



FEDERATION OF RAILWAY OFFICERS' ASSOCIATIONS

President

R.K. BHATNAGAR
Tel. Rly : 44648
MTNL : 23381869
Fax : 23304692

Secretary General

SHUBHRANSHU
Tel. Rly : 43402
MTNL : 23383167
Fax : 23389155

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Chairman,
Railway Board,
Ministry of Railways,
New Delhi

FROA's views on norms for selection/promotion to the posts of CRB, Members, GMs and DRMs

Ref: Secretary/Railway Board's note no. nil for meeting, dated: 20-6-2013.

FROA's views have been sought on only some specific issues through a meeting with the Railway Board in reference to the communication no. ERB-I/2012/23/47 dated 25-10-2012, which constitutes a committee to revisit the norms governing appointment of Chairman/ Members of the Railway Board as well as General Managers of Zonal Railways.

This is the first time FROA's views have been sought though the committee has been in existence for eight months and has nearly finalized its recommendations. It would have been appropriate if this interaction had taken place earlier and FROA given more time to deliberate on these issues, which have wide and far-reaching implications on the career of Group A Officers. In fact FROA, vide its letter no. FROA/2013/25, dated: 14-06-2013, had requested the Board to recuse itself from acting in haste.

However, since the views of FROA have been sought, these are presented parawise.

I. Criteria for selection of General Managers.

i) Should seniority and APARs be the only criteria?

Yes. Seniority and APAR can be the only criteria for selection of General Managers and for all other promotions. APAR covers all attributes of the working and character of an officer observed over a long period of time by at

least fifteen different superiors over a span of five years, which include General Managers, Board Members, CRB and the MR. There can be no better method of assessment. FROA is, however, of the view that best 4 out of last five APARs should be basis for promotions to take care of aberrations on account of biases and victimization by a particular superior in a particular year.

ii) Should the past working on key posts at the field levels be given any weightage?

No. Postings of an officer are based on administrative convenience and not as per the choice of an officer. Hence they cannot be judged adversely for things beyond their control.

iii) Should the overall personality of the officer be assessed through means other than APAR?

No. There should be no other means for assessment of suitability, such as an interview, which seems to be under contemplation by the committee. Besides, when an officer has been continuously evaluated for 33-35 years, it is inconceivable that a short interview should be even a partial basis for such elevation. Interviews, even with minor weightage, can be subjective and will be prone to be misused for further manipulations as it will play a major role in the postings of Board Members. It is seen that such systems are exploited by political class and other vested interests. Hence there should be no scope for an interview or any other subjective evaluation. It is for this reason that the system of interview has been eliminated even from lower grade promotions in the Railways. There is no such provision for Group A Officers anywhere else in the Government of India and cannot be introduced selectively for Railways.

iv) Should the posts of General Managers be distributed to the various Services based on the cadre strength?

No. The existing system of seniority cum suitability is working well and is also in line with the promotion norms for the rest of the civil service in the Government of India. Any quota ignores merit and should be shunned. Quota system will invariably lead to supersessions, litigation and disputes. It will severely affect the morale of the senior superseded officers for no fault of theirs. The well-established hierarchical system of the government working will get destroyed by this. The current cap of 37.5% of predominance (known as the rule of nine) ensures that a single cadre does not occupy an unusually large number of positions.

v) Is the present method of determination of inter se seniority based on DITS fair and equitable to all the Services? Suggestions of FROA for making it more equitable.

Yes. The current system is working satisfactorily and has stood the test of time. Any other system may not necessarily be more equitable. In any case, alternatives, if any may be advised for comments of FROA.

II. Encadrement of the posts of Members

- i) **Presently only FC's post is encadred in IRAS. Should the post of all the Board Members be encadred?**

Yes. All posts should be encadred, except that of the CRB and MS, which should be open to all Group A organized services. The reason why the Ministry of Railways have seven Secretary level posts is that every service has every service has representation on the Board, except in some cases, where posts of DGs have been created and proposals exist for the rest. Encadrement fulfils the aspirations of an entire cadre.

- ii) **Ways to address the situations where a suitable officer fulfilling the stipulated norms is not available to fill up the post of Board Member.**

Once these posts are encadred, then the problem of non-availability of a GM for further elevation can be solved simply by promoting the seniormost suitable AM of that cadre.

III. Rule of Predominance

- i) **Today there is a cap of nine posts of General Managers from anyone of the Services. Should this cap remain or be scrapped?**

The cap of nine posts (or the rule of predominance) strikes a fine balance between the principle of seniority and competing aspirations of various cadres. This has also gained acceptance over a long period of time and there is no need to tamper with this provision at all

IV. Appointment of Board Members/CRB

- i) **Should Board Members be selected only out of the officers working as GM/OL? Or, should only clearance for GM/OL be a prerequisite for posting as Member Railway Board? Suggestion on the residual service and minimum working as General Manager for posting as Board Member.**

The categorization of GMs as open line and non-open line is unfair to officers who have worked for 33-35 years in various positions and have been dubbed not fit for open line towards the end of their careers. In fact many cadres such as the IRAS, IRPS, IRSS, even when posted to open line have no direct involvement in operations, yet they may be fit for posting as open line GMs. On the other hand, similar other cadre who are directly involved in operations all their lives may have officers who are declared unfit for open line GMs posting towards the end of their careers. Once we have declared the post of GM as ex-cadre and permit officers from diverse cadres to compete for it, any categorization as open line or non-open line is not justified. Besides, such categorization and postings have been used to manipulate further postings to the Board and must be put to an end immediately.

- ii) Views on the present system where GMs having completed one year as such and having a residual service of two years can directly be posted as CRB. Is it desirable for a junior officer to join the Board as CRB?


Seniormost member of the Board should be elevated as the Chairman regardless of residual tenure as acceptance of seniority across cadres is an established norm. This will also eliminate the scope for favouritism and manipulations.

V. Posting of DRM

- i) DRMs are posted based on the quota allotted to each department. Is this system okay? Due to quota to various Services, the gap between batches of the officers getting posted as DRMs is as high as five years. Any suggestion in this regard?

FROA is not in favour of any quota as it results in out-of-turn advancement of officers of one service over the others and is highly resented. In any case, gap between batches of two services should not exceed two years for postings a DRMs. Even the 6th Pay Commission accepted that any difference in status by more than two years is not desirable.

FROA requests that these views should be incorporated in the recommendations of the committee.


27/6/13
(Shubhranshu)
Hony. Secretary General

Copy to: All Members of the Committee.
Secretary, Railway Board.

Copy to: Hon'ble MR, MOSR(A), MOSR(K)