

Shortage of staff hits chemical analysis wing under Directorate of Mines in Odisha

Bhubaneswar: Though the mining exploration has been hit severely due to lack of adequate expertise, the state government has not made direct recruitment to the posts of assistant chemist in steel and mines department for past three decades. Assistant chemists are employed in chemical analysis wing of directorate of mines. The wing does the vital work of analysing the quality of ores.

The direct recruitment for assistant chemist was last conducted in 1987, revealed a reply to an RTI query. Of the 29 sanctioned posts of assistant chemists, 21 are lying vacant, official sources said.

Of the sanctioned posts, the state government makes direct recruitment for only 25% posts while 75% vacancies are filled up through promotion from among the senior laboratory assistants. With large vacancies, the chemical analysis has been rendered useless fuelling resentment among staff, the sources said.

Even though the director of mines last year recommended the state government for conducting recruitment of assistant chemists, no step has been taken. The government is also yet to come out with a proper cadre rule for appointment of the assistant chemists.

Explaining about the large-scale vacancies in the chemical analysis wing, a senior officer of the department said the vacancies could not be filled up through promotion due to lack of experience of the senior laboratory assistants.

Laboratory assistants need seven years of experience to be promoted to the post of assistant chemist. But none of them has the required experience, the officer said, adding, the direct recruitment was essential.

Odisha lags behind other mineral-bearing states in putting mining blocks on auction due to lack of proper exploration and analysis of ores.

"I am not aware of this. I will look into the matter and take steps to fill up the vacancies," said steel and mines minister Prafulla Mallik.