

## **The Hindu**

### **Metro Rail outsources train operator jobs to agency**

In a recent move, Chennai Metro Rail has outsourced several train operators jobs to a private agency. So far, only maintenance of stations was outsourced.

According to sources in Chennai Metro Rail project, this has displeased a section of its employees who think it is unreasonable to outsource the train operator's job. "While many think, it's a mundane job, for a handful who were exclusively recruited for this, it is sacred and special. We are displeased with this move. They certainly cannot display the same loyalty and contribute like us. If everything is going to be outsourced, then we lose the morale to work," a source said.

The staff who earlier drove trains now handle station controlling and other related jobs.

"As far as we know, this was done to cut down cost; if we are paid around 25,000-30,000, the outsourced workers may be given about 10,000 less," the source added.

Chennai Metro Rail Limited has 45 train operators and now 54 staff from the private agency for the operator's job.

Officials said there is no harm in outsourcing a part of operations and this was certainly not done as part of any austerity measure. Since the number of people travelling had substantially increased over the last three years with the addition of new networks, these outsourced staff have been brought in.

"Anyway, our operators train these staff. They have been given a better role as station controllers," an official said.

"We are living in an age where there are driverless trains. And see Metro Rail projects like Hyderabad, which is built on public private partnership. Our aim is to only ensure the project doesn't suffer," he added.

Chennai Metro Rail currently operates over 26 km in the city with two elevated and one underground network and about 14,000-15,000 people travel everyday.