



KERALA STATE ELECTRICITY BOARD LIMITED

(Incorporated under the Companies Act, 1956)

CIN : U40100KL2011SGC027424

Reg.Office: Vidyuthi Bhavanam, Pattom, Thiruvananthapuram,
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Abstract

Estt - Recruitment of Meter Readers in KSEBL through KPSC in 75% Direct recruitment and 25% Department Quota –Revision of strength in the cadre and allied matters-Sanction accorded - Orders issued.

CORPORATE OFFICE (HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT)

B.O.(FTD) No. 744/2021 (NO.EB4(C)/Recruitment/21-22)

Dated, TVPM: 07.10.2021.

- Read:-
1. B O No.PS-1-84/88(59) dated 05.10.1990
 2. B.O (DB)No.494/2018(Estt.II6718/2016)dated 23.02.2018
 3. B.O (FTD) No.641/2020(EB4(C) MR/Vacancy Report2020- 21) Thiruvananthapuram, dated 19.10.2020
 4. Letter No.RIB(2)2681/2021/GW Thiruvananthapuram dtd 29.07.2021, of the Secretary, Kerala Public Service Commission .
 5. Note No EB4(C) /Qualification/21-22 dated 26.03.2021 of the Chief Engineer(HRM) submitted to the Chairman & Managing Director through Director(Distribution IT & HRM)
 6. Note No.EB4(C)/Recruitment/21-22 dated 27.08.2021 of the Chief Engineer (HRM)submitted to the Full Time Directors, KSEBL, through Director(D,IT &HRM) (Agenda No./64/09/21)

ORDER

The Method of appointment to the cadre of Meter Reader in KSEB Ltd is regulated by Board Order read as 1st above. As per the said Board Order, 75% of the vacancies are filled by Direct Recruitment through Kerala Public Service Commission and the remaining 25% by promotion from KSEBL employees. The existing qualifications prescribed for Direct Recruitment through Kerala Public Service Commission are as follows:

1. General

Pass in 8th Std. (IVth form) or its equivalent.

2. Technical

National Trade Certificate in Electrician / Wireman / Electronics Trade

or

K.G.C.E Electrical from an Institution recognized by the Govt. of Kerala.

or

M.G.T.E / K.G.T.E. Group Certificate covering the following four subjects:

- a) Electrical light & power (higher)
- b) Applied Mechanics (L)
- c) Heat Engines (Lower)
- d) Machine Drawing (L).

The Kerala Public Service Commission had invited application for the post of Meter Reader as per Category No. 557 / 2014 dated 26.12.2014 for filling up one Non Joining Duty vacancy reported on 31.10.2012 by the Chief Engineer (HRM). The candidates who appeared in the test approached the Hon'ble High Court of Kerala to publish the list and report the existing vacancies to the Kerala Public Service Commission. The Hon'ble High Court, in its judgment dated 04.01.2018 in WP (C) Nos. 30039 of 2016 and 21919 of 2017, ordered KSEB Limited to report 799 vacancies of Meter Readers to the Kerala Public Service Commission, which was challenged by Kerala State Electricity Board Limited filing Writ Appeal. Subsequently it was ordered by the Board to reduce the sanctioned strength from 1721 to 922. As per Order read as 2nd above, KSEB Limited, abolished 799 post of Meter Reader/Spot Biller, considering the introduction of advanced technology like Smart Meters and Personal Digital Assistant (PDA) and the ongoing restructuring process for streamlining the manpower requirements, subject to the outcome of Writ Appeal pending before the Hon'ble High Court of Kerala. Further the Hon'ble High Court had set-aside the orders directing to report 799 vacancy above, upholding the Board order reducing the strength of Meter Reader in the Kerala Public Service Commission Quota to the extend of 799 Nos.

In the meanwhile 365 Meter Readers were promoted to the cadre of Sub Engineer and hence, in order to maintain Skelton staff, in Meter Reader category the KSEBL has examined the matter and decided to fill 218 vacancies as per Board Order read as 3rd above, being the 50% of the vacancies existed and reported to the KPSC on 20.10.2020. Accordingly Kerala Public Service Commission has advised 218 candidates for the post of Meter Reader as per letter read as 4th above. The above list includes candidates from Disabled group too, especially from Low-Vision category having disability from 40% to 60%.

As per regulation 6, of CEA Regulations, Engineers and Supervisors engaged or appointed to operate or undertake maintenance of any part or all of a thermal power Generation station and a Hydro Power Plant and Electric Power Plant together with the associated Sub Station shall hold degree or diploma in engineering from a recognized institute or University. As per regulation 7, Engineers or supervisors engaged or appointed in operation and maintenance to operate or undertake maintenance of transmission and distribution systems shall hold degree or diploma in Electrical, Mechanical, Electronics and instrumentation engineering from a recognized institute or University. The recent draft amendment of CEA has recited the stream as 'appropriate trade' as far as branch of study is concerned. As far as KSEB Limited is concerned, Electrical & Electronics engineering stream is the appropriate trade of this cadre.

Presently Meter Readers comprises of 40% of the feeder category of Sub Engineer (Ele). The sanctioned strength of Sub Engineers (E) in KSEBL is 3492, out of which 40% vacancies (ie 1397) are set apart for promotion of Meter Readers. As per CEA Regulations, 2010, qualification required for the appointment/promotion to the cadre of Sub Engineer (Ele), coming under the category of supervisors, is either Diploma or Degree in the concerned discipline. But as per the qualification prescribed in the Board Order read as 1st above for Meter Readers, ITI holders are eligible. Even Matriculation is not insisted for ITI holders, only pass in 8th std is insisted. The Board Order does not envisage Degree or Diploma as an essential qualification for Meter Readers. Moreover, many of the qualifications approved in 1990 are irrelevant and topics are obsolete as far as the duty of Meter Readers are concerned. For eg. Heat Engines, Machine drawing etc relate to Mechanical Engineering only, and finds a place when Electro mechanical meter are in use.

In the backdrop of the above, it is evident that the new meter readers who are recruited with the presently stipulated ITI qualification would be confined to the post of Meter Readers only throughout their service forever with absolutely no chances of promotion and with resulting

consequence that 40% of Sub Engineer (Ele.) places would remain unfilled permanently, which would be detrimental to the functioning of KSEBL.

In the meantime the certain applicants for the post of Meter Reader/Spot Biller (Category No.557 of 2014 notified by the KPSC), approached the Hon'ble High Court of Kerala with a prayer to declare that Degree Holders or Diploma Holders are not eligible to be included in the probability list and rank list and prepare a rank list strictly in accordance with the Board Order read as 1st above, ie, filled up candidates only with ITI qualification. The Hon'ble High Court has disposed the petition without any further specific orders. A candidate having higher qualifications (Diploma/B.Tech.) may also be eligible for recruitment to the post of Meter Readers, since the Honourable High Court have pronounced in many cases that Higher Qualification is not a Disqualification *In Satishchandra Bhailalshah v. State of Gujarat (1984)2 SLR 737*, and *Jyothi and others Vs KPSC,SLR(C)No.13684,13685/2001* the Hon'ble Supreme Court held that a candidate cannot be denied consideration because he possess qualification which are higher than prescribed.

Meanwhile to improve the operational efficiency and financial sustainability of the distribution sector, the Government of India has approved the Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme-A reforms Based and Result Linked Scheme. The Scheme seeks to transform the existing DISCOMs into making them operationally efficient and financially sustainable. One of the path breaking interventions under the Scheme is the plan to install prepaid smart meters to all electricity consumers except agricultural consumers in a phased manner. The scheme has to be completed by 2023 and 2025 in two phases. Once such meters are installed, manual meter reading is not required and the role of a conventional Meter Reader would become redundant. As a result manual meter reading will come to an end in the near future. In the above scenario, further recruitment to the post of Meter Reader will create a situation of under- utilization of Meter Readers. After the introduction of Personal Digital Assistant (PDA), the job description of Meter Readers has been completely changed. Further a phased reduction of existing vacancies of Meter readers is needed with the introduction of Smart Meters. The available surplus staff in other categories can be engaged for meter reading after imparting sufficient training till the roll out of Smart Meters is completed. However KSEBL has to find out effective ways to accommodate/retain the existing meter readers in order to avoid their retrenchment. It is expected that less than 1/3 of the present working strength of meter readers will be sufficient once the scheme is materialized. In this transitional stage wherein manual meter reading is about to be done away in the near future, the subject needs detailed deliberation.

In this regard the Chief Engineer (HRM) has submitted a detailed Note read as 5th above to the Director (D,IT & HRM), and it was directed to place the matter before the Full Time Directors.

The matter was placed before the Full Time Directors as per note read as 6th above. Having considered the matter in detail, the Full Time Directors, in its meeting held on 17.09.2021, resolved to accord sanction to the following .

1. 1. To limit the Cadre Strength of Meter Reader to 272 (Present working strength 54 (PSC-26,Comp-22 PH-1,SR-5) and reported vacancy to KPSC-218) in PSC Direct Recruitment Quota, shelving remaining number in both the Quotas in view of change in technology and policy of metering undergoing pan India. By doing so the total strength of Meter Reader would be reduced to 363 Nos (272+91=363), (91 being 25 % quota earmarked for department candidates).
2. To request the Kerala Public Service Commission to revisit the advice list dated 29.07.2021 of 218 candidates since it contains Low Vision/PH candidates who are not capable of discharging the duties in the cadre and to keep in abeyance the posting of Meter Readers as per the advice list dated 29.07.2021 till a decision is arrived on this issue.

3. To keep in abeyance further recruitment of Meter Readers till comprehensive policy on this issue is arrived.
4. To authorize the Chief Personal Officer, KSEBL to put forward, proposal for positioning of Meter Reader in overall hierarchy, their career progression prospects and quota allocation to higher post etc for the consideration of the KSEBL.

Orders are issued accordingly.

By Order of the Full Time Directors,

Sd/-

LEKHA G

Company Secretary (in Charge)

To

The Chief Engineer (HRM), KSEBL

Copy to:

1. The Financial Adviser/Chief Internal Auditor.
2. The Company Secretary-in-charge/ Legal Adviser & Disciplinary Enquiry Officer.
3. The Chief Vigilance Officer/Chief Personnel Officer/Deputy Chief Engineer (IT).
4. The T A to Chairman & Managing Director and Director (HRM).
5. The TA to Director (Distribution & IT/ TA to Director (Transmission, System Operation)/
TA to Director (Generation – Civil/ TA to Director (Planning, Safety & SCM)/
TA to Director (Generation-Electrical/ PA to Director (Finance)/TA to Director (REES
including SOURA, Sports & Welfare)
6. The Senior CA to the Secretary (Administration).
7. The Fair Copy Superintendent/Record Section.
8. Stock File.

Forwarded/By Order



SENIOR SUPERINTENDENT

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