No. 2-10/2009-RT

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To

The Director,
Indira Gandhi National Forest Academy,
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Sub: Need for specialization in Indian Forest Service-Regarding.

Sir,

Please find enclosed a copy of constitution of a committee for screening and selection of Indian Forest Service Officers opting for specialization immediately after completing two years probation. You are requested to kindly notify the Committee and to seek proposal from the batches and also do the needful for screening and selection. A copy of the concept note is enclosed herewith.

Yours faithfully,

(A. R. Chadha)
Deputy Inspector General of Forests (RT)
NOTIFICATION of a Scheme for
Developing Specialization in the Indian Forest Service

Background

There has been a long-standing feeling that the officers of Indian Forest Service have not been able to achieve high levels of personal excellence and achievement in specialized fields of knowledge under the broad umbrella of forestry & natural resource management. As a recent instance, the National Forestry Commission Report, 2006, recognizes that due to the diverse functions of the forester, specialization is required 'to equip him to excel in a specialized job besides having adequate knowledge and skills to handle other assignments related to forestry'. Especially in reference to wildlife conservation and management, there has been a long-standing demand that a specialized cadre or sub-cadre of officers be developed with the appropriate technical knowledge and skills, which can come only from a concerted and specially designed programme of career development of selected officers. The same would be the case with other disciplines of importance to the scientific and professional development of forestry, which have to be identified. At the same time, it is felt not desirable to split up the Indian Forest Service into water-tight compartments, as the situation in the field requires cooperation, coordination and unified command of all the wings of the forest department. Hence, the following scheme has been developed, which will enable individual officers to develop high levels of achievement of world standards in their chosen field of specialization during the initial and middle years, while at the same time keeping their feet on the ground and enabling them to perform the synthesizing and unifying role called for at the higher levels of the hierarchy in the later parts of their service career.

Advanced levels of proficiency can be developed to an extent entitling an individual to be recognized as a "Specialist" only if the following elements are provided:

(i) early in the career, induction into the chosen field of specialization,
(ii) during the formative years, deepening hands-on experience in the chosen field of specialization,
(iii) during middle years, broadening of the experience,
(iv) during the later years, opportunity to synthesize.

This is an arduous and long-drawn out course of individual and sustained effort, which will be suited to only a few say 10% of each batch of officers, who will be identified based on their own commitment, expressed desire for higher studies, and certain objective criteria to be developed at the Indira Gandhi National Forest Academy (IGNFA), Dehradun. The details of the scheme at different stages are as follows:

1. Induction into the chosen field of specialization during the 2 year training at IGNFA.

**HARI SINGH FELLOWSHIP:**

At the initial training itself, IGNFA will undertake a formal screening of the IFS Probationers to assess their aptitude for this scheme, based on their academic record and background, qualifications, evidence of prior achievements and interest, and indicators of any extraordinary commitment to developing high levels of proficiency in the chosen field of specialization. The screening will be done on two occasions viz, initially, at the time of first entry into the Academy, and on a second occasion, at the start of or during the second year of the training. A rigorous and objective mechanism will be developed for screening the potential candidates for the scheme in consultation with professionals from advanced institutes in the subject matter of the concerned fields specialization. A committee will be set up for each field of specialization consisting of:

- Director, IGNFA
- Additional Director
- Professor
- Subject matter specialist from outside
- Head of advanced institute
- Course Director
- Chairman
- Member
- Member
- Member
- Member

The candidates selected through this process for the programme at the IGNFA will be termed "HARI SINGH FELLOWS"
and will be afforded the following special inputs and awards to put
them on the track to developing into specialists:

a) During their training at the IGNFA, they will be offered
special exercises, programmes and courses at
advanced levels (depending on their previous
qualifications, demonstrated levels of proficiency
already attained, and aptitude) in their chosen fields
of specialization, either at the IGNFA itself or at
suitable other advanced academic/professional
institution, using all available methods including web-
based courses, distance education etc., apart from
residence in the selected institution. To enable them
to find time for such advanced courses, a system of
"Credits" will be provided to the Hari Singh Fellows
which will permit them to attain and demonstrate
expected levels of proficiency in the regular courses,
at their own pace, without insisting on class-room
attendance, at least in those subjects in which they
already have demonstrated proficiency. Thus, a
probationer who has a post-graduate degree in say
Botany or in Economics, may be exempted from
attending the classes in Basic Botany or introduction
to Economics, thereby freeing the time for the
advanced level courses or exercises. Some advanced-
level modules may also be provided at IGNFA or
ICFRE itself by supplementing the existing teaching
faculty with highly qualified guest faculty from within
the country or from overseas as visiting faculty.

b) Immediately after the completion of the probationary
training at IGNFA, the HARI SINGH FELLOWS will be
sponsored for a suitable 1 year post-graduate
diploma/degree in the field of specialization, at a
suitable specialized/advanced institution, such as WII,
Dehradun for wildlife. The officer's salary and
allowances will continue to be paid by the IGNFA, for
which adequate financial resources will be made
available. The fees to be paid to the institute will also
be fully paid by the Government directly in case of
institutions receiving grants-in-aid, or through IGNFA
in other cases. The number of HARI SINGH Fellowships awarded each year would depend on
the number of offices making it through the screening process, the funding available, etc. and may be
pegged at 5 per year in the immediate future.

HARI SINGH Fellows will proceed to their respective states of
allotment on completion of the specialist course, and undergo a
compressed series of attachments and short-term charges within the
time period provided by the respective state for other probationers of
the same batch, after which the HARI SINGH Fellows will proceed to
their regular postings at the same time as their other batchmates in
that state. The State Governments shall take care to provide training
charges as well as first postings in the area of specialization of the
HARI SINGH Fellow, e.g. in wildlife posts in case of wildlife
specialization, and so on. It is advisable to give the HARI SINGH
Fellow at least two terms in posts where the specialized subject is
predominant, followed by one posting in any other sphere, which may
take the officer to a cumulative service put in of 9 years or more,
after which the officer will be encouraged to apply for the next stage
in the programme. During these initial postings, the officer will be
called a HARI SINGH Fellow, be identified as one of the nodal officers
for the subject of specialization, and would be encouraged and
expected to contribute in terms of papers to conferences, journals
etc.

For the financial year 2010-11, the programme will be offered
to a few of the probationers in the senior batch, who show the
requisite interest and aptitude in Wildlife Conservation, and they will
then go on to the Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun, for a course of
10 months or so as a start to their programme of specialization in
Wildlife. In future years, the programme is envisaged to provide
courses in the following fields of specialization:

i) Wildlife, with a course in Wildlife Institute of India,
Dehradun.

ii) Remote sensing & Geomatics, with a course in Indian
Institute of Remote Sensing, Dehradun.

iii) Genetics and Tree Breeding – Course & institute to be
identified.
iv) Forest Growth Modelling, Economics Management – Course & Institute to be identified/developed.

v) Forest Biometry, Statistics, Mensuration, Experimental Design, Inventory – Course & Institute to be identified.

vi) Forest Ecology, Environmental Sciences, Energy, Climate Change, Natural Resources – Course & Institute to be identified.

vii) Forest Botany, Systematics, Taxonomy, Herbarium etc. – Course & Institute to be identified.

viii) Silviculture, Plant Propagation, Nursery and Plantation Management etc. – Course & Institute to be identified.

2) During mid-career period:

a) SK SETH FELLOWSHIP

The next phase of the programme would invite applications for the SK SETH FELLOWSHIPS from officers who have put in at least 9 years of service, with such upper age limits as are applicable for grant of study leave, and who have had a good ground experience of both their chosen fields of specialization and of the general work of the department, and who have demonstrated a higher than usual level of proficiency in the scientific aspect of their chosen field of specialization, as shown by their field work, reports and papers written & published, participation in seminars, conferences, study groups etc. These fellowships will be open for HARI SINGH FELLOWS as well as to other officers of the IFS who fulfill the above characteristics, or who hold higher qualifications in a chosen field of specialization attained on their own before or during the course of their service in the IFS. In other words, it will not be restricted to the HARI SINGH fellows, and all IFS officers will be considered on an equal footing in making nominations to the SK SETH fellowships. The SK SETH fellowship would consist of the following components, to be utilized over a period of 5 years by the awardee:

(a) a Special Travel Grant of up to Rs.3 lakh with a limit of Rs.1 lakh in any one year.

(b) A Special Book/Journals purchase grant of up to Rs.3 lakh with a limit of Rs.1 lakh in any one year

(c) A grant to engage the services of research assistants and to procure equipment, consumables and
miscellaneous items up to Rs.3 lakh with a limit of Rs.1 lakh in any one year.

The item (c) will be interpreted in a broad manner to enable the awardee to procure what he deems essential in the pursuit of higher levels of excellence in the chosen field of specialization. However, in order to ensure that the money is not frittered away and that it actually leads to demonstrable improvement in the levels of proficiency & achievement, the SK SETH fellow will submit a proposal every year specifying the activities, items of expenditure, time line and anticipated output/outcome, which will be vetted by a Committee consisting of the following:

Director, IGNFA - Chairman
Subject matter specialist as required - Member
Director, FSI - Member
Director, WII - Member
Director of 1 or more ICFRE Institutes - Member
Joint Secretary, MoEF - Member
A senior level officer from the candidate's State cadre to act as mentor - Member

The above committee will draw up an MOU giving the mutually agreed plan of activities and expected outcomes with time schedule, and have an annual review before deciding on release of the further amounts. The awardee will be expected to produce scientific papers, research reports, etc. apart from contributing actively to policy formulation, survey reports etc. and participating in workshops, seminars etc. The awardee will be encouraged to publish books or pamphlets/brochures based on his work with due peer review as per academic norms. This fellowship will also facilitate visit of the officer to institutes and field spots in India or abroad for study visits, mentoring, understudy, consultation with world-renowned experts etc. The budget for the above grants would be provided from a corpus to be created through existing/new scheme of MoEF, the detailed modalities of which would be worked out in due course of time.
b) **CR RANGANATHAN FELLOWSHIPS**

This is an award to be made available to officers of the IFS in mid-career having at least 9 years of service, with such upper age limits as are applicable for study leave, for higher studies leading to Masters and Doctorate/Post-doctorate degrees in the chosen areas of interest. A major portion of the Ministry’s scheme called “Foreign Training of Forest Officers” will be earmarked for funding support for the CR RANGANATHAN Awards. The Committee indicated above for the SK Seth Awards will also function as the Committee for the CR RANGANATHAN Awards, with the subject-matter specialists being co-opted as required. The awards will be based on notification, giving wide publicity including e-mail messages to all the members of the Service, inviting, voluntary applications from the officers, and such screening & selection criteria and processes as the Committee may devise. The final selection shall be made by the MoEF, as per procedure in force for foreign training.

**General**

It is expected that officers groomed through these programmes of fellowships coupled with mentoring or placement with eminent specialists the world over, will produce a pool of outstanding talent and expertise in the Service, with a broad outlook, in-depth knowledge of the field of specialization, world-wide exposure coupled with experience of the ground reality in the Indian context. They will be preferred for posts in Central deputation reserve and autonomous institutions like ICFRE. The target will be to develop a pool of specialists of around 10% of the IFS over a period of 10-15 years. It is expected that the officers will anchor themselves sufficiently in their field of specialization to even become strong contenders to occupy positions in multi-lateral organizations like UNDP, FAO, IUCN, International NGOs like WWF etc. Ultimately they will be the torch bearers for the cause of forestry & natural resources conservation in the country as well as at the global level.

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