

RECRUITMENT IN REVENUE BOARDS : A CASE OF LOST OPPORTUNITY FOR FM!

By Taxindiaonline News Service

NEW DELHI, MARCH 4: 'INDIA SHINING' is the latest buzzword among the stalwards of the NDA Government. Though the Opposition, as a matter of habit, sees chinks in it but there is no denying that India is shining and, it would have been shining much brighter, had the Finance Minister, Mr Jaswant Singh, been slightly more sensitive to the needs of the revenue and also adequately poll-savvy to fill up the vacancies in the Grades of Group B, C & D in the income tax and Customs & Central Excise Department.

Any guess, how many vacancies exist in these two departments? A whopping 10,000 posts! Had Mr Singh been advised properly by his political-cum-economic advisors, credit would have gone to the NDA Government not only for being sensitive to the interests of the revenue but also creating a huge pool of at least 25-30 lakh well-wishers. How?

Given the fact that the government jobs have completely gone dry except for the Indian Railways, an average of 25-30 applicants could have applied for these 10,000 posts. This clearly means an application of about three lakh. And, going by the acute employment-crunch theory for highly-educated but non-technical growing population, it would have involved at least 10 family members talking about the welfarist dimension of the NDA Government. But, it is a case of lost opportunity.

More so, as it was decided by none but Mr Singh himself that until a Cabinet clearance is taken, one-third of the vacancies could be filled up by both the departments as it has evidently been adversely affecting the working and performance of the revenue gatherers! How? There is an acute shortage of Inspectors, Stenoes, Tax Assistants, sepoy, drivers and many more in both the departments. And, as one can very well predict without these necessary assistants, how much delay must be taking place in finalisation of Show Cause Notices and typing of important documents. At present, one steno is being shared by at least three officers turn-by-turn and, since there is a legal obligation to finalise the SCN if a case is made, there is no incentive to officers to go for more than they could at present. Though automation is taking place in both the departments but the skills are missing in most cases and, then the issue is that certain types of jobs are meant for certain types of officers.

So, why was nothing done even after the Finance Minister's decision? Plain lackadaisical attitude and gloriously penny wise and pound foolish approach of the IFU in the Ministry of Finance. Instead of implementing the decision of the Minister, it continued to think more in terms of making an extraordinarily poor saving of Rs 25 cr which both the departments would have incurred by hiring these 3000 employees!

Even the CBDT and CBEC bosses cannot escape from their own quota of blame for poor-handling as Member (P &V) who is the link between the problems of the field formations and the solutions sanctioned at the Minister-level, continued to be more engrossed in routine transfer than any ground-level problem-

solving! Worse, something which could have earned tonnes of goodwill for the Government, the Chairman and others in the Board, were simply ignored at the cost of momentum which could have been given to revenue generation campaign.

Worse, the Staff Selection Commission which could have been approached for the selection of Inspectors is yet to receive any formal communication from both the Boards and has already finalised its schedule for 2004. Why none took the initiative is not yet clear and, Mr Singh has nobody but himself to blame for forfeiting a golden opportunity to enrich the political fortune of the party in the forthcoming polls!