

## **44th Annual General Meeting**

### **REPORT OF THE GENERAL SECRETARY FOR THE YEAR 2022-23**

Dear Colleagues,

I, on behalf of the Executive Committee of the Higher and State Audit & Accounts Services Association would like to express my heartiest welcome to all the members of the Association and wish you and your family a happy and prosperous New Year ahead. I have the pleasure and privilege of presenting the Annual Report of the Association along with the Audited Accounts for the year ended 31st March, 2023, on this occasion of the 44th Annual General Meeting, with the kind permission of the President, for consideration and adoption of the members.

Friends, as a mark of respect for the departed souls of Shri Ashok Ghosh (1977) who was the founder member of our Association let us stand up, keep still and observe a minute of silence.

Thank you.

Friends, understanding the history of any association is crucial for its members because it provides valuable insights into the Association's (i) Root and Foundations, (ii) Evolution and Growth, (iii) Learning from past decisions (iv) Leadership Legacy and (v) Member engagement. Let us recall that fifty-two long years have passed since the West Bengal Audit & Accounts Service was introduced in tandem with the West Bengal Higher and State Audit & Accounts Service and the West Bengal Junior Audit & Accounts Service after a long deliberation by the Government about the formation of a specialized cadre of officers capable of gathering all loose strings of the state finance to foster a mechanism of monetary discipline in the Government based on established monetary and financial norms as well as the rules and regulations specially framed by it for the purpose. The creation of the three specialised Services was done through Gazette Notification No 935-F Dated 27th March 1971. The "Association for the Officers of the State Audit & Accounts Services, West Bengal" was born in the year 1981 with the members of West Bengal Higher Audit & Accounts Service and West Bengal Audit & Accounts Service primarily to oversee the welfare of the members of the service and in its stride, the development of the finance, accounting and auditing functions of the State. Subsequently, the name of the Association was changed to "Higher and State Audit & Accounts Services Association, West Bengal" in August 1995 but the vision and motto did not change their character, rather through constant endeavour those are now more sharply focused and concentrated.

With the passage of time the Government, acting on the advice of the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India, decided to unify, on administrative ground, the West Bengal Junior Audit & Accounts Service with the West Bengal Audit & Accounts Service and abolish the West Bengal Higher Audit & Accounts Service through the Gazette Notification No. 6426-F dated 24th June 2004. Hitherto our Association functions in a total democratic set-up with the general body of members remaining the force majeure. An elected executive committee acts as its entrusted emissary for ensuring welfare of its members.

Friends, you are all aware that the hurdles that we have had to cross over the years since the inception of the Service to reach each milestone and the superfluity of mentioning each such milestone in this limited space restrains me from citing those over again. Still a lot remains to be done and we are certain that with your constant active support we shall be able to further the cause of holistic development of our Service. I shall now try to highlight before you the major activities of the Association during the last year.

➤ **Press Release and Change of Career Advancement Schemes and creation of Functional Posts:** -As a result of our continuous and tenacious endeavour we have succeeded to convince the Government about our demands and as a result our beloved honourable Chief Minister has declared certain benefits to be awarded to our Service along with other Constituted Services. The glimpses of such benefits are-

- 1) The existing Career Advancement Scheme has been modified so as to reduce the period for movement from second and third higher level from 16 to 15 years and from 25 to 24 years respectively vide Notification number 5100-F(P1)/FA/O/2M/46/23 (N.B) dated 31/08/2023.
- 2) Existing strength in the functional posts in Pay Level 24 of ROPA 2019 have been enhanced from 13 to 21 and existing strength in the functional posts in Pay Level 21 of ROPA 2019 is said to have been enhanced from 21 to 42 vide Notification number 5100 F(P1)/FA/O/2M/46/23 (N.B) dated 31/08/2023.
- 3) Benefits of Pay Level 22 of WBS ROPA 2019 have also been awarded to Officers on completion of 2 years of continuous service in the post borne in Pay Level 21 vide Notification number 5100 F(P1)/FA/O/2M/46/23 (N.B) dated 31/08/2023.

I on behalf of my Association cordially welcome the declaration of our Hon'ble Chief Minister and decision of the Government to acknowledge our effort though we expressed our concerns on some points which creates confusion among our Service members regarding such Notification. Those are

- 1) Though it has been said that our existing strength in the Pay Level 21 of ROPA 2019 is 21 but presently the actual such posts are more than 100 and therefore we posed our demand for awarding at least 10% of our total strength in the Pay Level 21 of ROPA 2019.
- 2) We also demanded for 2 additional increments in each case of movements to higher level.
- 3) Though there is a declaration about Seniority linked designation of officers in the 'Press Release' but there is no such action on the part of the Government has taken place till now. We also tried to draw attention of the Government to this point.

- **Finalization of Seniority Rules and Publication of Gradation List: -**  
Our Association has been taking continuous and serious initiative for immediate publication of the Seniority Rules and Gradation List of unified cadre of West Bengal Audit and Accounts Service with our demand for seniority of Officers of direct recruit batch of 1999 to the mergee Officers of 1994 batch on the basis of decisions taken in the last Annual General Meeting of the Association held online on 8th January, 2023, the court cases have been withdrawn to pave the way for publication of Seniority Rule. After withdrawal of such court cases, the State Government has been requested several times for taking steps for immediate publication of Seniority Rule and Gradation List.

As per latest updates, we came to know that publication of Seniority Rule and Gradation List is at the final stage of consideration in Group P of the Finance Department and we expect it to be out within a very few days.

- **Intervening the process of conducting Exam in Hindi for in service Officers: -** As was reported and observed that the process of conducting departmental examination in Hindi by PSC proves to be a burden for in service Officers, we visited the Chairperson of PSC, West Bengal and expressed our concern on this matter. The Chairperson assured us of taking the necessary action and as a result the Examiner has been changed and in the next term many of our members were able to clear the examination.
- **Training of Officers: -** You are aware that your Association has ensured regular and effective training of fresh WBA&AS officers. Post-specific training has been conducted at ATI, Salt Lake for Officers posted as

A.O, DCFS; A.O, CMOH; F.O, Municipalities, DPD (Accounts), DRDC etc. Due to our persuasion post specific training of COF, DPSC has also been arranged at ATI, Salt Lake. To cope with the challenges posed by the changing economy, emphasis needs to be laid on developing skills for financial administration, too. We have kept suggestions before the Government to design the in-service training programme in a way that will help building up a team of Finance Managers/Analysts instead of only Accounts or Finance Officers. Under this changing situation, in-service training programme was arranged at IIM, Joka. The Government had also introduced a programme of developing communication skill in English through British Council for our in-service Officers. However, all the programmes suffered a lot during the last few years because of the COVID-19 restrictions. We have pursued the Government to resume these training programmes as well as the Foreign Training Programme as early as possible.

- **Regional Meetings of the Association:** - A Regional Meeting of the members of the Association of Cooch Behar, Alipurduar, Jalpaiguri, Darjeeling, Kalimpong, Uttar Dinajpur, Dakshin Dinajpur and Malda districts was held on 21st April, 2023 at Siliguri. 60 nos. of members were present in the meeting. Discussions were held in different service matter and a Regional Committee was also formed in that meeting.
- **The Co-operative Credit Society of the Association:** - The State Audit & Accounts Services Co-operative Credit Society Ltd. run by the Association performed a challenging role by providing short-time credits to its members. During the year 2022-23 the total recovery and disbursement of loan was Rs.96,87,055/- (previous year Rs. 88,39,079/-) and Rs.1,17,83,702/-(previous year Rs. 1,05,99,910/-) respectively and as on 31st March 2023 the total amount lying with members as loan was Rs. 2,96,63,181/- (previous year Rs. 2,75,66,534/-). We hope that the recovery position will improve in the years to come.
- **Annual Accounts of the Association:** -The annual audited accounts of the Association for the year 2022-23 have been computer-generated like in the last year and are placed before you for approval and adoption. In this connection we would like to put on record the untiring efforts of Sri Prahlad Biswas for undertaking great pains amidst their hectic office schedule to take time out to complete the accounts in due time.

➤ **Remembering the contribution of senior members of the Service: -**  
We take this opportunity to remember the contribution of all our senior members many of whom have already retired and some are on the verge of their retirement. We pay our respect to these men whose efforts have played a major role in shaping the Association and uplifting the image of the Service at a time when very few even knew of the existence of our Service. We express our whole hearted gratitude for their contribution for building the image and repute of the service and wish their good health at their retired life.

➤ **Farewell Ceremony on superannuation: -**The Association has been consistently following the system of honouring our colleagues on the occasion of their superannuation with a written felicitation and a token gift. This is just a manifestation of the deep bond existing between the members of different batches – old and new. We pledge to hold on to this practice.

➤ **Roadmap of the Association for the coming years:-**We think each and every organisation should function for achieving its goals and hence existence of a roadmap is necessary. Accordingly, the future roadmap of the Association will be the guided by the activity for achieving the following demands: -

1. Granting **5%** posts of the total strength in **Pay Level 24** of ROPA 2019.
2. Granting **10%** posts of the total strength of our total strength in the **Pay Level 21** and **Pay Level 22** of the WBS ROPA 2019 in the ratio of 2:1.
3. Granting of two additional increments in each case of movements to higher level.
4. Publication of up-to-date Cadre Schedule, Seniority Rules and publication of Gradation List of the Officers of WBA&AS.
5. Maintenance of inter-service seniority criterion among the Officers of Constituted State Services while posted under same hierarchy.
6. The West Bengal Audit & Accounts Service Officers should be appointed to the following posts:
  - I. Director of Treasuries & Accounts, West Bengal
  - II. Director of Pension Provident Fund & G.I., West Bengal

III. Director of Co-operative Audit under the Co-operation Department

7. Adoption of a uniform policy in the matter of promotion to IAS from the constituted Group-A State Civil Services.
  8. Granting Joint Secretary Scale to the officers after 20 years of service.
  9. Arrangement of Half-Yearly Departmental Examination at ATI, Salt Lake.
- **Proposal for increasing the strength of Executive Committee:** - Friends, as you know, when I assume the responsibility of General Secretary of our Association at the AGM of December 2017, the number of members of our association was around 340. Now the total number of members of our Association become around 700. Under such circumstances, I feel that the representation of members in the Executive Committee should be enhanced. Therefore, I placed the proposal of enhancing the number of the elected members of the Executive Committee from eleven (11) to fifteen (15) to enable the executive committee to function more smoothly.

Last but not the least, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude & thanks to Sri Dilip Kumar Das, Chief Election Officer and Special Secretary of e-Governance Group & his able team of Joint Election Officers from Finance Department for using their huge experience & knowledge as torchbearers of the e-Governance initiatives in financial administration of the State to introduce the online voting facility for the election of the Executive Committee for the first-time considering the need of the hour, which has eliminated both the painstaking procedure of conducting election using paper ballots and uncertainty of reaching ballots within the stipulated time through post office.

At the end, let us welcome 2024 as the harbinger of our hope and faith, feelings and fervour. I believe through our collective endeavour 2024 will unfold itself into a storehouse of opportunities for the Service. I urge upon all our members to remain by the side of the Association in its quest for betterment of the Service which will be the most important impetus for us to stride forward towards the right direction.

Dated: Kolkata, 14th January, 2024

Partha Chakraborty 14/01/2024  
Partha Chakraborty  
General Secretary  
Higher & State Audit &  
Accounts Service Association, W.B