the accused notice of the matter with which he is charged.

(2) When the accused is charged with criminal breach of trust or dishonest misappropriation of money or other movable property, it shall be sufficient to specify the gross sum or, as the case may be, describe the movable property in respect of which the offence is alleged to have been committed, and the dates between which the offence is alleged to have been committed, without specifying particular items or exact dates, and the charge so framed shall be deemed to be a charge of one offence within the meaning of section 219; provided that the time included between the first and last of such dates shall not exceed one year."

**Addition or Alteration of Charge:**

“(1) Any Court may alter or add to any charge at any time before judgment is pronounced.

(2) Every such alteration or addition shall be read and explained to the accused.

(3) If the alteration or addition to a charge is such that proceeding immediately with the trial is not likely, in the opinion of the Court, to prejudice the accused in his defence or the prosecutor in the conduct of the case, the Court may, in its discretion, after such alteration or addition has been made, proceed with the trial as if the altered or added charge had been the original charge.

(4) If the alteration or addition is such that proceeding immediately with the trial is likely, in the opinion of the Court, to prejudice the accused or the prosecutor as aforesaid the Court may either direct a new trial or adjourn the trial for such period as may be necessary.

(5) If the offence stated in the altered or added charge is one for the prosecution of which previous sanction is necessary, the case shall not be proceeded with until such sanction is obtained, unless sanction has been already obtained for a prosecution on the same facts as those on which the altered or added charge is founded.”

**Acquittal:**

“If, after taking the evidence for the prosecution, examining the accused and hearing the prosecution and the defence on the point, the Judge considers that there is

no evidence that the accused committed the offence, the Judge shall record an order of acquittal.”

**Entering upon defence:**

“(1) Where the accused is not acquitted under section 232, he shall be called upon to enter on his defence and adduce any evidence he may have in support thereof.

(2) If the accused puts in any written statement, the Judge shall file it with the record.

(3) If the accused applies for the issue of any process for compelling the attendance of any witness or the production of any document or thing, the Judge shall issue such process unless he considers for reasons to be recorded, that such application should be refused on the ground that it is made for the purpose of vexation or delay or for defeating the ends of justice”

**Arguments:**

“When the examination of the witnesses, if any, for the defence is completed, the prosecutor shall sum up his case and the accused or his pleader shall be entitled to reply; provided that where any point of law is raised by the accused or his pleader, the prosecution may, with the permission of the Judge, make his submissions with regards to such point of law”

**Judgments of acquittal or conviction:**

"(1) After hearing argument and points of law, if any, the Judge shall give a judgment in the case where charge has been framed, the Magistrate finds the accused not guilty. Then there may be judgement of acquittal or otherwise the charges framed are proved and it ends with guilt of the accused and conviction.

(2) If the accused is convicted, the Judge shall, unless he proceeds in accordance with the provisions of Section 360, hear the accused on the question of sentence, and then pass sentence on him according to law"

**AIR 2019 SUPREME COURT 4308:**

L. NAGESWARA RAO AND HEMANTA GUPTA, JJ.

Civil Appeal No. 7279 of 2019 (Arising out of SLP (C) No. 25909 of 2013), dated 16/09/2019.

Karnataka Power Transmission Corporation Limited, Represented by Managing Director (Admin. and HR) vs. C. Nagaraju & Anr.

Prevention of Corruption Act (49 of 1988), Sections 7, 13(1) (d), (2).

In the present case, the prosecution witnesses turned hostile during the criminal trial.

In WA No. 17495 of 2011, dated 13/08/2020 (Karnataka), the accused employee was acquitted by the Criminal Court on the ground that the prosecution

could not produce any credible evidence to prove the charge. On the other hand, the complainant and other witnesses appeared before the Inquiry Officer and deposed against employee. The evidence available in the Departmental Inquiry is completely different from that led by the prosecution in criminal trial. **It is settled law that acquittal by a Criminal Court does not preclude a Departmental Inquiry against the delinquent Officer.** The Disciplinary Authority is not bound by the judgment of the Criminal Court if the evidence that is produced in the Departmental Inquiry is different from that produced during the criminal trial. The object of a Departmental Inquiry is to determine whether the charged employee is guilty of misconduct under the conduct rules for the purpose of determining whether he should be allowed to continue in service. The standard of proof in a Departmental Inquiry is not strictly based on the rules of evidence. The Order of Dismissal, which is based on the evidence before the Inquiry Officer in the Disciplinary Proceedings, which is different from the evidence available to the Criminal Court, is justified and needs no interference by the High Court.

The judgment of the High Court by which the Order of Dismissal of Respondent No. 1 from service was set aside is the subject matter of this appeal. Respondent No. 1 was appointed as a Meter Reader-cum-Clerk in the Karnataka Power Transmission Corp. Ltd. (KPTCL) in

the year 1974. He was promoted to Jr. Engineer in the year 1997. On 21/06/2003, the Addl. Register of Enquires - I, Karnataka Lokayukta, Bangalore framed charge against the Respondent.

Mr. Chandrasekhar, who was an electrical contractor, submitted a complaint in which it was stated that he made an application for electrical connection in favour of an applicant for connection. He alleged in the complaint that Respondent No. 1 demanded a bribe of ₹1,250/- for giving the electricity connection. After negotiation, the amount of bribe was reduced to ₹750/-. Unwilling to pay the illegal gratification, Mr. Chandrasekhar lodged a complaint before the Lokayukta Police on 15/05/1998. A case was registered u/s 7, 13(1)(d) read with Section 13(2) of the PC Act. A trap was laid, and the accused employee was caught accepting the amount ₹750/- from Mr. Chandrasekhar. The right hand of the employee was washed in Sodium Carbonate Solution and it turned into pink colour. The complainant appeared before the Inquiry Officer and deposed against accused employee about demand and acceptance of illegal gratification. That apart, the complainant, Mr. Chandrasekhar, also gave details about the trap laid down by the Lokayukta Police. Mr. Santosh Kumar, Deputy Superintendent of Police, who conducted the trap was examined as PW-3. After taking into account the evidence, the Inquiry Officer held the employee guilty of

the charge. Considering the gravity of misconduct in demanding and accepting illegal gratification, the Disciplinary Authority found the accused employee not fit to continue in service.

Acquittal by a Criminal Court could not debar an organization from exercising the power to conduct Departmental Proceedings in accordance with Rules and Regulations. The two proceedings, Criminal and Departmental, are entirely different. They operate in different fields and have different objectives. In Disciplinary Proceedings, the question is whether the charged employee is guilty of such misconduct as would merit his removal from service or a lesser punishment, as the case maybe, whereas in Criminal Proceedings, the question is whether offences registered against him under the PC Act are established, and if established, what sentence should be imposed upon him. The standard of proof, mode of enquiry, and rules governing enquiry and trial in the two cases are significantly distinct and different.

In the matter of Sandip Hazra, who happened to be a Hd. Assistant under Burdwan Region, WBSEDCL, Vigilance Enquiry could not be started due to the fact that Sri Hazra was in jail custody when he was charged with misappropriation of the Company's revenue in the year 2014 by making payment entries against large number of L & MV consumers fraudulently

through misuse of his User Id, even though those consumers could not produce any payment receipt. FIR was lodged by the Company against Sri Hazra. Thereafter, he was acquitted by the Ld. Sessions Court, Burdwan, but the Company challenged that Order by filing for revision, which is currently pending before the Hon'ble Calcutta High Court. The stalled enquiry process has already been resumed as mere acquittal by the Court will not come in the way of continuing the process.

**Civil liability vis-a-vis Criminal liability under the Electricity Act, 2003:**

In the matter of WP No. 18100 (W) of 2000

Sudhir Kumar Mondal & Anr. vs. WBSSEDCL & Ors.

The writ petitioners prayed for refund of a sum of ₹1,46,139/- which was paid by them under provision of Section 126 of the Electricity Act, 2003 as Final Assessment Bill raised by WBSSEDCL against theft of electricity. The contention of the writ petitioners was that since they had been acquitted of the charge of theft of electricity u/s 135 of Electricity Act, 2003 by the Criminal Court after a full-fledged trial, the Final Assessment Bill raised and duly paid by them in terms of Section 126 of the Act should stand nullified, and the said amount should be refunded to them. The Hon'ble Calcutta High Court, on 16/05/2012, held that "adjudication of claims for unauthorised use of electricity u/s 126 of the Electricity Act operates in an entirely

different field from prosecution of an offence u/s 135 of the said Act. There may be cases where an individual may be subject to both the proceedings simultaneously. In spite of that, the purpose and object of the two proceedings are entirely different. One is to ascertain the liability for unauthorised use of electricity and the other is to punish an offender for committing a crime. The standard of proof of the proceedings are also different. The criminal proceedings require a higher standard of proof beyond reasonable doubt to bring home a connection while the adjudication u/s 126 of the Act is not subject to the principles of strict proof. Moreover, the liability u/s 126 of the Act arises on mere finding of unauthorised user, while the ingredients of the offence u/s 135, which require to be proved, are quite different".

So, the Hon'ble Calcutta High Court felt that findings of the Criminal Court would not have a binding effect on the action of the statutory authority and would not nullify the bill raised against the consumer u/s 126 of the Act. So the petitioners are not entitled to refund of the amount paid by them as final assessment merely on the ground that they have been acquitted of the charge of theft of electricity.

In WP 19087 (W) of 2007

Abdulla Mia vs. WBSSEDCL & Ors

The Hon'ble Calcutta High Court felt that offences under the Electricity Act, 2003 for pilferage is to be tried by the Criminal Court, as such offence is punishable u/s 135 of the Act. Such punishment has nothing to do with petitioner's civil liability towards Distribution Company. If the petitioner has been acquitted by the Criminal Court on merits, he is at liberty to use the judgement of the Criminal Court in support of his contention of not being guilty of pilferage. However, he has to defend himself in the Civil Proceedings initiated by the Authority by making provisional assessment, and thereafter, final assessment.

The mere fact of his acquittal by the Criminal Court cannot, *ipso facto*, absolve him from the liability of payment of the energy bills finally assessed by the Distribution Company.

The same contention has been echoed in the reported judgement of the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India ((2012) 2 Sec 108) in the case of Executive Enginner, Southern Electricity Supply Company of Orissa Ltd. (Southco) & Anr. vs. Sri Seetaram Rice Mill. It was held that in the case of theft of energy, element of unauthorised use of electricity would definitely be involved.

Admitted fact is that two parallel proceedings, one section 126 of Electricity Act, and another Section 135 of Electricity Act, came to be initiated against the consumers. Even if proceedings u/s 135 of the Act end in acquittal, assessment order

can still stand u/s 126 of Electricity Act. According to the writ petitioners, in the light of the observations of the Apex Court (Hon'ble Supreme Court of India), they need not pay the assessment amount. However, this is misinterpretation of the observations of the Apex Court, u/s 135 of the Act, the penal proceedings to punish the accused person charged with theft of electricity is dealt with.

Element of unauthorised use of electricity or energy does not implicitly result in prosecution u/s 135 of the Act. There are two different provisions. One is a civil action for recovery of amounts towards the consumption of electricity, and the other is penal action against the act of theft of energy.

So, their Lordships have categorically held that the proceedings u/s 126 and u/s 135 of the Act stand on separate and independent footing, and are mutually exclusive. Thus, there is no justification in the stand that in the light of acquittal of the accused in the proceedings u/s 135 of the Act, there should not be any assessment of consumption charges (Basudeb Paine Vs WBSEDCL & Ors., MAT No. 263 of 2015 with CAN 2584 of 2015, High Court, Calcutta).

So, meeting up of civil liability shall not automatically absolve the charges of criminal liability of the accused person as well. Compounding of offence u/s 152 of Electricity Act shall be necessary.

## **Transition from Management to Engagement of Contract Labour**

Sri Partha Sarathi Chatterjee  
GM (HR & A), WBPDC/DPL



Contractual workers, whether in organized or unorganized sector, are now the mainstream of service providers in production. They are instrumental in generating revenue growth of industrial sectors. Recognition was given to them over five decades ago by the Indian legislature, and the Contract Labour (Regulation & Abolition) Act, 1970 was implemented. The socio-economic impact of contractual workers' contribution is yet to be assessed in a realistic perspective.

Interestingly, the great Indian epics *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana* depict the struggles of contractual warriors. Whether the *Vanar Sena* or *Narayani Sena*, these soldiers fought for others. Such instances are common not only in ancient

civilizations, but spans through the medieval era right down to the modern age.

The process and rationale behind deployment of contractual workers need further elaboration. As of now, the reason behind deployment of contractual workers in any industry is centered around the flexibility of utilizing the labour force, as well as the specialized skill they possess.

So far, the expert domain of HR/IR professionals has been limited to citing case studies of judicial pronouncements related to deployment of contractor workers. However, now a more holistic approach regarding whether or not to employ contractual labour, and the terms and conditions through which they are to be employed are being taken up by the HR/IR

professionals. This has led a specialized competency framework, and it is termed "Contract Labour Management". B-schools and other similar training Institutions have been dedicated courses for developing the competency of Contract Labour Management.

A long time has passed since the Contract Labour (Regulation & Abolition) Act came into force in the year of 1970. It is a fact that the strength of contractual workers in organized industries has increased manifold. It is estimated that currently around 36% of workforce in the organized sector of India are contractual workers. There exists opportunity for high volume of employment in this category. The categorization of contractual labourers has also taken varied shapes. There are platform workers, gig workers, and outsourced workers, depending on the type of Industry.

Industry itself is passing through turbulent waters. As a natural evolution of its image, it has accepted with open arms its transformation through mergers, acquisitions, and outsourcing that may be classified into COFO, FOFO, and FOCO. COFO stands for Company Owned Franchise operated, FOFO stands for Franchise owned Franchise operated, and FOCO stands for Franchise Owned Company Operated. The status of contractual workers in such concerns is a point to be pondered upon. The question of

how the applicable laws are to be interpreted in such changing circumstances is moot.

This radical change, along with the current pandemic situation where work from home (WFH) is becoming the new norm for the workforce, has forced us to review the issue of contractual labour management. The basic objective of management is confined to the narrow scope of looking at contract labour through a long-range telescope. It calls for a defensive approach, associated with legal interpretation and application of IR techniques. Statutory compliance is a major part of this management. The Company generally believes in man-management of contractual labourers while modern HR concepts like talent acquisition, talent management, compensation structuring, and social security benefit are reserved for employees on the payroll. A realistic perspective on changing characteristics of contractual workers is still missing while deliberating on this issue.

Recent alarming instances of violence perpetrated by contractual workers in industries located in different states are compelling indicators for changing our approach towards employment of contractual workers. The law is not the answer. Be it the Maruti Suzuki factory in Manesar, or the Wistron factory in Bangalore, the writing on the wall is becoming clearer with each passing

day. The changing demographics of the contractual workforce in terms of literacy and aspiration needs special care and more trustworthy, professional practices from the side of the Management to tackle these situational eventualities. It is an opportune time for the confluence of ideas emerging from HR and IR industrial practices to be applied judiciously and reasonably.

The issues that are generally related to deployment of contract labour are as follows:

- Disparity in the wage structure compared to similarly placed regular employees
- Permanency
- Different benefits/allowances
- Lack of job security
- Lack of training/skill building
- Non-acceptance in the organizational profile
- Discriminatory terms and conditions of employment

The overall policy of the Company is guided by these characteristics, and herein lies the contradiction that leads to tense IR situations. The Unions are now concentrating on these issues, albeit to serve its political and vested interests at times. But the difference in treatment that the contractual workers face cannot be ruled out. That is why the approach towards management of contract labour should be converted to engagement. This

paradigm shift acknowledges them as part of the workforce of the Company who are equally responsible for its growth. All HR/IR policies should be aligned with this demarcated route to ensure smooth flow of traffic without hindrance. The labour laws already passed by the legislature strive to address this issue. However, the challenge faced by HR/IR professionals is to overcome the barrier to approach embedded over the years.

Recruitment of contract labourers through well-defined processes should be considered, and must not be left to the whims of the contractor. Since the Hon'ble Court usually delivers judgment in realistic parlance, legal implications need not be feared. They should be provided with fair wages and congenial working environment. Benefits, allowances, and other welfare aspects should be provided at par with similarly placed workers on the payroll. Undoubtedly, the flexibility that the engagement of contract labour allows offers competitive advantage, but this should not mean depriving them with humane opportunities. They are to be accepted on the same level as mainstream workforce.

Permanency is so sensitive an issue that it is often feared that the contractual workers' Union will blame the principal employer if any legal discrepancy is noticed. This fear psychosis often manifests while dealing with trivial issues regarding contractual workers that unnecessarily

causes a tug-of-war. It is better to explain permanency in terms of appointment, wages, benefits, and social security structuring as expected by the workers. A lot of organizations offer the opportunity of absorption of contractual workers phase-wise into their payrolls through various schemes, such as the one initiated by a renowned cement Company. This inculcates a spirit of emotional attachment from those workers. In turn, they become disciplined and interested in skill building, and the Company also benefits from having a ready-made trained workforce.

Astonishingly, the management of the multi-national Company Wistron (licensed manufacturer of Apple gadgets) has introduced 12 working hours per day for contractual workers, but has refused to pay overtime. Even basic necessities like adequate break/recess time within the workday has been denied. The foreign Companies are setting up plants in India, but are refraining from compliance of basic laws of the land that are related to human rights. This cultural mismatch and non-recognition of the fundamental right to live with dignity plays a major role in the disgruntlement of contractual workers.

The dogmatic issue of contract labour needs trimming. A professional approach for engagement of contract labour needs to be part of the core competence of a

HR/IR official rather than managing them. Progressive attitude towards tackling contract labour issues over past practices needs to be cultivated, as new directional change is knocking at the door. Labour code, in its wider coverage, should include the vast majority of unorganized workers to allow them to enjoy social security benefits, minimum wages, and better service conditions, since that is the mirror through which it would reflect the views of the Government. A change in approach for engaging contract labour shall herald a new addition to the HR practices of the nation. HR/IR objectives and policies should not be static. They should adapt to the demands for belongingness of contractual workers, whose aspirations should be shown due respect through a progressive HR approach based on a spirit of mutual respect and recognition rather than leaving it to be handled by the agencies. This is the aspect that has been repeatedly emphasized for engagement rather than management of contractual workers. Engagement, enrichment, and enlightenment of irregular/informal workers, a. k. a. contractual workers cannot be denied further, and initiatives must be taken towards gainful involvement of their productive capabilities. The future of industry rests on this significant transformation of approach for dealing with contractual workers.

## **Work Dynamics in Covid-19**

Sri Suprio Ghosh

Manager (HR & A), R & MP Cell, WBSEDCL



The unthinkable has set rolling the worst nightmare of all times, the Covid-19 virus has inevitably made its way to India! It has profoundly affected our daily lives. Companies have downsized their operations with fear of uncertainty taking grip, pay cuts have become common phenomenon, and unemployment has reached an all time high, with layoffs becoming go-to measure for Companies to ensure its sustainability in these difficult times.

### **Impact upon Important Sectors**

#### **a. Public Services**

With the State playing a greater role, the public services have been placed in the forefront. Public services have been kept operational to the furthest extent possible, with reduced operations in order to keep employees safe. Public servants have played a pivotal role in containing the pandemic. Non-essential services have been diverted to provide additional support to essential categories like health care. Round-the-clock service through work shifts has helped maintain certain other essential services in tandem. The public sector employees, along with outsourced workforce have acted as prime agents in this disaster management programme,

which would otherwise have been very difficult to accomplish by the private sector alone.

However, the State now has to take on a much broader role that includes raising the health services budget substantially, bringing about policy reforms to safeguard the interests of the weaker sections of the society (especially the unorganized sector and the citizens below poverty line), imposition of social distancing norms, shutting down non-essential services, enforcing hygiene requirements, mobilizing various Government machineries (including support services) to provide uninterrupted emergency services, and many more. All of such measures do not mandate close evaluation for efficacy, since everyone is facing the same crisis, and the Government is making an all out effort to curb the pandemic to protect the masses.

**Impact:**

If these frontline workers become ill while rendering selfless service to the community, they will be victims of stigma and discrimination, which is still prevalent in our so-called progressive and liberal society. Law enforcement officials sandwiched between Government directives, political interventions, and communal groups with different socio-cultural norms often have to face violence from the citizens who resist restrictive measures. Work-from-home concept is a

remote possibility in most cases. Delay in payment of wages, temporary curtailment of employee benefits, etc. lead to financial strains on Government employees.

**b. IT & ITES**

Organizations with sufficient cash reserves have been able to shift its core functioning system to work-from-home and/or flexitime models, and have divulged in various technology upgradation schemes for providing smooth services to its valuable clients. Even in these difficult times, certain jobs seem to have drastically gained ground, such as cyber security, online training solutions (upskilling), skilled workforce in the healthcare sector (diagnostics, emergency, pharmaceuticals, etc.), online distribution and logistic chain management, and skilled jobs in the telecom industry (providing internet solutions). Companies are also extending greater support in handling the unusual scenarios to retain its customer base.

**Impact:**

With the onset of the pandemic, many Companies continue to grapple with the need to digitize its business operations. Organizations not being able to comply with IT and physical security policies mandated by clients/firms lead to unnecessary delay in the project timelines. The ability to provide remote support often gets jeopardised due to access hindrances or network connectivity issues. The flow of

discretionary spending on technology has increased manifold even though many Companies are otherwise struggling to find funds to survive. This has, in turn, taken a toll on the workforce, which is the backbone of the entire system. The working hours in the new normal regime has actually resulted in extended workdays, posing greater challenges in their work-life balance, often induced with disruptive levels of emotional stress and burnout amongst the employees. This has affected the female workforce more acutely due to friction between their home commitments, personal space, and work identity (some are even forced to quit jobs to look after children due to non-availability of other support services).

### **c. Education**

The education sector has seen an overnight shift from the standard offline system of learning to knowledge exchange entirely through online mode, which is gradually developing into a well-balanced learning platform. With greater integration with various online tutorials, students are finding it easy to grasp information, and there is greater opportunity to know the unknowns through the advanced search engines. This has increased their freedom to undertake online projects, crafts, access gaming zones, etc. which is a perhaps the only possible substitute for all their pre-pandemic physical activities which had to be suddenly stopped.

### **Impact:**

It certainly had a deep impact on their lifestyle, with the students rarely stepping out of their homes for extra-curricular activities, which is an absolute necessity for holistic growth of a child. The screen-time got longer, causing various health problems. Learning through observation in the physical environment, and non-verbal communication through interaction with peers and teachers has totally come to a halt. A large section of students is also facing difficulty in coping with the changed learning environment due to financial constraints. Especially in the Government schools (which used to be supplemented through Government aided mid-day meals) that are now totally closed, the percentage of school drop-outs has drastically increased. The teachers also have a Herculean task of disseminating the information in a way that would be best understood by the students, and finding the opportunity to assess their performances with limited interaction.

### **d. E-commerce**

Digital talent transformation continues to take shape and one such sector is digital sales. E-commerce sites are developing into Internet-of-things (IoT), and Artificial Intelligence (AI) is being used extensively to enhance efficiencies and competitiveness, marking a shift from a labour intensive industry to automated logistics. The demand for online purchase

for various essential as well as non-essential commodities are on the rise, with the facility of doorstep delivery being extended by most of the sellers.

**Impact:**

Hampered by demand-deficient economy, and burdened with supply chain logistics, the Companies have resorted to short-run production methods with the view to optimize the warehouse cost and cater to fast changing consumer needs. Income of the consumers have also decreased in this pandemic induced economic slowdown, and there has been a slump in consumption of almost all commodities in general, thereby weakening demand. Companies that are solely dependent on across-the-counter sales are still struggling to get basic operations back on track.

**e. Other industries: Hospitality, Transport, Tourism, Recreation, etc.**

All these industries have been immensely affected by the depletion in the earning capacity of the middle class and

upper middle class, along with the decrease in affinity for services of non-essential nature to prioritize the safety and well-being of self and others in the community. As a cascading effect, the Government's revenue fell to an all time low in terms of GST collection, resulting in sharp decrease in GDP.

The key question, then, is how the Indian service sector will emerge from the current crisis. On one hand, Government policy reforms are the need of the hour to protect industries and jobs, while on the other hand, whether the employees are physically and emotionally ready to go back to the workplace after Covid-19 still remains uncertain. The pressure for digital transformation shall remain, and the fact that Companies across all sectors maybe facing increased financial pressure will mean that many of them shall be compelled to consider outsourcing more of their operations. Amidst the present conditions, it is still a very difficult task to find the right path to overcome the impact of Covid-19, and strike the right balance for prolonged sustenance.

## WBSEBOA Events Picture Gallery



Biennial General Meeting 2019 and Central Executive Committee Elections of WBSEBOA [Picture dated: 09/05/2019]

WBSEBOA welcoming the new Assistant Managers (HR & A) of WBSETCL [Picture dated: 03/01/2020]



The WBSEBOA leadership stands united in protest against physical assault on a member of WBSEBOA while on duty [Picture dated: 14/02/2020]

Cheque for ₹5,00,000/- towards the WBSERF (contributed by WBSEBOA members) being handed over to the Hon'ble Minister-in-Charge, Dept. of Power, Govt. of West Bengal by the WBSEBOA leadership [Picture dated: 25/06/2020]





Meeting of the Kolkata Zonal Committee of WBSEBOA on 10/08/2019

Biennial General Meeting of the Midnapore Zonal Committee of WBSEBOA on 31/08/2019



Meeting of the Siliguri Zonal Committee of WBSEBOA on 28/12/2019

Meeting of the Kolkata Zonal Committee of WBSEBOA on 29/02/2020



Workshop on "Employees' Service Regulations with Special Emphasis on Discipline & Conduct" organized by the Burdwan Zonal Committee of WBSEBOA at the Science Centre, Burdwan on 30/11/2019



WBSEBOA Annual Get Together 2020 at Hukum Chand Jute Mill at Bischpur, Halisahar, Kanchrapara on 05/01/2020



Symposium + Workshop on "Employees' Service Regulations & Code of Discipline" organized by the Midnapore Zonal Committee of WBSEBOA at Burdge Town, Midnapore on 15/02/2020



Get-together of the Siliguri  
Zonal Committee of  
WBSEBOA at Lower Fagu  
Heritage Tea Resort on  
09/01/2021 and 10/01/2021





WBSEBOA members bidding farewell to Sri Atis Kumar Bhattacharya, GM (HR & A), WBSEDCL (and one of the senior-most members of WBSEBOA) on his last working day before retirement [Picture dated: 16/10/2020]



The WBSEBOA leadership extending welcome to Sri Utpal Sarkar, senior WBSEBOA member, in his new role as the GM (HR & A), WBSEDCL



WBSEBOA members bidding farewell to Sri Sabyasachi Dutta, GM (HR & A), WBSETCL (and one of the senior-most members of WBSEBOA) on his last working day before retirement [Picture dated: 29/01/2021]

## 'নেই'সব দিনগুলো

**Sri Samir Banerjee**

Addl. GM (HR & A) - Retd., WBSEDCL



৪-ঠা সেপ্টেম্বর, ১৯৮৪। চিঠিতে বলা ছিল কাজে যোগদান করতে হবে ৬, লিটল রাসেল স্ট্রিটের "Distribution Headquarters"-এ। সকাল দশটার মধ্যেই পৌঁছেছিলাম, পৌঁছে শুনলাম অফিসের বেশির ভাগটাই ইতিমধ্যে সরিয়ে নিয়ে যাওয়া হয়েছে সল্ট লেকের বিদ্যুৎ ভবনে, অতএব যোগদান পর্বটা ওইখানেই হবে। সেটা আবার কোথায়? ওই অফিসেরই একজন পথের সন্ধান দিলেন। বেলা সাড়ে এগারোটা নাগাদ পৌঁছলাম বিদ্যুৎ ভবনে পৌঁছলাম। একাই ছিলাম। ওইটাই ছিল তৎকালীন পশ্চিমবঙ্গ রাজ্য বিদ্যুৎ পর্ষদের কর্মী হিসাবে আমার প্রথম দিন।

ওই প্রথম দিনে দেখা বিদ্যুৎ ভবনের চেহারার সাথে বর্তমানের ঝকঝকে সাদা রঙের বাগানে ঘেরা বিরাট বাড়িটার মিল খুঁজে পাওয়া মুশকিল। তখন শুধুমাত্র দোতলায় দুটো ব্লকে Distribution Headquarters (Accounts Section তখনও আসেনি), আর দশ তলায়, যারা বাড়িটা তৈরি করছিলেন, সেই Chief Engineer, Salt Lake Complex-এর দফতর। চতুর্দিকে স্তূপাকৃত কাঠ, লোহার রড, ইট, সিমেন্ট, বালি,

সিমেন্ট ঢালাই মেশিনের একঘেয়ে শব্দ, নির্মাণ শ্রমিকদের হাঁক ডাক, এদিক ওদিক থেকে টুঁইয়ে পড়তে থাকা জল, একটা স্যাঁতসেঁতে অচেনা গন্ধ - এই সব মিলিয়েই ছিল রাজ্য বিদ্যুৎ পর্ষদে আমার প্রথম দিন। সময়ের সাথে আমূল বদলে গেছে বাড়িটার চেহারা, আর তার সাথেই কখন যেন বদলে গিয়েছি সেই দিনের "আমি"-ও।

৩১-শে জুলাই, ২০১৭। সারাদিন বিদ্যুৎ ভবনে নিজের অফিস ঘরে মোটামুটি একাই বসে ছিলাম। সাত ঘন্টা সময়টা যে এতটা লম্বা হতে পারে আগে কোনোদিন বুঝিনি। বিকেল চারটের থেকে ঘড়ি দেখা শুরু করেছিলাম, কখন পাঁচটা বাজবে! তারপর (হয়তো বা তেত্রিশ বছরের কর্মজীবনে প্রথমবার) ঠিক পাঁচটার সময়, টেবিলে রাখা রোজকার সাথী ব্যাগটা নিয়ে এতদিনের চেনা বাড়িটার থেকে বেরিয়ে এসেছিলাম রাজ্য বিদ্যুৎ পর্ষদের অবসরপ্রাপ্ত একজন গর্বিত কর্মী হিসেবে, শেষবারের মত! বিদ্যুৎ ভবনে ঢোকান প্রথম দিনটার মতোই এক্কেবারে একা! নাঃ, ওই শেষবারের মতো বের হওয়ার সময় হাতে কোনও ফুলের তোড়া ছিল না, যদিও তার জন্য কোনও আক্ষেপ কিংবা অভিযোগও ছিল না। ছিল শুধু এক লহমায়

ভীষণ চেনা কিছু শেষ হয়ে যাওয়ার অনুভূতি বুকের ভিতরটা অসম্ভব রকম ফাঁকা লাগছিল।

এই দুটো দিনের মাঝে ছিল প্রায় তেত্রিশটা বছর। যৌবন পার করে কবে যে প্রৌঢ়ত্বের দিকে পা বাড়িয়ে দিয়েছিলাম বুঝতেই পারিনি। ইত্যবসরে মনের গহীন গোপন কোনে জমা পড়েছে একরাশ ভালো লাগার মুহূর্ত, আর কিছু মন খারাপ করা সময়। এখন পিছনে ফিরে তাকালেই চোখে পড়ে অনেক চড়াই-উৎরাই, ঘাত-প্রতিঘাত, মান-অভিমান, আর ছোট-ছোট হার-জিতের গল্প। নিজেেকে মনে হয় কোনও এক বিয়োগান্তক কাহিনীর tragic hero! যাক সে কথা। হলোই বা বিয়োগান্তক, হতেই পারে যে কেউ মনে রাখবে না - তবুও (অন্তত আমার জন্য) এই সময়টুকু একটা কাহিনী তো বটেই!

শুরুর দিনগুলোতে কিন্তু আমরা এখনকার মানবসম্পদ বিভাগে কাজ করতে আসা ছেলে মেয়েদের মত কোনও "তৈরি জমি" পাইনি। আমরাই ছিলাম প্রথম batch যাদের প্রশাসনিক কাজের জন্য সরাসরি ভাবে প্রথম শ্রেণীর আধিকারিক হিসেবে নিয়োগ করা হয়েছিল। নিয়োগের দায়িত্ব দেওয়া হয়েছিল IIM, Kolkata-কে! তার আগে পর্যন্ত প্রশাসনিক কাজ দেখাশোনা করতেন পদোন্নতি পাওয়া (পূর্বতন রাজ্য সরকারি কর্মী) পঞ্চাশোর্ধ কিছু আধিকারিক। বয়সে এবং অভিজ্ঞতায় অনেকটাই বড় ছিলেন বলে তাঁদের কাজের মান নিয়ে আলোচনা করার কোনও অভিপ্রায় আজ আর নেই, কিন্তু তাঁদের কাজের ধরন-ধারনই ছিল আলাদা রকম।

বুঝতে পারতাম যে তাঁদের অনেকেই সহজ ভাবে আমাদের ওইরকম সরাসরিভাবে,

কোনও অভিজ্ঞতা ছাড়াই ওই চেয়ারে বসে পড়াটাকে মেনে নিতে পারতেন না (হয়তো খুব একটা অস্বাভাবিকও ছিল না)। কয়েকজন একটু অদ্ভুতভাবে আমাদের দিকে তাকাতেন। হয়তো ভাবতেন, "এই ছোকরা আবার কি কাজ করবে?"। কেউ কেউ আবার সুযোগ পেলেই, "আপনারা তো আবার Management specialist" গোছের কটাক্ষ করতেন! একবার তো এক উচ্চপদস্থ Engineer-ও কোনও এক বিষয়ে আমার "গেঁতোমি" দেখে রেগে গিয়ে বলেই ফেললেন, "আপনার মতো এইরকম Administrative Officer আগে কোনোদিন দেখিনি!"। দুর্মুখ হিসেবে একটা সুনাম(?) আমার বরাবরই ছিল। সপাটে উত্তর দিয়েছিলাম, "ঠিকই বলেছেন, ধুতি পড়া লোক দেখার অভ্যাস, এই চেয়ারে জিন্স পড়ে কাউকেই বসতে দেখেননি এর আগে!"। নিজেদের উপযোগিতা প্রমাণ করার লড়াইটা সহজ ছিল না - একটু সময় লেগেছিল ওই "উড়ে এসে জুড়ে বসা" তকমাটা গায়ের থেকে তুলতে।

ব্যতিক্রমী মানুষও অবশ্যই ছিলেন পুরনোদের মধ্যে। যেমন শ্রী দেবব্রত চক্রবর্তী, আমাদের অনেকের প্রিয় "দেবুদা" ছিলেন ওইরকমই এক উজ্জ্বল ব্যতিক্রম। শুনেছি প্রশাসনিক কাজের জন্য পেশাদারি শিক্ষা পাওয়া ছেলে মেয়েদের আধিকারিক পদে সরাসরি নিয়োগ করার বিষয়ে উনি অগ্রনী ভূমিকা নিয়েছিলেন। কত কিছুই যে শিখেছি মানুষটার কাছে - নিজে কাজ জানতেন, এবং কাজ শেখানোর ইচ্ছাও ছিল। অসাধারণ স্মরণশক্তি ছিল দেবুদার, আর তার সাথে ছিলো তীব্র রসবোধ! আজকের Officers' Association-টা একরকম ওর হাতেই তৈরি।

ওই দেবুদার হাত ধরেই অচেনা চৌকাঠ ডিঙিয়ে আমার Association-এর অন্দরমহলে ঢুকে পড়া। একবার মহাজাতি সদনে Association-এর বার্ষিক সভায়, মঞ্চে দাঁড়িয়ে কেন্দ্রীয় কার্যনির্বাহী কমিটির কাজকর্ম নিয়ে অনেক শক্ত শক্ত কথা শুনিয়েছিলি। দেবুদা-ই তখনও Association-এর সাধারণ সম্পাদক ছিলেন। বাঁকুড়া, কাশিয়ং ঘুরে সবে মাত্র বিদ্যুৎ ভবনে এসেছি, তখনও নেহাতই অখ্যাত ছিলাম, কুখ্যাত হিসেবে আমার উত্তরন(?) হয়েছিল তার অনেক পরে। ওইদিনের সভাতেই সম্পাদকীয় ভাষণে, আমাকে (এবং হয়তো বা আরও অনেক কে) চমকে দিয়ে দেবুদা ঘোষণা করলেন যে আমাকে কেন্দ্রীয় কার্যনির্বাহী কমিটির অতিরিক্ত সদস্য হিসেবে মনোনীত করা হলো! সভার শেষে আমাকে ডেকে বলেছিলেন, "বাইরে থেকে দেখেছ তো, ভালই বলেছ। এবার ঘরের ভিতরটাও বুঝে নাও। এরপর তোমাদেরই তো চালাতে হবে।"

ওটাই ছিল শুরু। তার পরেও প্রায় বছর পঁচিশেক Association-এর অলিন্দে ঘোরাফেরা করেছি, কখনও কেন্দ্রীয় কার্যনির্বাহী কমিটির সদস্য হিসেবে, কখনও বা নিতান্তই দুর্মুখ, বিরোধী হিসেবে। ওই সংগঠনের মঞ্চতেই অনেকবার অনেকের সাথে মতবিরোধ হয়েছে, রাগারাগির ঘটনাও ঘটেছে, কিন্তু দুই-একটা ঘটনা ছাড়া কখনোই সেটা নিজেদের ব্যক্তিগত সম্পর্কে ছাপ ফেলতে পারিনি।

সতীর্থদের সাথে এই ভাতৃত্ববোধটা বোঝানোর জন্য একটা ছোট্ট ঘটনার উল্লেখ করি। একবার Association-এর কেন্দ্রীয় কার্যনির্বাহী কমিটির নির্বাচন নিয়ে উত্তেজনার

পারদ একটু বেশিই চড়েছিল। দুই যুযুধান panel-এর বিরোধ এমন পর্যায়ে পৌঁছেছিল যে নির্বাচনের দিন বিদ্যুৎ ভবনের বাইরে কতৃপক্ষের অনুরোধে পুলিশ মোতায়েন করা হয়েছিল সম্ভাব্য গোলমাল সামাল দেওয়ার জন্য! এই পরিবেশেও, নির্বাচনের ঠিক আগের রাতে আমার সস্ত্রীক নিমন্ত্রণ ছিল বিরোধী panel-এর জনৈক সক্রিয় প্রার্থীর চন্দননগরের বাড়িতে! সারাটা সন্ধ্যা নেহাৎই খোশগল্প করেই কাটিয়েছিলি।

অবসর নেওয়ার পরে অনেকবার নিজের মনেই ভেবেছি, এতদিনের পুরনো কর্মজীবন শেষ করে পেছনে ফেলে আসা কোন জিনিসটার অভাব সত্যিই বোধ করি? রোজকার ব্যস্ততা আর কাজকর্মের, তেরিশ বছর ধরে জীবনের সঙ্গে ওতপ্রোতভাবে জড়িয়ে থাকা ওই সংস্থাটার, নাকি অন্য কিছুর? ঘুরেফিরে একটাই উত্তর খুঁজে পাই – অন্য কিছুই না, অভাব বোধ করি এতদিন যাদের সাথে একসাথে কাজ করেছি সেইসব সতীর্থদের। হয়তো বা সবার সাথে সবসময় কাঁধে-কাঁধ মিলতো না, পায়ে-পায়ে মিলত না সবসময় সবার সাথে, কিন্তু ওই একসাথে থাকার মজাটা আর পাই না। অভাব বোধ করি সতীর্থ ভাই-বোনদের সাথে থাকার ওই অসাধারণ মঞ্চটাকে - Officers' Association - আমার ভাল লাগার, ভালবাসার সংগঠনটাকে।

একজন প্রাক্তনীর শুভেচ্ছা কোনও কাজে লাগবে কিনা জানি না, তবুও মনের গভীর থেকে চাইব ভাল থাকুক আমার ভালবাসার Officers' Association, ভাল থাকুক আমার ভাই-বোনেরা।

## Some Documents & Communications from WBSEBOA

**West Bengal State Electricity Board Officers' Association**  
(Regd. No. S/16108)  
**A United Organisation of WBSEDCL, WBSETCL & WBPDCCL**  
Vidyut Bhawan, Bidhannagar  
Block-DJ, Sector-II, Kolkata-91

Memo No: WBSEBOA/2019-21/40 Dated: 04.06.2019

To  
The Chairman & Managing Director,  
West Bengal State Electricity Distribution Co. Ltd.,  
Vidyut Bhawan (7th Fl. A Block), DJ Block, Sector-II,  
Salt Lake,  
Kolkata-700091

Sub: Consideration for early release of 29% DA, pending since July'2016 Sir,

You may be aware of the fact that since July'2016 no DA in favour of the employees serving in WBPDCCL has been allowed in terms of ROPA'2009. As a result the gap in pay in between Central Govt. Employee and a employee of State Owned Power Utilities (viz. WBPDCCL, WBSEDCL & WBSETCL) has reached to 29% as upto January'2019, which is as follows:-  
Revision in DA (from Jan'2014 to Jan'2019)

Period	Rate of DA (in %)	% hike in DA	% of due DA	Equivalent to % of DA as 7th CFR
January'2014	100	-	-	-
July'2014	102	2%	-	-
January'2015	113	6%	-	-
July'2015	119	6%	-	-
January'2016	125	6%	-	-
July'2016	132	-	7%	2%
January'2017	135	-	4%	4%
July'2017	139	-	3%	5%
January'2018	142	-	3%	7%
July'2018	148	-	6%	9%
January'2019	154	-	6%	12%
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>29%</b>	<b>12%</b>

In this context we would also like to place it on record that after implementation of restructuring in the Power Sector some times since 2003 and to attract talents in various fields to join in State Owned Power Utilities to combat the job challenges in the Power Sector the DA has been allowed to all the employees serving in aforesaid Power Utilities soon after it is announced by the Union Government and accordingly it was continued upto January'2016. Thereafter, due to the unknown reasons it has been stopped since July'2016, which has cropped serious grievance & de-motivation amongst the employees serving in aforesaid Power Utilities. (Including our members), not to speak about the sharp increase in attrition from aforesaid Power Utilities.

Sir, in this context we would like to place a comparative statement showing difference in pay only (excluding the perquisites) between a Central Govt. Employee and a State Owned Power Utilities (viz. WBPDCCL, WBSEDCL & WBSETCL) in rank of Class-II to Class-I (5th Level), which clearly shows loss caused to the aforesaid category of employees ranging from Rs. 85,373.50 to Rs. 3,12,375.80 during the period from July'2016 to May'2019 (for 34 months).

Hope, you would surely appreciate the gravity of the situation and legitimacy of our demand and issue necessary order at the earliest towards releasing due DA of 29% with its retrospective arrear effect for all the employees, for the greater interest of all the aforesaid (Three) State Owned Power Utilities.

Thanking you and assuring our best cooperation

Enclco: As stated above (in 4 pages)

Yours Faithfully,  
**Sudip Das**  
(Sudip Das) 4/6/2019  
President

**RECEIVED**  
CONTENT NOT RECORDED  
= 4 JUN 2019  
Office of the  
Chairman & M.D. WBSEDCL

**West Bengal State Electricity Board Officers' Association**  
(Regd. No. S/16108)  
**A United Organisation of Officers of WBSEDCL, WBSETCL & WBPDCCL**  
Vidyut Bhawan, Bidhannagar  
Block-DJ, Sector-II, Kolkata-91  
Mobile No: 9433240336/9874929726

Memo No: WBSEBOA/2019/61 Dated: 04.04.2019

To  
The Managing Director  
WBSETCL, Vidyut Bhawan  
7<sup>th</sup> Floor, A Block, Salt Lake,  
Kolkata-700091

Sub:- Enhancement of accrued quantum of Earned Leave from 315 days to 320 days

Sir,

You are aware that, at present Earned Leave can be accumulated maximum upto 315 days against any employee. The Company has extended the benefit of Annual Leave Encashment maximum upto 20 days w.e.f 01.01.2019. As per existing norms, an employee can get maximum cash equivalent of leave salary in respect of 295 days of the Earned Leave at their credit at the time of retirement on superannuation if an employee drawn Leave salary for 20 (Twenty) days in that particular calendar year.

So, an employee is unable to get the benefits of 300 days leave encashment at the time of superannuation. But as per the existing Employees Service Regulations, an employee is eligible to get 300 days leave encashment at the time of superannuation.

In consideration of all the above, we, on behalf of our Association, request you to look into the matter to modify the quantum of accumulation of EL from 315 days to 320 days.

Yours faithfully,  
Sd/-  
(Siladitya Sengupta)  
General Secretary

*7/6/2019*  
Office of the  
Managing Director  
WBSETCL

**West Bengal State Electricity Board Officers' Association**  
(Regd. No. S/16108)  
**A United Organisation of Officers of WBSEDCL, WBSETCL & WBPDCCL**  
Vidyut Bhawan, Bidhannagar  
Block-DJ, Sector-II, Kolkata-91  
Mobile No: 9433240336/9874929726

Memo No: WBSEBOA/2019/62 Dated: 04.04.2019

To  
The Managing Director  
WBSETCL, Vidyut Bhawan  
7<sup>th</sup> Floor, A Block, Salt Lake,  
Kolkata-700091

Sub:- Review of ex-gratia and enhancement from Rs. 7,000/- to Rs. 15,000/-

Sir,

We, on behalf of our Association, would like to bring to your kind notice that The Company is paying Rs. 7,000/- as ex-gratia since 2012. Though a considerable time has already been passed but the amount of ex-gratia remains the same in spite of increase of volume of business of the Company.

In view of the above, we would request you to review the present quantum of ex-gratia amount and issue suitable order enhancing the amount from Rs. 7,000/- to Rs. 15,000/- with effect from the current year.

Yours faithfully,  
Sd/-  
(Siladitya Sengupta)  
General Secretary

Memo. No. WBSEBOA/2019/62 Dated: 04.04.2019

Copy to:-  
The Director (HR), WBSETCL

*6/19/19*  
(Siladitya Sengupta)  
General Secretary

*6/19/19*  
Office of the  
Managing Director  
WBSETCL

**West Bengal State Electricity Board Officers' Association**  
(Regd. No. S/16108)  
A United Organisation of Officers of WBSEDCL, WBSETCL & WBPDCI  
Vidyut Bhavan, Bidhannagar  
Block-DJ, Sector-II, Kolkata-91  
Mobile No: 9433240336/9874929726

Memo No - WBSEBOA/2019/93

Dated: 04.09.2019

To  
The Managing Director  
WBSETCL, Vidyut Bhawan  
7<sup>th</sup> Floor, A Block, Salt Lake,  
Kolkata-700091

Sub:- Immediate Publication of WBSETCL Employees' Service  
Regulations for the employees of WBSETCL

Sir,

We, on behalf of our Association, would like to bring to your kind attention that erstwhile WBSEB has been re-structured by emergence two successor entities namely, WBSEDCL and WBSETCL in terms of notification dated 25<sup>th</sup> January 2007 of Department of Power & NES, Government of West Bengal and started functioning w.e.f. 01.04.2007. Though more than 10 years have been elapsed after re-structuring but till date we being the employee of WBSETCL are following WBSEBESR which was adopted in the first meeting of the Board of Directors of WBSETCL held on 12.03.2007 and unable to implement WBSETCLESR, though drafted few years back. Matter has been discussed on several occasions during the meeting with different authorities of the Company.

In this context we would also like to intimate that non-formulation of WBSETCLESR has been criticized even at different Legal forum also.

In view of the above, we would like to request you to kindly look into the matter and take suitable actions for publication of new WBSETCLESR for the interest of the employees as well as for the Company.

Yours faithfully,

Sd/-  
(Siladitya Sengupta)  
General Secretary

**West Bengal State Electricity Board Officers' Association**  
(Regd. No. S/16108)  
A United Organisation of Officers of WBSEDCL, WBSETCL & WBPDCI  
Vidyut Bhavan, Bidhannagar  
Block-DJ, Sector-II, Kolkata-91  
Mobile No: 9433240336/9874929726

Memo No: WBSEBOA/2019/66

Dated: 11.11.2019

To  
The Chairman & Managing Director  
WBSEDCL,  
Vidyut Bhawan (7<sup>th</sup> Floor),  
Salt Lake City,  
Kolkata-700091

Sub:- Immediate filling up of the vacant posts of Addl. General Manager(HR&A)

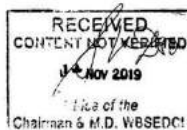
Sir,

You are aware that, 5 nos. posts of Addl. General Manager (HR&A) are lying vacant for last couple of years. Though the issue was brought to the notice of the authority in different times, different occasions for early filling all these vacant posts but no initiative as yet could be noticed.

In this context it may be noted that posts of Addl. Chief Engineers have been filled up through interview in a regular interval during this period. It is learnt that an interview is again going to be held at the end of this month for selection of Addl. Chief Engineers from Superintendent Engineers, but we are yet to hear any thing about selection of AGM(HR&A).

Under the circumstances, we on behalf of WBSEBOA, would like to place our demand for conducting of interview process for selection of candidates for the posts of AGM(HR&A) immediately.

Hope you will look into the matter and take necessary action accordingly.



Yours faithfully,  
*(Signature)*  
(Siladitya Sengupta)  
General Secretary

**West Bengal State Electricity Board Officers' Association**  
(Regd. No. S/16108)  
A United Organisation of Officers of WBSEDCL, WBSETCL & WBPDCI  
Vidyut Bhavan, Bidhannagar  
Block-DJ, Sector-II, Kolkata-91  
Mobile No: 9433240336/9874929726

Memo No - WBSEBOA/2019/56

Dated: 04.09.2019

To  
The Chairman & Managing Director  
WBSEDCL, Vidyut Bhawan  
7<sup>th</sup> Floor, A Block, Salt Lake,  
Kolkata-700091

Sub:- Immediate Publication of WBSEDCL Employees' Service  
Regulations for the employees of WBSEDCL

Sir,

We, on behalf of our Association, would like to bring to your kind attention that erstwhile WBSEB has been re-structured by emergence two successor entities namely, WBSEDCL and WBSETCL in terms of notification dated 25<sup>th</sup> January 2007 of Department of Power & NES, Government of West Bengal and started functioning w.e.f. 01.04.2007. Though more than 10 years have been elapsed after re-structuring but till date we being the employee of WBSEDCL are following WBSEBESR which was adopted in the first meeting of the Board of Directors of WBSEDCL held on 12.03.2007 and unable to implement WBSEDCLCSR, though drafted few years back. Matter has been discussed on several occasions during the meeting with different authorities of the Company.

In this context we would also like to intimate that non-formulation of WBSEDCLCSR has been criticized even at different Legal forum also.

In view of the above, we would like to request you to kindly look into the matter and take suitable actions for publication of new WBSEDCLCSR for the interest of the employees as well as for the Company.

**West Bengal State Electricity Board Officers' Association**  
(Regd. No. S/16108)  
A United Organisation of Officers of WBSEDCL, WBSETCL & WBPDCI  
Vidyut Bhavan, Bidhannagar  
Block-DJ, Sector-II, Kolkata-91  
Mobile No: 9433240336/9874929726

Memo No: WBSEBOA/2019-21/81

Dated: 05.02.2020

To  
The Director (HR)  
WBPDCI  
Vidyut Unnayan Bhavan  
Saltlake,  
Kolkata-700098



Sub: Condemning the assault on Sri Siddhartha Ghosh, Manager (HR&A)  
attached to KTIPS

Sir,

It is with great alarm that we write to you about the untoward incident of violent assault perpetrated by a mob on employees within the premises of Kolaghat Thermal Power Station (KTIPS) during office hours on 06.02.2020. You must be aware that one of our esteemed members, Sri Siddhartha Ghosh, Manager (HR&A) attached to KTIPS and Assistant Secretary of KTIPS unit of our Association, suffered serious injuries during such unruly incident and is presently undergoing treatment at a super speciality hospital in Kolkata.

We condemn the entire incident with strongest possible words. Such physical attack on employees at their workplace is unacceptable. An incident of such gross nature undoubtedly warrants stringent and exemplary action which should act as a deterrent against the recurrence of similar situations in future. It is learnt that an FIR has been lodged in this regard at Kolaghat Police Station. This is to entreat you to take all necessary steps to ensure that the miscreants are nabbed and brought to book at the earliest.

The unfortunate incident also raises grave concerns about the state of employee safety at various units under the Company. All employees expect to feel safe and comfortable in their work environment. However, such an incident of brutality within office premises has adversely affected the morale of employees and has resulted in a sense of insecurity and fear among the employees. It is imperative that safety measures at workplace be strengthened immediately to safeguard employees and curb the possibility of violent activities.

*(Signature)*  
(Siladitya Sengupta)  
General Secretary

**West Bengal State Electricity Board Officers' Association**  
(Regd. No. 5/16108)  
**A united Organization of WBSEDCL, WBSETCL & WBPDCI**  
Vidyut Bhavan: Bidhannagar  
Block-DJ: Sector-II: Kolkata-91

Memo No: WBSEBOA/2019-21/ 24

Dated: 05/03/2020

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF CEC OF THE ASSOCIATION**

The meeting of the Central Executive Committee was held on 12.12.2019 at Vidyut Bhaban.

Sri Sudip Das, President of the Association presided over the meeting.

At the very beginning the minutes of the last CEC meeting was read out and the minutes was accepted by the house unanimously.

Agenda wise discussions, as held in the meeting, are recorded below:

- **Formation of Zonal/Unit Committee & Arrangement of Seminar:** the Zonal Committee of Berhampore Zone has been successfully constituted on 01.09.2019. On 30.11.2019 Burdwan Zonal Committee arranged the seminar on Legal issues and Disciplinary Proceedings & conducting the seminar was a great success. Likewise, other Zonal committees have been advised and requested to organized such seminars on topics relevant to day to day work. It was decided that on 28-12-2019, Siliguri Zonal Committee is expected to be formed, which have been delayed due to unavoidable circumstances. The representatives from WBPDCI also assured that different unit committees of WBPDCI will also be formed very shortly.

- **Miscellaneous:** Sri Siladitya Sengupta, General Secretary of the Association informed the house about the recent developments after the last meeting of the CEC of the Association as follows:

The WBSEBOA gave deliberation to CMD, on issues of ROPA and DA for its members.

- On further discussion on misc. matter Sri B.B.Rao, treasurer stated that the previous CEC committee should provide immediately the registration list of the AGM held on 09<sup>th</sup> May 2019 and electoral list within seven days, in order to finalize the membership list. Even after repeated persuasions the documents and list of electoral have not yet been received from previous committee. Sri Rao requested General Secretary and President to take immediate action. In this regard Sri S Sengupta General Secretary, stated that it was committed by the earlier committee in the meeting 25-09-2019 to provide such documents within a week which has not been provided till date. Hence a communication needs to be made, other members also supported the proposal stating a date to be fixed within that the list must be handed over.
- Sri Siladitya Sengupta, General Secretary pointed out about existing "Dual Membership" of the technical employees enlisted in WBSEBOA, lists were

- The member list with date of birth of the member must be submitted to the concerned Zonal/Unit committee within 20-12-2019, unless the members details are received the CEC is not being able to process with the term insurance.
- The Zonal Secretaries were requested to update the subscription and submit a status report to the CEC

The meeting ended with vote of thanks to the chair.

*Siladitya Sengupta*  
(Siladitya Sengupta)  
General Secretary

handed over to concern Technical Association(s). 24 members have dual membership. It has been decided that action as deemed fit in this regard will be taken within January 2020 i.e. the members who have dual membership through a written communication. On further detection of dual membership same process will be followed, the draft of communication will be sent to the Zonal Committees and units of WBPDCI

- Name of the members holding dual membership with other Association are given below:-

Sl No.	DUAL MEMBERSHIP	ZONE
1	Kounak Sarkar	Berhampore
2	Nikhil Kr. Mondal	Berhampore
3	Asish Dutta	Kolkata
4	Partha Barai	Kolkata
5	Sumit Majumder	Kolkata
6	Sukhomoy Maji	Midnapore
7	Chinmoy Das	Burdwan
8	Nemai Chand Sau	Kolkata
9	Nikhil Ranjan Halder	Kolkata
10	Arunavo Roy	Burdwan
11	Krishnendu Kirtania	Berhampore
12	Monotosh Sarkar	Berhampore
13	Bikram Swarnakar	Berhampore
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**West Bengal State Electricity Board Officers' Association**  
(Regd. No. 5/16108)  
**A united Organisation of WBSEDCL, WBSETCL & WBPDCI**  
Vidyut Bhavan: Bidhannagar  
Block-DJ: Sector-II: Kolkata-91

Memo No: WBSEBOA/2019-21/97

Dated: 22.09.2020

To  
The Chairman & Managing Director, WBSEDCL,  
Vidyut Bhawan, 7<sup>th</sup> Floor, 'A' Block,  
Bidhannagar, Kolkata-700091

Sub: Creation of one post of General Manager (HR&A) and additional posts of AGM(HR&A) to revitalize & sensitize the HR activities of the Co. Company.

Sir,  
As you know that since emergence WBSEDCL as State owned Public Limited Company from 2007 onwards, the business of the Company and its operational area has been enlarged manifold with increase of its consumers' base nearly to 20 Million across the State of West Bengal. Further to manage with such a rapid growing consumer base & system demand the Company has continuously been endeavoring to strengthen its functioning & monitoring mechanism by opening of a good no. of new Customer Care Centers, 33/11 KV Sub-Stns, Divisions and Regional Offices, RE Project Offices in order to ensure 24x7 reliable power to all such consumers. Besides, the Company has also been operating 4(Four) major Hydel Power Stations, viz PPSF, TCFHP, JHP and RHP and few Mini-micro HEPs, functioning under Hydel Hqrs, Siliguri to enhance its inhouse generation capacity.

The present employees' strength is around 13600 against a sanctioned strength of 22,500 and it is expected such employees' strength will further increase in the years to come. Besides dealing with aforesaid regular employees the HR Officials are also to work with nearly 30000 outsourced labourers, engaged for different Tech/Line/Repair/O&M activities through different Agencies and a substantial no. of retired employees reengaged temporarily on contractual term against resultant vacant positions mainly in different Sub-Stations across the State.

As a result the HR activities of the Company have been increasing day by day with opening of its new areas of operation and substantial increasing trend in its direct & indirect employees/labour strength as well.

It may be mentioned here that at present there are 2(Two) posts of General Manager (HR&A), between 2(Two) one is earmarked for Training, Development & Performance Appraisal Management and rest one General Manager (HR&A) at the Corporate level, who is looking after the entire HR activities of WBSEDCL, a gist of which is annexed hereto for your kind perusal & reference.

Further, considering the existing work load of the departments working under HR Directorate, particularly increasing work load of ES&ER-II, R&MP Cell & other Departments, it is simultaneously felt extremely necessary, rationalize & reorganize the

Contd....P/2

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23 SEP 2020  
Office of the  
Chairman & M.D. WBSEDCL

*Siladitya Sengupta*  
22/9/2020

Memo No: WBSEBOA/2019 - 21/94

Dated: 26/06/2020

To  
 The Director (HR),  
 West Bengal State Electricity Distribution Company Ltd.,  
 Vidyut Bhawan, Block DJ, Sector - II,  
 Salt Lake,  
 Kolkata - 700091

RECEIVED  
 CONTENT NOT VERIFIED  
 Date 26.06.2020  
 Signature  
 Office of the Director (HR) WBSEBOA

Subject: Demand for modifications in ROPA 2020 of WBSEDCL and proposal for changes in promotion structure

Ref: WBSEDCL (ROPA) Rules, 2020 issued vide Office Order No. 1782 dated: 22/02/2020

Sir,

At the onset, WBSEBOA expresses heartfelt thanks for formulation and implementation of the long-pending ROPA 2020. While the said ROPA Rules has overall commendably attempted to afford a fair compensation to the employees of WBSEDCL for their services, as well as allow them to maintain a good standard of living considering the current market, there have been some glaringly unfair and inadequate components in the ROPA 2020, which warrant immediate redressal, as proposed below:

i. **Adequate increment after promotion from Assistant Manager to Manager and from Manager to Sr. Manager level:**

As per Annexure - II of the ROPA 2020, it is noted that upon getting promotion from Assistant Manager to Manager level, or from Manager to Sr. Manager level, an employee is getting a nominal monetary benefit of merely ₹100/- in excess of a regular annual increment. It is highly de-motivating for an employee to get so little monetary benefit upon finally getting his/her first or second promotion after years of dedicated hard work. Further, an increment of a mere ₹100/- at first or second promotion is extremely underwhelming, and falls quite short of expectations. Thus, necessary modifications are required to be incorporated in the ROPA 2020 of WBSEDCL to provide increased monetary benefit upon promotion from Assistant Manager to Manager level, and from Manager to Sr. Manager level as befitting such promotion. The following pay structure is proposed for promotions to Manager and Sr. Manager level:

*Siladitya Sengupta*

iv. **Removal of ₹16,000/- ceiling of House Rent Allowance:** Although House Rent Allowance @16% of basic pay has been introduced in the ROPA 2020, a maximum HRA ceiling of ₹16,000/- has been stipulated. This is especially unfair in the senior employees who would have been able to draw a greater amount of HRA as per their basic if such ceiling had not been existed, and appears to be specifically depriving those who dedicated long years of service and loyalty to the Company. As such, WBSEBOA demands that the provision of HRA ceiling at ₹16,000/- be removed from the ROPA 2020 of WBSEDCL.

v. **Uncapped House Rent Allowance for employees with working spouses:** In ROPA 2009, a clause had been included under which if the spouse of a WBSEDCL employee is also employed in service of any organization, then the maximum House Rent Allowance admissible jointly to the couple is ₹6,000/-. Yearly HRA declarations were taken from all employees by the concerned DDOs, and deductions were made from the HRA components (of employees with working spouses) by the concerned DDOs accordingly. However, such a restrictive policy is not followed by any PSU. Moreover, it is noted that in cases where both partners in a couple work in WBSEDCL, Electricity Allowance is granted to both partners by WBSEDCL without any restriction. Thus, there should not be any hindrance to disbursing full HRA to all employees of WBSEDCL without any capping irrespective of the employment status of their spouses.

vi. **Payment of Electricity Allowance as cost of a fixed number of units of electricity (at prevailing rates) instead of lump sum:** A lump sum Electricity Allowance that varies for different categories of employees of WBSEDCL has been incorporated in ROPA 2020. However, considering the periodic increments in unit cost of electricity, and the fact the ROPA 2020 shall be in effect for a considerably long period of time, it seems more logical to grant the employees the actual cost of a fixed number of units of electricity (that may vary across different categories of employees) at prevailing unit rate, rather than give them a lump sum electricity allowance. This will be a more sustainable form of electricity allowance considering the long period for which the ROPA 2020 shall remain in force.

vii. **Adequate Medical Allowance for regular medical expenditures:** Although WBSEDCL reimburses medical expenditures for medical treatments of employees and their dependents in cases where hospitalization is required, no such reimbursement is provided for day to day treatments of relatively less critical afflictions (that do not require hospitalization) or regular purchase of medicines. As such, ₹500/- seems to be too low a sum to cover such expenses on a monthly basis. Thus, WBSEBOA demands that the Medical Allowance be increased to at least ₹1,000/- per month uniformly across all categories of employees.

*Siladitya Sengupta*

Proposed Pay Matrix for Promotion to the rank of Manager and Sr. Manager			
PB - 4			
Pay Band	₹15,600/- - ₹39,100/-		
Scale	₹5,400/-	₹6,600/-	₹7,600/-
Grade Pay	8	9	10
Level			
Multiplying Factor	2.67	2.67	2.67
1	56,100	76,500	1,02,600
2	57,800	78,800	1,05,600
3	59,600	81,200	1,08,800
4	61,400	83,600	1,12,100
5	63,300	86,100	1,15,400
6	65,200	88,700	1,18,900
7	67,200	91,400	1,22,400
8	69,300	94,200	1,26,100
9	71,400	97,000	1,29,900
10	73,600	99,900	1,33,800
11	75,900	1,02,900	1,37,800

ii. **Sufficient career progression opportunities for Class - 1 Officers:** All categories of employees of WBSEDCL except for Class - 1 Officers are afforded the opportunity of 3 (three) assured promotions, while for Class - 1 Officers, only 2 (two) promotions under Career Progression Scheme are granted, and remaining promotions are vacancy based. Consequently, many Class - 1 Officers are destined to retire with only two promotions. WBSEBOA has long been demanding 3 (three) promotions under Career Progression Scheme for Class - 1 and had also proposed the same in its recommendations for ROPA Rules, 2020. Thus, the following changes to Career Progression Scheme are once again proposed to provide adequate self-actualization opportunities to Class - 1 Officers:

- **Induction Level:** Assistant Manager (HR&A)
- **First assured promotion under CPS (after 7 years):** Manager(HR&A)
- **Second assured promotion under CPS (after 13 years):** Sr. Manager (HR&A)
- **Third assured promotion under CPS (after 19 years):** Deputy G.M. (HR&A)

iii. **Payment of arrear from 01/01/2016 to 31/12/2019:** Although, the ROPA 2020 has been deemed to have come into force from 01/01/2016; it was actually implemented in practice from 01.01.2020. Such delayed implementation naturally merits payment of arrear to the employees for the period 01/01/2016 to 31.03.2019. While the arrear amount from 01/01/2016 to 31/12/2019 has been left unsettled, which is a gross deprivation of fair dues to the employees of WBSEDCL. Hence, WBSEBOA demands payment of arrear for the period 01/01/2016 to 31/12/2019.

*Siladitya Sengupta*

It is earnestly expected that the above demands and proposal shall be considered seriously by the Management of WBSEDCL. WBSEBOA is open to discussion and shall be happy to provide any clarification regarding the above.

Thanking you.

Yours faithfully,  
*Siladitya Sengupta*  
 26/6/2020  
 (Siladitya Sengupta)  
 General Secretary

**West Bengal State Electricity Board Officers' Association**  
(Regd. No. S/16108)  
A United Organisation of Officers of WBSEDCL, WBSETCL & WBPDCI  
Vidyut Bhawan, Bidhannagar  
Block-DJ, Sector-II, Kolkata-91  
Mobile No: 9433240336/9874929726

Memo No: WBSEBOA/2019/66

Dated: 11-11-2019

To  
The Chairman & Managing Director  
WBPDCI, Vidyut Unnayan Bhawan  
3/C, LA Block, 5th Floor,  
Sector-III Salt Lake City,  
Kolkata-700098

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W.B.P.D.C.I.  
Kolkata - 98

Sub: Immediate constitution of 'Working Group' for Revision of Pay and Allowances for employees of WBPDCI.

Sir,

You are aware that, Revision of Pay and Allowances of the employees of WBSEDCL is under process and a 'Working Group' has been formed for the purpose vide Office Order No: 1707 DI: 01.10.2019 of the Chairman & Managing Director, WBSEDCL (copy enclosed). But no initiative has been taken till date for formation of 'Working Group' for revision of Pay & Allowances for the employees of WBPDCI.

We, on behalf of WBSEBOA, demand immediate formation of 'Working Group' for revision of Pay & Allowances for the employees of WBPDCI.

Yours faithfully,

*[Signature]*  
11/11/19

**West Bengal State Electricity Board Officers' Association**  
(Regd. No. S/16108)  
A United Organisation of Officers of WBSEDCL, WBSETCL & WBPDCI  
Vidyut Bhawan, Bidhannagar  
Block-DJ, Sector-II, Kolkata-91  
Mobile No: 9433240336/9874929726

Memo No: WBSEBOA/2019-21/108

Date: 05.03.2021

To  
The Chairman & Managing Director  
WBSEDCL  
Vidyut Bhawan, 7<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Kolkata-700091

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Date: 05/03/21  
W.B.S.E.B.O.A.

Sub: Representations against ROPA-2020 (O.O No 1782 dated 22.02.2020) and subsequent O.O No 1900 dated 31.12.2020 issued for plugging the loopholes in ROPA-2020

Sir,

After having to wait for almost 4 (Four) years from the publication of the 7<sup>th</sup> Pay Commission by the Government of India (29.06.2016, effective from 01.01.2016) and almost 6 (six) months from the issuance of the ROPA-2019 (SS62-F the 25th September, 2019) by the Govt of West Bengal, the much awaited ROPA-2020 was published by WBSEDCL.

We must thank you, for steering the much-anticipated Revision of Pay and Allowances of WBSEDCL, but at the same time we cannot resist ourselves from ventilating various issues of discrepancies and shortcomings of ROPA-2020 of WBSEDCL, causing resentment among large sections of our members, who toil really hard, day in and day out, to manage the show of our beloved organization.

Earlier, we had the opportunity to bring many anomalies in ROPA-2020 to your kind notice and we rested our case on your wisdom and fine sense of judgement. Subsequently, our hope was raised with the formation of the anomaly committee.

But, what we have seen through the report of the anomaly committee is very demoralizing. None of the issues were addressed and not even deliberated, even the blatant errors in ROPA-2020 w.r.t. Pay matrix and other allied issues, were not looked upon.

In a nut shell the following anomalies, are, hereby presented for your kind consideration and resolution:

- A. Serious deprivation of pay in the pay-matrix i.e. Manager (HR & A) and Sr Manager (HR & A) cadres:
- I. It is needless to mention that middle level officials, in the cadre of Manager (HR & A) & Sr Manager (HR & A), who were earlier belonged to 6600/- (GP) and 7600/- (GP) in the pre-revised scale respectively (under pay band 15600-39100), are the worst affected, for such unreasonable pay-matrix.

*[Signature]*

**West Bengal State Electricity Board Officers' Association**  
(Regd. No. S/16108)  
A United Organisation of Officers of WBSEDCL, WBSETCL & WBPDCI  
Vidyut Bhawan, Bidhannagar  
Block-DJ, Sector-II, Kolkata-91  
Mobile No: 9433240336/9433101716

Memo No: WBSEBOA/2019-21/83

Dated: 25.02.2020

To  
The Director (Reg. Affairs) & Company Secretary and  
Convener Secretary of the Working Group  
WBPDCI,  
Vidyut Unnayan Bhawan,  
Salt Lake,  
Kolkata-700098

Sub: Memorandum of proposal of WBSEB Officer's Association for Revision of Pay, Allowances & other benefits i.r.o the employee of WBPDCI.

Ref: Notice bearing No: WBPDCI/ROPA/20/638 dated: 17.02.2020 of the Chairman & Managing Director & Chairman, Working Group, WBPDCI.

Sir,

With reference to the above the memorandum of proposals of WBSEB Officer's Association for Revision of Pay, Allowances & other benefits i.r.o the employee of WBPDCI for consideration of Working Group for WBPDCI is enclosed for kind perusal and necessary action.

Yours faithfully,  
*[Signature]*  
(Siladitya Sengupta)  
General Secretary

Received on 25/02/20  
25/2/20  
*[Signature]*

10. We are writing this letter in concise form, with an anticipation that the authority of WBSEDCL may find some time to read it out and do justice with some fine tuning.

We also demand to relook the O.O. No:1966 dated: 12.02.2021 through which re-designation of the officers only after completion of 25 years of service has been made without extending any financial benefit to them instead of extension of full fledged 3<sup>rd</sup> Level CPS / APS after 25 years of continuous service (AGM or equivalent). We also feel that it would be odd to fathom that Sr. Manager(s) and Dy GMs both will be running for AGM which may break the moral of the employees in future.

Yours faithfully,

Sd/-  
(Siladitya Sengupta)  
General Secretary, WBSEBOA

Memo No: WBSEBOA/2019-21/108(C)

Date: 05.03.2021

Copy forwarded for kind information and necessary action:-  
i) Director(HR), WBSEDCL

*[Signature]*  
General Secretary, WBSEBOA

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MANAGER & M.D. WBSEDCL

To  
The Chairman and Managing Director  
WBSEDCL

Sub: Promotional Path of Class-I Engineers & Officers.

Sir,

You are very much aware that there remains a long pending as well as the most legitimate demand of Creation of revised promotional path with special emphasis on creation of 3<sup>rd</sup> Level CPS for directly recruited Class-I Engineers & Officers like the other cadres of WBSEDCL.

As per the present promotional policy of WBSEDCL, all the cadres except the directly recruited Class-I Engineers & Officers of WBSEDCL are getting 3 assured promotions under Career Progression Scheme (CPS) and many of them are getting even 4<sup>th</sup> promotion, beyond CPS promotions.

While the directly recruited Class-I Engineers & Officers are getting only 2 assured Career Progression Scheme (CPS) Promotions with only few of them become eligible for Pay Level 12 i.e. equivalent to Grade pay of Rs. 8700 of unrevised scale after completion of 19 years of Service based on limited vacancies in the name of Addl. Chief Engineer/ Addl. General Manager. The majority of the cadre base is not getting any promotions due to very limited vacancies, inter-se seniority etc. After completion of 25 Years of Service, they have been given Pay Level 11 (only the Pay-Matrix corresponding to Grade Pay of Rs. 8100/-) in the newly published ROPA-2020 of WBSEDCL without giving designation.

As a result of the fact that even after starting 2 levels below at the induction level of Class -I officers, some of the other cadres are elevated to the same level where most of the Class-I cadres are completing their service through superannuation.

The above scenario is not at all desirable for the health of the organization as the present promotional policy of WBSEDCL is creating frustration and unnecessary deprivation to the cadre which are taking the signing responsibility from the very induction post. Furthermore, this exasperated promotion policy is leading towards attrition of efficient Engineers & Officers as WBSEDCL recruits Graduate Engineers, Chartered Accountants, Cost Accountants, MBA(Finance) & MBA (HR) in this class-I induction level posts.

A resolution to this gross deprivation and utter frustration due to poor promotion policy of the Class-I Engineers & Officers, we, WBSEB Engineers Association, WBSE Finance &

*Sohaj Mukherjee*  
*Mouपाली मुखोपाध्याय*  
*Siladitya Sengupta*

**West Bengal State Electricity Board Officers' Association**  
(Regd. No. S/16108)  
**A united Organisation of WBSEDCL, WBSETCL & WBPDCI**  
Vidyut Bhavan: Bidhannagar  
Block-DJ: Sector-II: Kolkata-91

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existing tasks amongst all such Departments under HR Directorate appropriately with creation of 2(Two) posts of Addl. General Manager (HR&A) for its smooth & effective functioning.

Thus, to combat with such growing need, to revamp the HR functions at Corporate Level and to sensitize the existing monitoring mechanism in HR field as well, it is felt extremely necessary (i) to create one another post of General Manager (HR&A) with adequate manning support to workout HR Succession Planning activities, viz HR Policy related issues, Succession Manpower Planning, Recruitment, Promotions, issues related to Contract Labour Management, issues related to HCM Module, monitoring of CSR Schemes of the Company etc and (ii) to create 2(Two) posts of Addl. GM(HR&A) to rationalize & reorganise the existing assignments of different Cells of HR Directorate for its smooth functioning. May kindly be mentioned that upon creation of new post of General Manager (HR&A) for HR (Planning) activities, the existing General Manager (HR&A) would look after appropriate operationalization of HR tasks. Accordingly the 2(two) posts of General Manager (HR&A) may be renamed as GM (HR&A) (Planning) and GM(HR&A) (Operation) respectively.

Sir, hope you would definitely appreciate the dire necessity and kindly exercise your good offices to consider our aforesaid proposal for creation of a new post of General Manager (HR&A) and additional posts of Addl. GM(HR&A) to strengthen & refresh the existing monitoring mechanism in HR field for the greater interest of the Company's work and filling-up the post early through interview from the exiting Sr. Managers and Addl. GMs of the Company.

Thanking you in anticipation of your favourable consideration and assuring our best cooperation always.

Yours Faithfully,  
*Siladitya Sengupta*  
(Siladitya Sengupta) 22/12/2020  
General Secretary

Accounts Managers Association and WBSEB Officers Association are submitting joint representation of the desired career path with seeking appointment of you for presenting the same before you.

As desired by you we place herewith the proposed CPS structure (The flow diagram annexed) for your kind perusal keeping in mind the substantial financial loss incurred by majority of directly recruited Class-I Engineers & Officers who could not get 3rd level promotion early owing to the factors beyond their control, like limited vacancies, inter-se seniority etc.

"At this moment the salary difference between an employees who got the promotion in first attempt after completing 19 years of service and ones who could not, amounts to Rs 50000/- approx. This huge financial disparity can only be compensated by extending the benefits of existing Special Service Linked Scheme (SSLS) with scale level 11 (earlier GP 8100) after completing 19 years of satisfactory service in place of 25 years at present for all Class-I Engineers & Officers. In this way financial loss may be compensated without allowing designation. The 3<sup>rd</sup> level CPS may be allowed with designation of Dy CE/ DGM after completion of 25 year of successful service at scale level 12." For up keeping morale of the Addl CE/ AGMs and CE/ GMs policy may be framed for up gradation to immediate next higher scale on completion of 5 years and 3 years of service respectively.

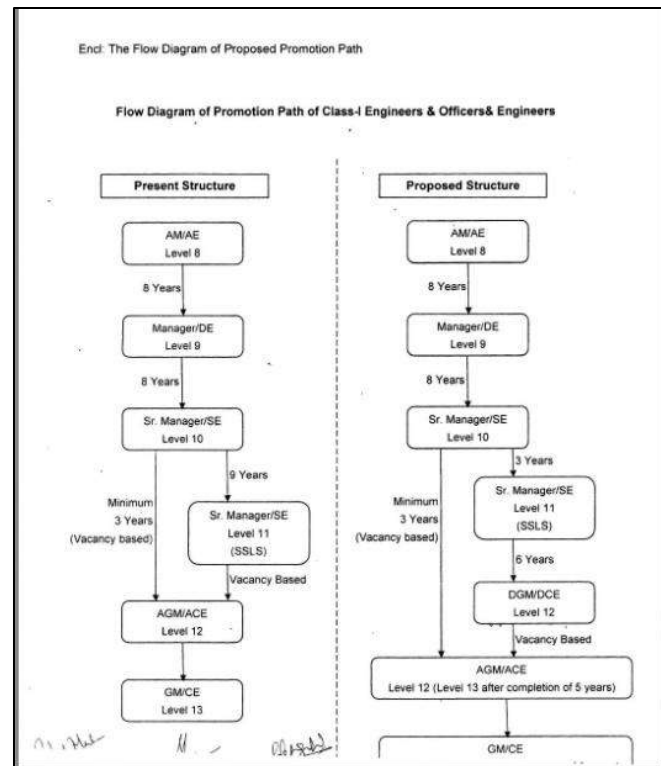
Your kind patronage and support is highly solicited.

Thanks and regards,

*Sohaj Mukherjee*  
22.12.2020  
(Sohaj Mukherjee)  
General Secretary,  
WBSE Finance & Accounts  
Managers' Association

*Mouपाली मुखोपाध्याय*  
22.12.2020  
(Mouपाली मुखोपाध्याय)  
Honorary Secretary,  
WBSEB Engineers'  
Association

*Siladitya Sengupta*  
22/12/2020  
(Siladitya Sengupta)  
General Secretary,  
WBSEB Officers'  
Association



## **The Impact of the Pandemic on HR & the New Normal of Work**

Smt. Moumita Mozumdar

AM (HR & A), Belda Division, WBSEDCL



HR professionals had certainly not imagined the challenges that Covid-19 would bring to them in 2020. The Covid-19 pandemic has tremendously disrupted the health, economies, and nature of workplaces, and HR professionals are scrambling to keep everything aligned. The sudden shift in work culture has brought new challenges for HR professionals. As the Coronavirus spreads invisibly across the globe, nation after nation declared lockdowns, and organizations had to comply with lockdown restrictions while striving to keep their operations going.

Remote work/minimal staffing policy became the immediate solution to business continuity. However, for many organizations, pivoting to online or remote work is not an option, and travelling to work each day to provide essential services

to thousands of customers or patients have led to high levels of anxiety and stress among employees. In this scenario, HR professionals have played a crucial role by rolling out new guidelines for working, such as flexible working hours and re-defined standard attendance and leave policies. Furthermore, by providing infrastructural and social support, they have endeavoured to keep employee spirits and productivity levels high during the lockdown scenario.

The front line workers operating primarily in essential services such as food, healthcare, power, etc. are now facing the challenge of continuing to perform their duties amidst the pressures of strict adherence to social distancing measures, while coping with the increased demand for goods and services. Employee safety

became the prime concern, and HR teams partnered with other functions to pave the path for ensuring safety and compliance with social distancing norms for those providing the essential services that continued to operate. Regular disinfection of premises, offices, and vehicles has become an essential component of keeping employees safe. The procurement of masks, hand washes, and sanitizers became crucial, even as supplies of the same dwindled in the market.

The nature of the virus and its transmissibility has made it clear that social distancing is going to be the new normal for at least another year. This implies that there will be major impact on routine HR practices like recruitment, on-boarding, and training. Almost every process shall have to be performed predominantly on a digital platform. However, this new normal way of work will not be without its challenges, and may create the need for some new roles,

and up-skilling of existing resources. With the current disruption to the industry, traditional ways of working have become things of the past. It is important for a HR professional to revamp the policies and processes in accordance with the new normal way of working. Technology adoption and digitalization is crucial, as it will help organizations to enable internal functions through collaboration and productivity tools for employees, and improve operational efficiency with flexible business continuity plans.

Despite the fact that the different impacts of the Coronavirus are uncertain, it is likely that the pandemic will greatly affect organizational life. Thus, it is recommended that the organizations should focus on forward thinking to maintain smooth business relations as the world strives to overcome this challenge, and HR policy should shift towards a more human-focused approach.

## **Trainer's Competencies for New Age Learners**

**Smt. Soumita Ghosh**

AM (HR & A), Corporate Office, WBPDCCL



In today's fast paced cut throat competitive world, the major challenge that lies in the way of trainers is to sustain the attention of new age learners. These learners, also called digital learners, are more overwhelmed, distracted, and impatient than ever before. They crave faster career progression, learning environment, and timely availability of information at their fingertips, and are aware of having outgrown a position and the right time to switch jobs. In the era of scrolling up and down with the thumb movement, the attention span of a learner has come down to a few seconds. Forget printed materials - today's learners cannot even read a full news article on their cell phones without scrolling/swiping to something more interesting.

Therefore, the onus lies on trainers to

carefully plan, devise, and incorporate learning techniques intercepted with suitable new age technology to grab the attention of trainees. In order to plan such a learning environment, the trainer should be keen on learning himself and become adept at incorporating technology in their regular presentations (known as digital competence). An example of this would be using smart tools and shapes in power point presentations to depict bland subject items in a fun, pictorial way.

Studies have shown that using varied learning techniques improve an individual's engagement with the topic and retention of information, and also lead to overall better outcome of training. Earlier, printed handouts were distributed with training kits to the trainees that triggered fear psychosis in their minds, and often led

to distraction. At this point, the trainer's ability to understand the learners' wavelengths, and subsequently categorize the target group according to age, designation, and nature of job, coupled with knowledge about the organization/industry comes into play. Accordingly, suitable tools like games, fact sheets, relevant news articles, case studies, and quiz may set the mood of the training. Further, learning capability of the trainees, and their career advancement goals also play a major role in preparation of the training module for the target group. For instance, a high performer with high career

developmental aspiration is already highly motivated. Therefore, arranging for motivation and domain knowledge refresher training without any planning on development of his leadership skill or skill upgradation will frustrate the employee and s/he wouldn't engage himself/herself in the programme. Therefore, a trainer must be very particular in knowing such parameters of the learner group, divide sessions based on their needs and capabilities, and design the programme accordingly. A graphical model on how the training module should be designed is given below:

<b>Career Growth Goals</b>	<b>HIGH</b>	General skill building, effective communication, team building; trainer should engage them in feedback oriented activities, quiz sessions	Leadership, building high performance teams, effective communication, stress management, specific skill enhancement; trainer should engage them in live case studies, role play, simulations, brain storming sessions, should be part of succession planning
	<b>LOW</b>	Repeated refresher training on core area, motivation, general skill development modules, communication; trainer should engage them in activities, role play, games, extempore	Specific skill building, leadership, team building, communication, stress management, refresher training on core areas; trainer should engage them in discussion of live case studies, brainstorming, feedback oriented activities
		<b>LOW</b>	<b>HIGH</b>

Apart from using ice-breaker activities for participants coming from a mixed field, anecdotes, trivia on the topic, and

relevant audio visual aids often strike the right chord with the learners' group, especially during opening of the session. Whenever the pace slackens, brief personalized accounts of

incidents and storytelling make the learning environment social and collaborative.

With increased dependency on virtual relationships, the innate quality of striking interpersonal relations with the learners brings about a level of comfort and novelty which acts as the clincher.

Lastly, sense of initiative and the ability to turn ideas that arise out of

interactive learning into some activity through creativity, innovation, and risk taking can turn a simple session into a fun and productive one. The trainers need to continually develop themselves to hone their various tools and skill of communication so that engagement on a personal level with participants can be made, which is the key to being a successful communicator.

## Raid Alert

Sri Sayantan Ghosh

Manager (HR & A), Corporate Vigilance Cell, WBSEDCL



দেখতে দেখতে WBSEDCL-এ ৮ বছরের ওপর পেরিয়ে গেলো। Corona-র সুবাদে আর কর্তৃপক্ষের বদান্যতায় WBSEDCL-এর চাকুরীজীবনের প্রথম পদোন্নতিটাও অন্যান্যদের তুলনায় বেশ খানিকটা নির্ঝঙ্গাটেই হয়ে গেলো। স্মৃতিচারণ জিনিসটা সাধারণত দীর্ঘ অভিজ্ঞতাসম্পন্ন বরিষ্ঠরা করলেই বেশি মনোরম হয়ে থাকে, তাহলেও একটু senior যখন হয়েই গেছি, তখন WBSEDCL-এর আপেক্ষিক নাতিদীর্ঘ কর্মজীবনের থেকে অল্পস্বল্প অভিজ্ঞতা উপস্থাপন করলে আশা করি সে ধৃষ্টতা পাঠকেরা নিজগুনে ক্ষমা করবেন।

WBSEDCL-এর অধিকাংশ মানবসম্পদ আধিকারিকের মত আমারও WBSEDCL-এর কর্মজীবন শুরু Division Office থেকেই। Assistant Manager (HR & A) হিসাবে দুটো আলাদা জেলার দুটো Division Office-এ কাজ করার সৌভাগ্য আমার হয়েছে - প্রথমটা হুগলী

জেলার আরামবাগ, ও দ্বিতীয়টা উত্তর ২৪ পরগনা জেলার বসিরহাট। দুটো Division-এর পরিবেশও সম্পূর্ণ আলাদা ধরণের। একদিকে Arambagh Division-এর অন্তর্ভুক্তি এলাকা মূলতঃ কৃষিপ্রধান শস্য-শ্যামলা বঙ্গভূমির একেবারে হৃদমাঝারে, অন্যদিকে Basirhat Division-এর অধীনে বহু এলাকা ভারত-বাংলাদেশ সীমান্তবর্তী অঞ্চলে অবস্থিত, আবার বেশ কিছু সুন্দরবন অন্তর্ভুক্ত ব-দ্বীপও রয়েছে।

WBSEDCL-এ আমার প্রথম posting Arambagh Divisional Office-এ। B-School থেকে বেরিয়ে প্রথম চাকরিই WBSEDCL-এ, অন্য কোথাও চাকরি করার পূর্ব অভিজ্ঞতাও নেই। এমতাবস্থায় WBSEDCL-এর একটা গোটা Division-এর মানবসম্পদ ও প্রশাসনিক কাজকর্মের একমাত্র দায়িত্বপ্রাপ্ত আধিকারিক হওয়ার প্রাথমিক অকূলপাথারে পড়া অনুভূতিটা কাটিয়ে ওঠার পর আস্তে আস্তে WBSEDCL-এর

কাজকর্ম সম্বন্ধে একটা ধারণা হতে শুরু করলো। Senior ও সহকর্মীদের সাহায্যে একটু একটু করে Division-এর কাজকর্মও রপ্ত হতে লাগলো, এবং যথাক্রমে ভালোমন্দ নানারকম অভিজ্ঞতাও হতে লাগলো কর্মক্ষেত্রে। যেকোনো site অফিসে কাজ করতে করতে WBSEDCL-এর গ্রাহকদের সাথে সাক্ষাৎ, বা কোনো কোনো ক্ষেত্রে সংঘাত হয়েই থাকে। আমি এরকম গ্রাহকদের সাথে সাক্ষাৎ বা সংঘাতের কিছু ছোট ছোট ঘটনাই আজ বলবো। ঘটনাগুলি সত্য বলে সংশ্লিষ্ট নির্দিষ্ট স্থান বা ব্যক্তিবিশেষের নাম উহা রাখা হলো।

Arambagh Division-এর অধীনস্থ এক CCC-র তৎকালীন Station Manager আমার batchmate, বয়েসেও আমার চেয়ে একটু ছোট, একসাথে কাজ করার সুবাদে বেশ একটা বন্ধুত্বের সম্পর্ক হয়ে গেছিলো। সে একদিন আমাকে এসে বলে যে তার CCC-র অধীনস্থ এক গ্রাহকের প্রচুর টাকা বকেয়া পড়ে আছে, কিন্তু সে তাঁর থেকে টাকাও আদায় করতে পারছে না, আর তাঁর বাড়ি নিজে গিয়েও বিদ্যুৎ সংযোগ কাটতে পারছে না। তাই তার অনুরোধ, পরের দিন আমি যেন তার সাথে ওই গ্রাহকের বাড়ি যাই ওনার সাথে কথা বলার জন্য। বিদ্যুৎ সংযোগ বিচ্ছিন্ন না করতে পারার কারণ জিজ্ঞেস করাতে তার কাছ থেকে কোনো সদুত্তর পাওয়া গেলো না, খালি বললো, "চলো না তুমি কাল, বুঝতে পারবে"।

Station Manager-এর কথামতো পরদিন দুপুরের দিকে ওর সাথে গ্রাহকের বাড়ির কাছে পৌঁছলাম। সঙ্গে CCC-র আরও লোকজন, সরঞ্জাম নিয়ে বিদ্যুৎ সংযোগ কাটার জন্য একেবারে তৈরী হয়েই এসেছে। গৃহকর্তা গ্রাহক

ইতিমধ্যে এলাকায় বিদ্যুৎ দপ্তরের গাড়ি ঢোকার খবর পেয়ে, ও Station Manager-এর সাথে পূর্বতন মোলাকাতের সূত্রে আমাদের আগমনের হেতু আন্দাজ করে নিয়ে ততক্ষণে বাড়ির সমস্ত মহিলাদের নিয়ে গলির মুখে পথ অবরোধ করে দাঁড়িয়েছেন। আমরা গলির কাছে যেতেই তুমুল শোরগোল পড়ে গেলো। আমি গ্রাহক মহাশয়ের সাথে যতবার কথা বলার চেষ্টা করি, ওনার একটিই স্পষ্ট বক্তব্য, "আমি labour-দের সাথে কথা বলি না, যাও তোমাদের মালিক কে ডেকে নিয়ে এসো"। আমরা বিদ্যুৎ দপ্তরের আধিকারিক, ওনার বকেয়া টাকা, এসব কোনো কিছুই উনি কানে নিচ্ছেন না, ভদ্রলোকের এক কথা, "মালিকের সাথে কথা বলবো"। উপরি পাওনা বাড়ির মহিলাদের চিৎকার-চঁচামিচি ও গালমন্দ।

Station Manager-এর দিকে তাকাতে সে করজোড়ে আমাকে বলে, "ভাই, আগের দিনও আমার সাথে একই ঘটনা ঘটেছে। খালি বলছেন মালিকের সাথে কথা বলবেন। DM সাহেব কে বলাতে উনি বললেন তোমাকে নিয়ে আসতে"। আমাদের মালিক যে ঠিক কে, সেটা বুঝতে বেশ চিন্তায় পড়ে গেলাম। নিয়োগপত্রে তো Director (HR) সাহেবের সাক্ষর দেখেছি, কিন্তু গ্রাহককে Director (HR) সাহেব আমাদের মালিক বলে ওনার কাছে কথা বলতে পাঠালে আবার Director (HR) সাহেবেরই সাক্ষর করা বরখাস্তের চিঠিও খুব শীঘ্রই পেয়ে যাওয়ার সমূহ সম্ভবনা ভেবে ওসব কথায় আর গেলাম না। অনেক কষ্টে গ্রাহককে বোঝানো গেল যে মালিক কে আনা না গেলেও, সরকারি কর্মচারীদের কর্তব্যপালনে বাধা দেওয়ার জন্য পরদিন পুলিশ কে নিয়ে আসতে পারি। এটা

বুঝতে পেরে গ্রাহক কিছুটা শান্ত হলেও বিদ্যুৎ সংযোগ কাটতে গলিতে ঢুকতে দিলেন না, তবে কথা দিলেন পরের দিন CCC-তে গিয়ে বকেয়া টাকা মিটিয়ে আসবেন। Station Manager-এর থেকে পরে খবর পেয়েছিলাম যে উনি কথা রেখেছেন।

Arambagh Division-এর অধীনস্থ আর এক CCC-র Station Manager-এর সাথে একদিন পরিদর্শনের কাজ সেরে ফেরার পথে গাড়ি থেকেই Station Manager সাহেব লক্ষ্য করেন একটা বেশ বড় বাড়িতে overhead cable থেকে hooking করা হয়েছে। তখন আন্দাজ বেলা বারোটা। সঙ্গে সঙ্গে উনি গাড়ি থামিয়ে নেমে পড়েন, আমিও যাই সাথে। দূর থেকে আমাদের হয়তো আসতে দেখেছিলো বাড়ির বাসিন্দারা। হঠাৎ বাড়ির দোতলার একটা জানালা থেকে একটা ছেলে শরীরের অর্ধেকটা বের করে একটা লম্বা বাঁশের কঞ্চি দিয়ে overhead cable থেকে hook-গুলো খুলে ফেলার চেষ্টা করতে থাকে, কিন্তু কঞ্চিটা cable-এ গিয়ে ঠেকতেই sparking হয়ে ধোঁয়া বেরোতে শুরু করে। আমাদের সাথে CCC-র আর যে কর্মীরা ছিলেন তাঁরা হইহই করে দৌড়ে বাড়ির ভেতর ঢোকেন। Station Manager সাহেব আমাকে, "দেখেছেন কান্ড, সাহেব! এক্ষুণি accident হয়ে মরবে!", বলে হন্থন্থ করে বাড়ির দিকে এগিয়ে যান।

যতক্ষণে আমরা বাড়ির ভেতর ঢুকি, ততক্ষণে ওই কঞ্চিওয়ালা ছেলেটাকে CCC-র বাকি কর্মীরা একতলায় নামিয়ে এনেছেন। সৌভাগ্যবশতঃ কোনো দুর্ঘটনা ঘটেনি। সঙ্গে আর একজন সমবয়সী ছেলেও রয়েছে। দুজনের পরনে শুধু half-pant, পাশাপাশি

মাটিতে বাবু হয়ে বসে বিহ্বল দৃষ্টিতে মিটমিট করে এদিক-ওদিক তাকাচ্ছে দুজনে। বেশ বোঝা যাচ্ছে নেশার ঘোরে রয়েছে দুজনেই। Station Manager সাহেব কে দেখেই দুজনে লাফিয়ে ওনার দুটো পা জড়িয়ে ধরে "ছেড়ে দিন, Sir, আর করবো না" বলে কান্নাকাটি জুড়ে দিলো। Station Manager সাহেব, "আরে, আরে! করছো কি? ছাড়া, ছাড়া!", বলে কোনোরকমে পড়ে যেতে যেতে সামলে নিয়ে দু'বার নাক টেনে গন্ধ শুঁকে নাক সিঁটকে বললেন, "ইস্‌স! এইটুকু-টুকু ছেলে, এই ভরদুপুরে নেশা করে রয়েছে?"। দুজনে দুজনের মুখ তাকাতাকি করে মাথাটাথা চুলকোয়, তারপর একজন বলে, "এমনিতে খাই না, Sir, কিন্তু এখন স্নান করতে যাচ্ছিলাম, তাই একটু খেলাম"। স্নান করতে যাওয়ার জন্য মদ্যপান করার প্রয়োজন কেন পড়লো সেটা জানার অবশ্য কেউ চেষ্টা করলো না।

ততক্ষণে পাড়ার লোক জড়ো হতে শুরু করেছে। আগেই লক্ষ্য করেছিলাম বাড়িটা তৈরি তখনও শেষ হয়নি - বাইরের দেওয়াল উঠে গেলেও বাড়ির ভেতরের কাজ তখনও কিছু বাকি। দুই মাতালের আধা-অসংলগ্ন বিবৃতি, ও পাড়ার লোকজনের বক্তব্য থেকে বোঝা গেলো যে ওরা দুজন জনৈক ধনী স্বর্ণব্যবসায়ীর সুপুত্র। বাড়িটাও স্বর্ণকার মহাশয়ই নির্মাণ করছেন, যদিও কাজ তখনও অসম্পূর্ণ। কাছাকাছি কোনো এক বন্ধুর বিবাহ অনুষ্ঠান উপলক্ষে দু'ভাই বাবার এই অর্ধনির্মিত অট্টালিকাকেই বেছে নেয় একটু উৎসব পালন করার জন্য, আর বাড়িতে বিদ্যুৎ সংযোগ তখনও না থাকতে অগত্যা hooking করে বিদ্যুৎ ব্যবহার করার সিদ্ধান্ত নেয়। আর যাই হোক, দুই ভাইয়ের

ভরদুপুরে বাড়ি বসে কারণবারি সেবন করার কারণটা অন্তত বোঝা গেলো।

জিনিসপত্র বাজেয়াপ্ত করে, সব তথ্য জোগাড় করে CCC-তে ফিরতে আরো ঘন্টাখানেক লেগে গেলো। CCC-তে বসে FIR লিখতে গিয়ে Station Manager সাহেব খেয়াল করলেন অন্য সব তথ্য লিখে আনা হলেও ছেলে দুটির বাবার নামটা জেনে আসা হয়নি, অথচ FIR-এ ওই তথ্যটা দেওয়ার নিয়ম। Station Manager সাহেব একটু আফসোস করে বললেন, "কি মুশকিল! আবার ওখানে যেতে হবে মনে হচ্ছে তো"। কিন্তু ঠিক সেই সময়ে অফিসে ওই পাড়ার দুজন মাতব্বর গোছের ভদ্রলোকের আবির্ভাব - ছেলে দুটির হয়ে সুপারিশ করতে এসেছেন। "কম বয়েসী ছেলে, ভুল করে ফেলেছে, ছেড়ে দিন" - এই তাঁদের বক্তব্য। Station Manager সাহেব কথাগুলো জিজ্ঞেস করলেন, "কার ছেলে বলুন তো ওরা?"। মাতব্বরদের একজন সোৎসাহে বলেন, "ওই তো, আমাদের শশধরবাবুর ছেলে"। Station Manager সাহেব বলেন, "আচ্ছা, আচ্ছা, দেখছি কি করা যায়"। মাতব্বর দুজন বিদায় নেওয়ার পর Station Manager সাহেব হাসি হাসি মুখে আমার দিকে তাকিয়ে, "যাক! বাবার নামটা পেয়ে গেলাম। আর ওখানে যেতে হোলো না", বলে আবার FIR লেখাতে মনোনিবেশ করলেন।

WBSEDCL-এ আমার দ্বিতীয় posting Basirhat Division-এ। ওখানে posting হওয়ার কিছুদিনের মধ্যেই Company Saturday Reading-এর প্রথা চালু করে। মাসের মধ্যে দুটো বা তিনটে শনিবার করে supervisory meter reading নিতে বেরোতে হতো সেসময়ে। এরকমই এক শনিবার দুপুরবেলা খাস বসিরহাট

শহরে supervisory meter reading নিতে গিয়ে Basirhat Division-এরই অন্তর্ভুক্ত একটি sub-station-এর এক কর্মচারীর বাড়িতে বিদ্যুৎ চুরি পাওয়া যায়। অগত্যা সংশ্লিষ্ট CCC-র Station Manager কে খবর দিয়ে অকুস্থলে আনিয়ে সেই কর্মচারীর বিরুদ্ধে যথাযত আইনি ব্যবস্থা নেওয়া হয়।

গোটা ঘটনার তিক্ত অভিজ্ঞতায় মেজাজ এমনিতেই খারাপ হয়ে গেছিলো supervisory meter reading দলের সবার। যাই হোক, কাছাকাছি একটা বড় বাগানবাড়ি দেখে ওখানেই ঢুকলাম পরের meter reading-টা নিতে। গৃহকর্তা বাগানেই দাঁড়িয়ে ফুলগাছের পরিচর্যা করছিলেন। আমাদের আসতে দেখে পরিচয় জানতে চাইলেন। আমরা Company-র Identity Card দেখিয়ে ওনার বিদ্যুতের meter-টি দেখার অনুমতি চাইতে উনি বলেন বিদ্যুৎ দপ্তর থেকে কয়েকদিন আগেই এসে ওনার meter reading নিয়ে গেছে, তাহলে এর মধ্যেই আবার কেন, এবং রীতিমত সন্দেহ প্রকাশ করেন যে বিদ্যুৎ দপ্তর ওনাকে দু'বার bill পাঠাবার মতলবে দু'বার করে meter reading নেওয়াচ্ছে। এই নিয়ে আমাদের supervisory meter reading দলের একজনের সাথে গ্রাহকের বচসা চলতে থাকে।

আগের বিদ্যুৎ চুরি ধরা পড়ার পর আবার বিতর্ক আর ভালো লাগছিলো না, তাই বচসায় মন না দিয়ে বাগানের চারিদিকটাই ভালো করে লক্ষ্য করছিলাম। হঠাৎ দেখি একটা সবুজ-কালো ডোরাকাটা সাপ বাগানের ঘাস পেরিয়ে বাড়ির ভেতর ঢুকে গেলো। নদী-নালা, খাল-বিল পরিবেষ্টিত জায়গা বসিরহাট, তাই খাস বসিরহাট শহরেও সাপের উপদ্রব অস্বাভাবিক কিছু নয়। আমার বসিরহাটের বাসস্থানেও একবার একটা

ছোট সাপ ঢুকে পড়েছিলো। কিন্তু অস্বাভাবিক না হলেও, ব্যাপারটা ভীতিজনক তো বটেই। তাই আঁতকে উঠে ভদ্রলোক কে বললাম, "দাদা, আপনার ঘরে একটা সাপ ঢুকে গেলো এক্সফুগি!"। ভদ্রলোক একবার অন্যমনস্কভাবে ঘাড় ঘুরিয়ে ঘরের দিকে তাকিয়ে আবার আমার সহকর্মীর সাথে তর্ক জারি রাখলেন। হয়তো ঠিকমত শুনতে পাননি ভেবে আমি আবার একবার বললাম, "দাদা শুনলেন? আপনার বাড়িতে সাপ ঢুকে পড়লো!"। এবার ভদ্রলোক আমার দিকে তাকিয়ে দাঁত খিঁচিয়ে বলে উঠলেন, "আরে সাপ তো আপনাদের তুলনায় অনেক নিরীহ জীব, ঢুকেছে তো ঢুকেছে। কিন্তু আপনারা কি জন্য ঢুকতে চাইছেন সেটা পরিষ্কার করে বলুন দেখি!"। সেদিনই প্রথম উপলব্ধি করলাম যে আমজনতা আমাদের, অর্থাৎ WBSEDCL কর্মচারীদের, সাপের চেয়েও বিষধর প্রাণী হিসাবেই দেখে থাকে।

একদিন আমার Basirhat Divisional Office-এর chamber-এ বসে Basirhat Division অধীনস্থ এক CCC-র Station Manager দুঃখ করছিলো যে তার CCC-তে যথেষ্ট রাজস্ব না ওঠা নিয়ে ইদানিং DM সাহেব তাকে খুব বকাবকি করছেন। Station Manager ছেলেটি আমার সমবয়সী ও batchmate, বন্ধুস্থানীয়ও বটে। আসলে সে মাসের PRT Meeting-এ প্রায় দেড় ঘন্টা দেড়িতে এসে, দেড়ি হওয়ার কারণ হিসাবে "গরম জল পাচ্ছিলাম না, তাই স্নান করতে দেড়ি হয়ে গেলো" বলাতে DM সাহেব এমনিতেই ওর ওপর বেজায় চটে ছিলেন। সেই থেকেই বিশেষতঃ পর্যাপ্ত পরিমাণে বিদ্যুৎ চুরি না রাখার কারণে তার CCC-র ক্ষতি বেড়েই চলেছে বলে মাঝেমাঝেই DM সাহেব ওকে বকা দিতেন।

সেই Station Manager-ই ওর CCC-র অধীনস্থ একটা জায়গার কথা উল্লেখ করে আমাকে বলছিলো, "কি করি বলো তো? যখন raid করতে যাই তখন কোনো hooking থাকে না। সব hooking রাতে করে, ৮-টার পর"। উপদেশ দেওয়ার ওপর সরকার বাহাদুর কর চাপাননি, তাই বেশ ভারিঙ্কি মেজাজে বললাম, "তা night raid করতে পারো তো"। উপকারী কে বাঘে খায়, এরকম কথা শুনেছিলাম বটে, Station Manager-এর পরের কথাতে চক্ষু-কর্ণের বিবাদভঞ্জন হলো। "বেশ, চলো তাহলে। পরশুদিনই যাই"। বলে কি? ওর ভালোর জন্য সুপরামর্শ দিলাম, আর উল্টে আমাকেই এই ঠান্ডায় রাতের বেলায় raid করতে যেতে বলছে?

একটু অপ্রস্তুতে পড়ে গিয়ে বললাম, "আমি? আমাকে যেতে বলছে night raid-এ?"। Station Manager বললো, "হ্যাঁ। তুমিই তো বুদ্ধি দিলে, তাহলে তুমিও চলো। আর আমরা CCC-র লোকেরা কি পরিস্থিতিতে কাজ করে revenue তুলি সেটা তো Division Office-এর লোকেদেরও একটু দেখা দরকার"। মোক্ষম যুক্তি! কি আর করি? DM সাহেবের কাছে অনুমতি চাইলাম সেই Station Manager-এর সাথে আগামী পরশু night raid-এ যাওয়ার। শুনে DM সাহেব একটু বিরক্ত হয়েই বললেন, "Raid করতে এবার তাহলে ওর AM (HR & A)-কে প্রয়োজন পড়ছে? তা ইচ্ছা হলে যাও, তবে ওর কথায় বেশি নেচো না! নিজের বুদ্ধি প্রয়োগ করে কাজ করবে। আর যাওয়ার আগে Station Manager-কে বলবে যেন অবশ্যই থানায় খবর দিয়ে রাখে"।

সেইমত দু'দিন পর রাত ৮-টার মধ্যে খাওয়া-দাওয়া সেরে তৈরী হয়ে ছিলাম। Station Manager ৮.১৫ নাগাদ আমার বসিরহাটের

বাসস্থান থেকে আমাকে নিজের গাড়িতে তুলে নিলো। অকুস্থলে পৌঁছতে রাত ৯.০০-টা বেজে গেল। CCC-র আরও কর্মীও সেখানে উপস্থিত ছিলেন। Station Manager সবাইকে দুটো দলে ভাগ করে দিয়ে বিদ্যুৎ চুরির হদিস করতে বলে। আমাদের দলে Station Manager, CCC-র তিনজন ঠিকাকর্মী ও আমি।

রাতের অন্ধকারে এদিক-ওদিক খুঁজতে খুঁজতে একটা বড় খামারঘরের সামনে এসে পৌঁছলাম। ভেতরে আলো জ্বলছে, গন্ধে মনে হচ্ছে মুরগি পালন হয় ভেতরে। খামারঘরের চারপাশে বড় বড় খড়ের গাদা, পাশেই পরিষ্কার দেখা যাচ্ছে overhead cable থেকে hooking করা, কিন্তু লোকজন কাউকে দেখা যাচ্ছে না। আমাদের সাথে যে তিনজন ঠিকাকর্মী ছিলেন তাঁদের মধ্যে সবচেয়ে কমবয়েসী ছেলোটিকে Station Manager হুকুম করলো একটা খড়ের গাদার পেছনে ঘাপটি মেরে বসে থাকতে, আর কেউ খামারঘরে আসছে কিনা লক্ষ্য রাখতে। সেও দেখলাম বেশ বাধ্য ছেলের মত ক্ষেতের মাঝে ইয়ে করার ভঙ্গিতে টুপ করে খড়ের গাদার পেছনে বসে পড়লো!

বাকি দুজন ঠিকাকর্মী কে হুকুম হলো আশপাশের ঘরগুলোতে খামারঘরের মালিকের খোঁজ করতে। তাঁরা দুজন একদিকে, আর আমরা দুজন (Station Manager আর আমি) আরেকদিকে এগিয়ে গেলাম খামার মালিকের খোঁজ করতে। Station Manager কে জিজ্ঞেস করলাম, "ছেলেটাকে খড়ের গাদার পেছনে যে বসিয়ে এলে, সাপখোপে কামড়ে দেবে না তো?"। Station Manager বেশ বিজ্ঞের ভঙ্গিতে জবাব দিলো, "আরে না, না। শীতকালে সাপ বেরোয় না। আর তাছাড়া এদিকে বেশিরভাগই দাঁড়াশ

সাপ, বিষ নেই"। স্থানীয় সাপেদের এতো ঠিকুজি-কুষ্ঠি সে National Geographic Channel দেখে জেনেছে কিনা এটা জিজ্ঞেস করার আগেই দেখলাম একটা বাড়ির সামনে এসে পড়েছি। বাড়ির ভেতর আলো জ্বলছে। প্রবেশদ্বারের দিকে এগোতেই হঠাৎ দুটো কালো রঙের কুকুর তুমুল আত্মফালন (মানে ওই গরু-গরু, ঘেউ-ঘেউ, ইত্যাদি) করতে করতে আমাদের দিকে তেড়ে এলো। বিলাতি পাহারাদার কুকুর নয়, নেহাৎই ভেতো বাঙালি নেড়ি, কিন্তু তাও দাঁত বসিয়ে দিলে অনুভূতিটা নিতান্ত সুখকর হবে বলে বোধ হলো না। তিন লাফে পেছনে সরে গিয়ে Station Manager কে চঁচিয়ে বললাম, "কুকুর তাড়া করছে যে!"। হঠাৎ শুনতে পেলাম কে বলে উঠলো, "পাজি লোক এলে ওরা বুঝতে পারে, তখন ওরকম করে"। চমকে উঠে বিবেকের বাণী কিনা বোঝার জন্য এদিক-ওদিক তাকাচ্ছি, তখনই লক্ষ্য করলাম সামনের বাড়ির এক ভদ্রলোক জানালার গ্রিলের ফাঁক দিয়ে নিজের নাকটা বের করে "হ্যা! হ্যা!" করে হাসছেন। বুঝলাম আমাদের নিদারুণ দুর্ভোগটা উনি দারুণ উপভোগ করতে করতে বাণীটি আওড়েছেন।

Station Manager-এর দিকে তাকিয়ে দেখলাম তার চোখে মুখে ঘোর জিঘাংসা! পারলে গ্রিলের ফাঁক দিয়ে বের করা নাকে একটা ঘুঁসিই বাগিয়ে দেয় আরকি! কিন্তু সামনে পথরুদ্ধ করে আছে কুকুর দুটো, ঘেউ-ঘেউ করতে করতে একটু একটু করে অগ্রসর হচ্ছে আমাদের দিকে। হঠাৎ Station Manager কুকুর দুটোর দিকে পতাকা মুদ্রায় হাত দেখিয়ে গম্গমে গলায় বলে উঠলো, "দাঁড়া!", আর ওমনি কুকুর দুটোও

দেখি চঁচামিচি থামিয়ে চুপ করে Station Manager-এর দিকে তাকিয়ে দাঁড়িয়ে পড়লো।

মনে পড়ে গেলো গুরুদেবের রাজর্ষি উপন্যাসের কথা - মহারাজ গোবিন্দমাণিক্য নির্জন অরণ্যে ভ্রমণকালে ভাই নক্ষত্ররায় কে "দাঁড়াও" বলাতে কালস্রোত যেন শুব্দ হয়ে গিয়েছিলো, পাখিদের কলরব থেমে গিয়েছিলো, অরণ্যের গাছও যেন ঝুঁকে দাঁড়িয়েছিলো, ধরণী ও আকাশও যেন রুদ্ধশ্বাসে শুব্দ হয়ে চেয়ে ছিলো, শুধু মহারাজের উচ্চারিত "দাঁড়াও" শব্দটিই যেন অনেক্ষণ ধরে চারিদিকে গম্গম করেছিলো। বর্তমান পরিস্থিতিও আমার অনেকটা সেরকমই মনে হলো। কুকুর দুটো চুপ করে দাঁড়িয়ে গেছে, জানালার বুলি আওড়ানো লোকটা তার নাক-টাক শুদ্ধ উধাও, Station Manager তখনও কুকুর দুটোর দিকে হাত তুলে চুপ করে দাঁড়িয়ে, আর আমিও চুপ করে গেছি। শুধু রাতের অন্ধকারে ঝাঁঝির ডাক শোনা যাচ্ছে। মহারাজ গোবিন্দমাণিক্যের ভঙ্গিতেই Station Manager এরপর বিষন্ন, মর্মভেদী কণ্ঠে, "কুকুর, তুমি আমাকে কামড়াইতে চাও?" জিজ্ঞেস করে কিনা দেখার জন্য উদগ্রীব হয়ে অনেক প্রত্যাশার সাথে অপেক্ষা করছিলাম, কিন্তু Station Manager এক্কেবারে রসভঙ্গ করে কুকুর দুটোর উদ্দেশ্যে হাওয়ায় একটা লাথি চালিয়ে, "এই যাঃ, হ্যাট্!" করতেই এতক্ষণ ধরে বীরদর্পে এগিয়ে আসা সারমেয়যুগল লেজ গুটিয়ে রাতের অন্ধকারে কোথায় পালিয়ে গেল!

Station Manager সামনের বাড়িটার দিকে পা বাড়িয়েছিলো, জানালার লোকটার গ্রিলের ফাঁক দিয়ে বের করা নাকখানি খুঁজে বের করে মুলতুবি রাখা ঘুঁসিটা প্রয়োগ করার সৎ অভিপ্রায়েই বোধহয়, কিন্তু তখনই খামারঘরটার দিক থেকে, "ধরেছি, ধরেছি! Sir, Sir!" রব উঠলো, আর Station Manager আমাকে কিছু না বলেই খামারঘরটার দিকে দৌড় দিলো।

রাতবিরেতে অন্ধকারে দৌড়দৌড়ি করা বুদ্ধিমানের কাজ হবে না, হোঁচট খেয়ে পড়ে গিয়ে কেলেঙ্কারি কান্ড হতে পারে। DM সাহেব এমনিতেও বলে দিয়েছিলেন নিজের বুদ্ধি প্রয়োগ করে কাজ করতে। এসব ভেবে ধীরেসুস্থে যখন খামারঘরটার কাছে পৌঁছলাম ততক্ষণে চিৎকার-চঁচামিচি থেমে গেছে, আর অন্য দলের কর্মীরাও সেখানে পৌঁছে গেছেন।

একটা খড়ের গাদার ওপর একটা লোক দেখি কাঁচুমাচু মুখ করে দাঁড়িয়ে আছে। বোধ করি চুপিসারে hook-টা খুলে ফেলার উদ্দেশ্যেই রাতের অন্ধকারে খড়ের গাদায় চেপেছিলো। কিন্তু খড়ের গাদার পেছনে ঔৎ পেতে বসে থাকা কমবয়েসী ঠিকাকর্মীটি প্রায় চিতাবাঘের ক্ষিপ্ততায় খপ্প করে তার পা চেপে ধরে চিৎকার করে জানান দেয়। সে তখনও লোকটার পা চেপে ধরে দাঁড়িয়ে, চোখেমুখে তার দৃঢ় সংকল্প। আর Station Manager কোমরে হাত দিয়ে দাঁড়িয়ে, মুখে তার বিজয়ীর হাসি।

## **Challenges for HR in the Covid-19 Pandemic**

Sri Somadri Daskarmakar

AM (HR & A), Berhampore Division, WBSEDCL



### **Mental Health and Well-being:**

The sudden shift in work culture took on a toll on overall employee health and well-being, and brought with it stress, anxiety, and other mental health issues that are usual in such a situation.

When the workers/employees are working in an office work environment, it is comparatively easier to understand their pulse and sensitivity. They can be managed with relative ease, as all of them are in close proximity, within visual reach. However, when they are working remotely, it is quite challenging to understand or predict their mental state and peripherals as the communication routes are significantly compromised.

### **Handling Remote Work:**

HR managers/leaders are trying to

develop routes and strategies to overcome the communication gap between them and the employees during remote working situations, but there is no immediate permanent solution to it because the situation is unique, and there is no ready-made single strategy to handle it, as it is affecting employees psychologically and even emotionally.

Hence, the process of trial and error seems to be the only option until the situation starts to mitigate, but such experimental approach may affect the ability to attain the productivity benchmark to some extent.

### **Lack of Agility:**

This is one of the many problems in the workplace in the current scenario. In this era of remote working and reduced

manpower at work sites, many tasks are getting prolonged due to pre-defined operational paths. Approvals for many works, and subsequently their executions, are getting delayed.

### **Employee Communication:**

Since communication is a major part (and possibly the greatest tool) in HR management, the lack of due to closed workplaces and reduced manpower, is spiking stress in this pandemic situation, and taking a toll on disposal of work.

Many issues which can be solved by a mere conversation are getting difficult to solve because of the lack of communication. Employees are sometimes reluctant to communicate their problems remotely, which were easier for them to relate face to face.

### **Employee Engagement:**

An organization aims to achieve optimum productivity from its employees, but it is challenging to keep employees engaged when they are working remotely. The internal communication is largely compromised, and keeping everyone on the same page is an uphill task. Systematic workflow is largely hampered in this situation.

### **Security of Job/ Service:**

Apart from the PSU/Government sector, employees are facing fear of lay off or a golden handshake in this pandemic

situation. As many Companies (especially the smaller firms) are facing revenue related issues due to closed markets, it is becoming increasingly difficult for them to afford to pay their employees' their salaries/wages, and even bear the minimum running costs.

### **Being flexible:**

The scope of disruption is one of the biggest problems HR managers are facing during this time. With closure or online operation of educational institutions and non-essential businesses, employees will need flexibility and understanding to re-establish a work life balance.

### **Keeping employees safe by creating and maintaining a healthy workplace:**

To create and maintain a safe and healthy workplace for the employees, the following steps should be taken:

- Training and encouragement to establish necessary hygiene practices
- Establish policies and practices for social distancing
- Prominently display posters illustrating respiratory etiquette and hand hygiene
- Perform routine environmental cleaning and disinfections
- Provide sanitizers and PPEs

### **Look for opportunities amid adversities:**

Companies and organizations must

take the opportunity provided by the Covid-19 pandemic to show empathy, and demonstrate how they value their employees. Crisis management is an integral part of HR team's repertoire, and the ability to drive and support strong business decisions prove invaluable during times of great turmoil.

With the current disruption in the industry, traditional ways of working have become things of the past. We need to be prepared for the new normal. It is crucial for HR to revamp policies and processes in accordance with this new normal. The organizations that wish to survive and run smoothly post-pandemic, are opting for the following agenda:

- Working hours, locations, and work arrangement to become more fluid
- Remote working to be an integral part of every organization

- Contractual jobs/freelancing opportunity to grow (in certain sectors)
- Competitive workforce to be developed with constant upgrading as required
- To focus on Learning & Development to make employees future ready
- Optimal adaptation of digitalization to enable the workforce and the organization to operate remotely
- Building trust among employees towards their organization
- Security of service/job be ensured in this pandemic situation at a greater extent in order to build the trust towards the company as well as to portray the empathetic side of the organization /management

## **Covid-19 & HR**

**Smt. Rituparna Das**

Manager (HR & A), Kasba Area Office, WBSETCL



Year 2020. A year which changed the world, the way we meet and greet people, and interact with others, the way we celebrate, lead our lives, the way we work, and our psyche. The outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic has affected nations and people in numerous ways. Many countries adopted lockdowns, or restrictions on movement of people and goods to avoid spread of Covid -19.

The pandemic gave a big jolt to organizations throughout the world, and brought a paradigm shift in how organizations function. This compelled HR professionals to take the helms of organizations in their hands during this pandemic, and think differently about their role in enabling the organizations to adjust to social distancing norms, and adapt to

functioning in an unprecedented work environment. It is the responsibility of the HR Manager to address and ensure the health and well-being of the employees, while keeping the productivity levels of the organization on target.

Creating a safe workplace and preventing the spread of Covid-19 in the workplace have been the most important points of focus for HR personnel. Many organizations across the globe have completely switched from crowded work places to remote work from home module. However, in view of the Sub-station installations, and the focus on keeping those installations running smoothly, the “work from home” format is not a viable option for WBSETCL. However, working with staggered manpower has been adopted, making the office premises and

Sub-stations safer workspaces. Installation of sanitizer dispensing machines and wash basins, restricting entry of visitors, monitoring of the health of visitors and staff, and encouraging social distancing, wearing of proper masks, and practicing regular hand hygiene have also been taken up to restrict the spread of Covid-19 in the workplace. Regular sanitization of the office and Sub-station premises are conducted to minimize risk of infection of employees. WBSETCL also provides its employees with masks and other PPEs to safeguard them from Covid-19, and also to encourage them to adopt healthy practices in their regular lifestyle during this pandemic.

To maintain co-ordination between different wings without risk of infection, face-to-face interaction has been increasingly replaced with e-mails and video conferencing. HR Managers have been trying to keep their staff productive, motivated, engaged, and connected to keep the focused on their individual professional goals, as well as organizational targets in this new normal.

The Covid-19 pandemic had also impacted the demand of many products

leading to many employees being laid off in many organizations. The HR Managers need to play an important role by providing them necessary support, tools, and counsel to help them tide over to the chapter in their professional careers. HR Managers play an important role in addressing the feeling of uncertainty and isolation of the employees in these situations.

The horizon of HR functions has been drastically changed by Covid-19 pandemic, and the time has come for further and more efficient utilization of technology in HR functions, like online training which can be accessed by the employees from remote locations at their convenience, and interviews through video conferencing for recruitment and promotions.

Hence, though the Covid-19 pandemic have hit the industries hard, the organizations, under the leadership of HR Managers, have refused to bow down to this new challenge, and are now successfully steering through these challenging times.

## Covidometry

**Sri Neshu Ranjan Saha**

AM (HR & A), Dinhata Division, WBSEDCL



The ongoing Covid-19 pandemic has wreaked havoc on human life (and lifestyle) as we know it. Consequently, new more benevolent HR policies have been introduced by different organizations. These new policies attempt to prioritize the health and well-being of the employees and their families, while attempting to understand the employees' perspective. Encouraging social distancing to reduce the spread of disease is the main focus area. Thus, policies such as working with minimum employees at Office, while enabling others to work from home is a key component of safety measures, in addition to other safety practices such as masks and sanitizers. Such measures are necessary to keep the organization running smoothly without comprising on productivity or the health of the employees. The SMS rule, i. e.,

Social distancing, **Masks**, and **Sanitization** have become a part of the new normal.

The impact of the coronavirus (Covid-19) on global economy has been significant. The nation-wide lockdown measures imposed by various Governments around the world since the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the novel coronavirus outbreak a pandemic have had Companies scrambling to respond strategically to these changed circumstances. Many organizations are relying on their Human Resources Management teams to help them navigate this unfamiliar terrain, and companies without professional and dedicated HR personnel in their policy making teams are faced with added risk of making erroneous, and potentially costly policy decisions.

This is not an isolated situation. Companies of all sizes and across industries are being impacted by this pandemic. Global companies have been impacted by supply chain shortages, declining consumer demand, and market insecurity. But it is the small and local businesses that feel the heaviest brunt of community policies encouraging social distancing to reduce the spread of the disease.

Now, more than ever, it is critical for our executive leadership teams and HR professionals to collaborate on smart, people-first policies that will ensure their Companies can quickly recover when we collectively contain the immediate threat from the coronavirus.

In recent times, Work From Home (or WFH, as it is popularly referred to) has taken an important role to mitigate the problem of shortage of employees at Office. Most of the administrative work, i. e., back office work are being done at home by using virtual private networks and fast internet connections. Most of the team meetings are being organised through video conferencing. This also demands an efficient and flexible IT infrastructure in the organization. In this context, the SAP-ERP system and ESS-MSS portal of WBSEDCL may be taken as a suitable example.

However, such new HR policy must be centred around basic IT training for all employees. A transparent and efficient work culture should be grown by fully utilising the IT infrastructure. New leave policies should be framed keeping in mind the employees' health and safety, but adequate fool-proofing of such policies has to be done so that they are not exploited by anyone to serve personal vested interests.

If the healthcare system of India, which at present seems to a largely broken system, is going to evolve, then private sector and the public sector communities have to work together fix it. This also means that the policies governing healthcare and allied benefits of employees of both the private and public sectors have to evolve as well. HR professionals are going to have a major role in shaping such policies in the foreseeable future.

Lastly, if an organization is considered a family, with all its employees being the family members, then the HR Manager maybe considered to be the mother of the family, who must simultaneously be compassionate towards the requirements of employees, as well as strict in matters of discipline, and enforcement of rules to keep his/her family (i. e., his/her beloved organization) running smoothly.

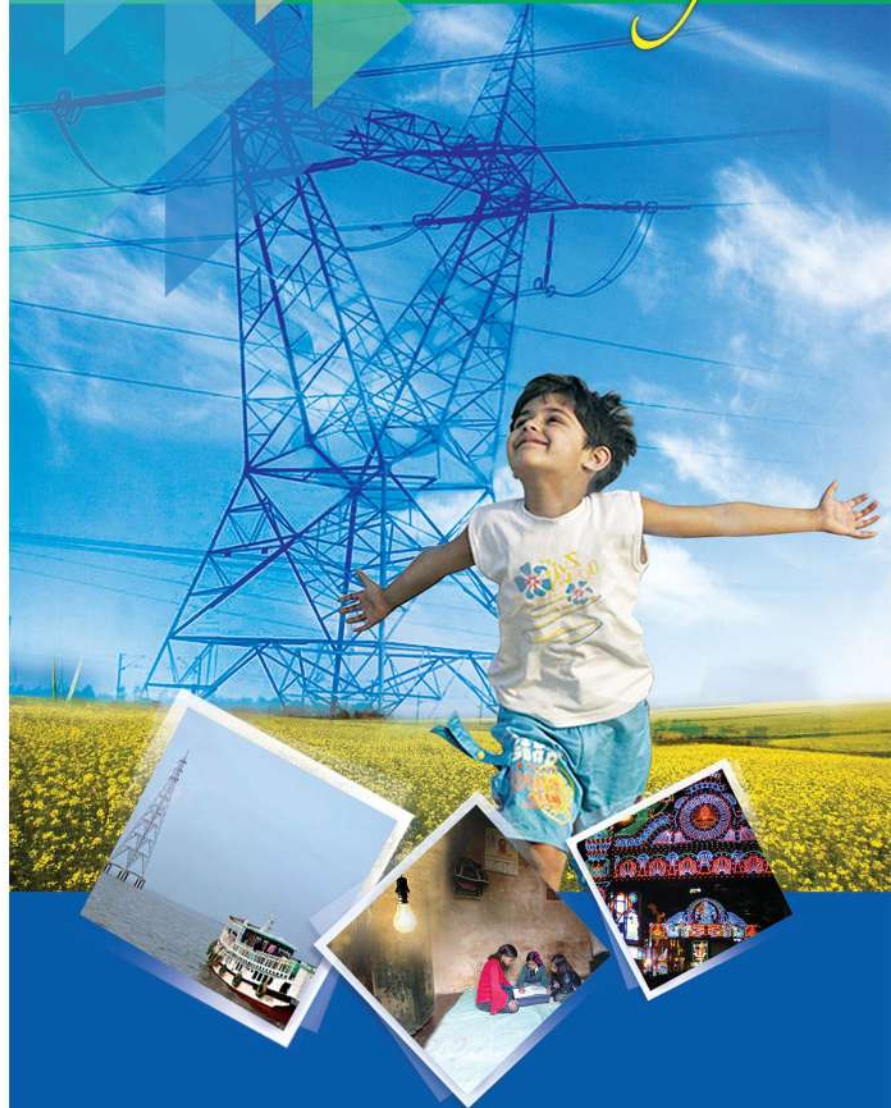
# Synergy 2021



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