

# Tamil Nadu Electricity Board Engineers' Sangam



தமிழ்நாடு மின்சார வாரிய பொறியாளர் சங்கம்

Regd. No. 124/MDS (Recognised)

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To  
**THE CHAIRMAN cum MANAGING DIRECTOR,**  
TANGEDCO,  
Chennai-600 002.

Lr.No.GS/TNEBES/F1/D.24/ 2023, Dt.22.02.2023.

Respected Sir,

Sub: Huge number of Posts being suppressed and redeployed in Thermal Power Stations – Power Generation will get hit due to this action – Reconsideration of decision - requested regarding

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Austerity measures is on the anvil for quite some time in various wings of the Board including Generation. In Thermal Power Stations, the measures have become more intense in the recent past putting up the Employees including Engineers and Officers in deep stress and mental agony.

Engineers' Sangam would like to register its concern on this subject as the measures undertaken will hamper the works in Thermal Stations affecting the Generation to a greater extent.

As ever we are putting up the points below purely on the welfare and wellbeing of the Board.

## **Abolition of 5<sup>th</sup> Operator Post:**

Engineers and Staff working in Shift Duties in Thermal Power Stations play a vital role in generation of power. They occupy the important areas of the Plant which requires continuous monitoring and operation. Their duty may be akin to that of a person working in other areas but not the same as they work, in not only a polluted atmosphere but also in an environment full of vibration and noise.

Hence all the Thermal Power Stations in our State viz. Tuticorin, Mettur and North Chennai are sanctioned with 5 persons in each operating location. While the

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5<sup>th</sup> operator may seem to be idle most times, their services are utilized for other works including assisting the maintenance apart from looking after leave shift duties.

The idea and action to remove the 5<sup>th</sup> shift operator post was mooted earlier many times, just a couple of years ago too, but wasn't done considering its importance. It is because of this reason, Shift operating Personnel are even provisioned with additional pay in the name of Shift Operation Special Pay – SOSP.

All these additional benefits have been allowed to the shift operating personnel, purely to reduce the downtime during breakdown and to ensure uninterrupted generation and also to reduce the cost of generation.

Moreover all the shift persons work in an endangered location. Huge machines such as Boiler, Turbine, Generator, Circuit Breaker and other equipment may blast leading to fatal if not operated properly.

Hence a new person is taught, trained, drilled, interviewed and has to pass through predetermined formalities before being assigned an operation location. This process takes a minimum of 20 days to 1 month normally.

Abolishing the 5<sup>th</sup> operator post will only be detrimental to the plant operation.

- There is a uniqueness for each operating location. The equipment, system and parameters to be monitored may look similar but not the same hence requires operating personnel trained exclusively for that system and area.
- Of late life of the Shift Personnel has become quite painful due to frequent trip and light up of Plant based on LDC requests particularly during summer.

The 5<sup>th</sup> Operator comes in handy during these times by lending an additional support to the shift personnel thereby aiding to bring back the plant to the grid in time.

- Apart from Plant duties the personnel are also posted in collieries / harbors for monitoring coal allocation and coal shipment.
- A set of 5 operators are trained for a particular location and no one else can look after their work, else it may lead to mal operation resulting in equipment damage and loss of generation.
- A person can work continuously for 1 shift only. Occasionally he may work for 2 shifts at a worst case and not more.
- Every day 3 persons look after the shift duties and the 4<sup>th</sup> person works on alternate days when weekly off is given to either of these 3 persons.



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During these off duty days they support the works like documentation, improvisation and other plant related works in their offices concerned.

- The 5<sup>th</sup> person comes into operation whenever either of these 4 person goes on leave. Shift duties apart he too supports the office works during off duty days.
- The health condition of shift personnel is always vulnerable to health threats as they work in a polluted environment, ear deafening noise and tiring vibration.
- Also they have to look after a minimum of 2 night shifts (20 hours) in a week which is highly tedious. Due to this their life style is totally different consisting of disturbed sleep and untimely food habits due to which most of them suffer from hyper tension, diabetics, heart disease and other ailments.
- Huge vacancies in shift locations for years together in all Power Station itself shows how difficult their nature of duties are. They can't even spend time with their children and family during festivals.

The available persons shoulder the additional load arising out of huge vacancies, due to which the decade old Power Stations are able to compete with the newly commissioned plants.

- Without the 5<sup>th</sup> person weekly off and genuine leave cannot be given for the operating personnel putting them in undue stress thereby affecting plant operation.
- Maternity leave too should be taken into account as there are many women employees in shift duties in all Thermal Stations.

Viewing from outside it may look that 5<sup>th</sup> operator is unnecessary, but he is of immense help for plant operation. Considering all these reasons only, the 5<sup>th</sup> operator post has been provisioned. It is sheer Man management work which requires utmost care in handling these personnel.

In simple terms, an owner of a good car not only employs a good driver but also gives adequate rest to the driver whenever necessary to ensure safe and accident less journey. Today on par with private buses, Govt. buses too are provided with a spare driver during long journey. We want this logic to be applied to our Thermal Plants too please.

Hence retaining this 5<sup>th</sup> personnel in operating location is highly imminent for the smooth operation of the plant.

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## **Abolition of Posts based on NPC Reports:**

National Productivity Council has undertaken a study on the staff pattern and staff strength in all Thermal Power Stations and submitted its report partially. The recommendation of the committee is being implemented immediately in the stations wherever received.

We would like to highlight the following points

- Report has been prepared in accordance with the NTPC standards. This cannot be applied for us as we are lagging far behind NTPC standards.
- Abolishing the quite long vacant posts is highly absurd and should not be applied.
- Barring TTPS the survey was carried out through online and data submitted without physical verification and hence it is a mere report of formality and should not be taken into account.
- Similar NPC study was undertaken 2 decades ago and many posts were abolished then. Presently it isn't possible to reduce the posts further in the aged Power Plants.
- The report has been prepared without any scientific application and just a completion of formality for the huge amount being paid to them.

Hence we earnestly pray to stop the whole exercise of post reduction in the aftermath of the NPC recommendations, study its applicability with our Engineers before implementation as recommended by the NPC committee itself please.

## **Abolition of Posts due to Outsourcing of Coal Handling Plant:**

Total outsourcing of Coal Handling areas has been done in both the plants in Mettur. It's really paining that the bad experiences faced by our Board in NCTPS earlier hasn't been taken into account. The stiff opposition of our Sangam and JAC in this matter has not been taken into account.

Still we insist withdrawal of this Outsourcing orders and also request to retain the essential strength of our Engineers and Staff at all these outsourced area including key locations to avoid pilferages, ensure accountability and maintain healthiness of our Board Equipment and Properties. Else Board may lose huge revenue in handling of coal and also loss of generation.

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We are aware that Board is desperate to bring the NCTPS – III project into service at the earliest and hence expediting the exercise of retrenchment and redeployment.

We would like to suggest that as ever our team of Engineers trained in Thermal Operation and Commissioning activities are ready to assist the light up and commissioning activity. Their services may be utilized for a limited period for the commissioning activities of the new plant.

## **Prayer:**

The Officers at the helm in all these Thermal Power Stations are well aware of the problems raised by us above. Yet none of them are least bothered about the repercussions as they are not going to remain in that post for a long time as most of them occupy the top post on the verge of retirement. So they simply comply and implement the decisions of the Head Quarters.

The onus to run the Plant successfully lies on lower level Officers, Engineers and others who are worried but couldn't ventilate their voices, the reason which we are raising these points to the respected Chairman cum Managing Director on their behalf.

Hence we earnestly request the respected Chairman cum Managing Director to put the downsizing exercise on hold and have a detailed discussion on the concern raised by us before implementation, for smooth running of our Power Plants and thus maintain Industrial Harmony and Peace please.

Thanking you, Sir,

Yours Sincerely,

  
(V.S.SAMPATH KUMAR)  
General Secretary.

Copy to:

Director / Generation/ TANGEDCO

✓ All Chief Engineer's / Thermal stations