

Government to review appraisal rules for bureaucrats

The government is expected to review the appraisal rules for Indian bureaucrats following strong criticism that the system of evaluation is 'gender insensitive'.

'It has been brought to our notice that some of the points in the evaluation form were too intrusive. I think it is bad. We will submit a new form to the prime minister,' Minister of State for Personnel Suresh Pachouri told IANS here Wednesday.

Pachouri was responding to newspaper reports about the gender insensitive references in the evaluation forms for the civil servants. According to the report, the All India Services Performance Appraisal Rules 2007 has asked women officers to record their last menstrual period as well as when they had last taken maternity leave, etc.

'It was the prime minister's initiative to have a more effective system for the assessment of the civil servants. We will definitely look into the complaints,' the minister said.

The women officers have termed the questions were too 'intrusive' and 'insensitive.'

'The appraisal form is extremely gender insensitive,' Baijendra Kumar, a 1985 batch Indian Administration Service official, said.

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh had approved the new annual scheme - 'Performance Appraisal Report' (PAR) - in June 2005, to replace the annual confidential report (ACR) for assessing the performance of the bureaucrats.

The new appraisal is done on a one to 10 scale - the higher the better - against 15-20 indicators. The overall grade will be the median of the scores for the various indicators.

Sources in the personnel ministry said the evaluation form had been finalised by the health ministry.

'Our ministry had prepared a format and sent it to the health ministry to finalise it. These questions - against which the women officers have complained - seem to have been added by them,' an official in the ministry said.

The new appraisal rules had invited criticism from male officers too.

'The new form has got questions to quantify those traits which are not quantifiable like emotional stability. How can one judge his/her emotional stability on a scale of 1-10?' Kumar asked.

'It is also cumbersome for the officers in charge of reviewing as it is too long and explanatory and it does not give scope for proper representation of the person, who is reviewed upon.

'It is a bureaucratic acrobatics,' Kumar said.

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