

Ahmedabad Mirror

With 39 percent vacancies, Gujarat Income Tax Department stares at empty posts

Around this time last year, the income tax department of Gujarat was struggling to overcome the huge burden of work that had piled up after demonetisation announcement. This year, though there is no demonetisation-related work load, the department continues its struggle to meet deadlines, burdened with severe staff shortage. Against the sanctioned strength of 5,829, the department has filled up only 3,570 positions, leaving 2,259 positions vacant.

That comes to 38.75% vacancy in the State. Officers in the department believe that the State needs to produce more personnel and officers for the revenue department to fill up vacancies. They believe that Gujarat not being able to produce enough revenue officers of its own to fill the cadre vacancies is hitting the department badly. A senior officer in the know of things told Mirror, “Most of the officers in the department here are from other states. Even the personnel at junior positions belong to others states.

Gujaratis comprise only a small section.” Elaborating on why it was an issue, he said that most employees take a transfer to their home state or a place closer home. “Mostly they return to Eastern India. This results in vacancies in Gujarat. Had there been higher recruitment from Gujarat, this would not have been the case. People would come back after serving elsewhere. That would have reduced the number of vacancies,” he said. The officer added that such was the burden of work during demonetisation days that even the Delhi office decided to send out fewer scrutiny notices this year.

The vacant places

There are only 919 gazetted officers against the sanctioned strength of 1,011, leaving a deficit of 92 (9%) officers. Senior officers say that since major decisions pertaining to operations at the department are taken at this level, many officers end up holding additional charges. With their attention divided among multiple tasks, decision-making on important matters gets delayed, the officers add. There are only four officers at the level of Director General (DG)/ Chief Commissioner of Income Tax (CCIT), against the sanctioned strength of 7.

The situation is better in the third-tier, with 22 officers against sanctioned strength of 24 at PD/Principal Commissioner of I-T (PCIT) level. However, it nosedives at the Commissioner level with 10 vacancies against strength of 42. A similar scenario prevails at the Addl/Jt CIT level where there are 38 vacancies among 111 posts, while at the DC/ACIT level 20 posts out of 161 are vacant. The condition is better at the Income Tax Officer (ITO) level, where 482 of 485 positions have been filled up. However, sources in the I-T department attributed this to promotions within the department.

44.85% vacancies in lower grades

The sanctioned strength for the rest of the staff is 4,818, against which the department has been able to fill up only 2,651 positions. That leaves a deficit of 2,161 or 44.85%. There are 61 vacancies at the rank of inspector, against a sanctioned strength of 1,032. This is because the department has jurisdiction to promote personnel to this cadre.

Massive shortfall

Not a single among 10 available positions for Data Processing Assistants (DPAs) Grade A has been filled up, while 116 of the 279 positions for office superintendents are vacant. There are only 94 senior tax assistants (Sr TAs) against the required number of 1,074. That's a vacancy of 980, or 91.25%! The higher number of empty positions can be attributed to zero recruitment coupled with promotion of Sr TAs to the post of inspectors. Though 931 positions for the rank of tax assistant have been sanctioned, only 682 or 26.75% have been filled up.