

STATE BANK OF INDIA OFFICERS' ASSOCIATION

(BENGAL CIRCLE)

(Registered under Trade Unions Act 1926-Regd. No. 6908)

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IP No. 500077

Circular No. 85/2020

Date : 27.04.2020

To All Members (Please Circulate)

We reproduce hereunder the Circular No. 65 dated 27.04.2020 issued by the General Secretary, All India State Bank Officers' Federation, the contents of which are self-explicit.

With revolutionary greetings,

Shubhajyoti Chattopadhyay
(General Secretary)

To all our Affiliates / Members:

STAFF: MISCELLANEOUS -DISRUPTION DUE TO COVID 19 PANDEMIC CLASSIFICATION OF PERIOD OF ABSENCE

We have sent a communication to the Dy. Managing Director (HR) & Corporate Development Officer, State Bank of India, on the captioned subject.

A copy is enclosed for information.

Yours comradely,

(Soumya Datta)
General Secretary

No : 6466/29/20

Date: 27.04.2020

The Deputy Managing Director (HR) & CDO,
State Bank of India,
Corporate Centre,
Madame Cama Road,
MUMBAI - 400 021.

Dear Sir,

STAFF: MISCELLANEOUS -DISRUPTION DUE TO COVID 19 PANDEMIC CLASSIFICATION OF PERIOD OF ABSENCE

At the outset, we place on record our appreciation and gratitude for implementing several proactive action for the safety of staff as well as path breaking HR initiatives during this period of crisis when the entire nation is combating the pandemic. It is also heartening to observe that several of our suggestions have been given due cognizance regarding treatment of absence from duty as Special Leave as per Circular No.CDO/P&HRD-IR/9/2020 dated 24.04.2020.

2. However, we wish to submit a few observations and we feel that some of the provisions need to be reviewed and amended keeping into view the prevailing situation in the country to provide equity and justice.

a. Sl. No.3: Employees on Home Quarantine on Doctor's advice

As you are well aware, personnel have been called upon to work under the present risky circumstances, as banking is considered as an essential service. It is incontrovertibly true that the footfalls will continue at the branches on the incremental trajectory as Government has called upon the banks to serve the underprivileged section by handling DBT, PM Kisan Yojana

Shubhajyoti Chattopadhyay

General Secretary
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etc. and also due to the simultaneous measures being taken by several State Governments to provide relief. Consequentially, the officers at various administrative offices also had to attend office. Naturally, the probability and risk of infection/suspected infection will be higher on account of movement and being amidst people. It is therefore, the responsibility of the organization and the society to ensure that quarantine is effectively ensured. As such, it is natural, humane and equitable that whenever an officer is advised to go on home quarantine by/medical professionals, bank may please look into them with compassion and empathy and consider sanctioning "Special Leave" and such absence should not be treated as Sick Leave. Else, this results in an adverse impact to the personnel who have served the nation in the hours of crisis.

b. Sl. No.5: Visually Impaired/ Physically Handicapped Employees/ Pregnant employees / Employees with serious ailments or high health risk exempted from duty

Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances & Pension vide OM No.11013/9/2014-Estt(A-III) dated 01.04.2020 has advised to exempt persons with disabilities (PwD) from duties while drawing up roster of employees required to attend essential services (copy enclosed). Based on the above GOI guidelines, our bank has exempted the category i.e. Visually Impaired/ Physically Handicapped Employees / Pregnant Employees / Employees with serious ailments or high health risk from duty vide Circular No.HR/IR/SKJ/2690 dated 30.03.2020. All Circles have complied with the instructions and given exemption to the above category staff working at various branches/administrative offices. The interpretation of the referred circular was widely held as being granted 'Special Leave' on humanitarian grounds. Hence, the instructions contained in Circular No.CDO/P&HRD-IR/9/2020 dated 24.04.2020 for treating absence as "Sick Leave" for the above category staff has created angst amongst the employees/officers 'exempted' from attending office. We, therefore, request that necessary amendment be made in the bank's instructions in that the absence of such category of staff is treated as "Special Leave". Incidentally, bank has recruited significant number of employees/officers, who are visually impaired/physically handicapped in the past couple of years to encourage the specially abled. In their short service span so far, there is likelihood that privilege or sick leave balances standing in their names are minimal which will be inadequate to accommodate their leave of absence under such extraordinary circumstances. Consequentially, in terms of the circular, the days of absence will be treated as extraordinary leave on loss of pay. This will be an unwarranted action against the employees/officers who belong to a special category recognised by our esteemed organisation.

c. Employees who went out of station for purposes other than on official work but were not able to travel back to headquarters

We have been receiving information that some of our officers, who were out of station for the purpose of medical treatment of self or family members, have been left stranded due to the sudden imposition of lock down. Similarly, a large number of officers had been on sanctioned leave and were out of station when the lockdown was announced and were unable to travel to their place of work. It would be unfair to debit Privilege Leave in respect of our personnel who are not in a position to attend office despite their willingness to do so. As cited in the previous paragraph, there is every likelihood that the privilege leave balance may not be adequate to adjust the period of absence from duty and some officers would be forced to go on 'loss of pay'. Incidentally, the ministry of Finance, Department of Expenditure, Government of India vide its office Memorandum dated 23.03.2020 has instructed all concerned that whenever any contractual, casual and outsourced staff of Ministries/Departments and other organizations of Government of India is required to stay at home in view of lockdown order, they shall be treated as "on duty" during such period of absence and necessary pay/wages would be paid accordingly which under normal circumstances would result in deduction in their pay/wages due to non availability of any kind of public transport. Thus, treatment of our own employees in a different manner would be discriminatory.

We, therefore, request that Special Leave may please be sanctioned in such cases also. Alternatively, as a special onetime arrangement under such unprecedented situation in the country, these officers who are stuck up in their hometown/elsewhere may be deputed to a nearby branch/administrative office so that bank is able to get their services at this critical juncture and at the same time their leave balance remains unaffected.

3. Sir, we also request you to issue suitable advisory to circles not to initiate transfer orders to officers during this period of lockdown and during the duration of restrictions of travel. In the prevailing lockdown scenario, the relieved officer will not be able to report to his/her next posting as no public transport is available. As a result, the relieved officer will be forced to stay back at the previous place of posting and the days of absence will naturally be adjusted with the accumulated leave balance.

We do hope that the suggestions detailed in the foregoing will be considered sympathetically.

With regards,
Yours sincerely,



(Soumya Datta)
General Secretary

Shubhajyoti Chattopadhyay

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