

RAA grapples with high turnover

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About 100 auditors have left the organisation in the past five years

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The Royal Audit Authority (RAA) has experienced significant attrition, with 100 auditors leaving the organisation between 2020 and 2024.

Of the total, 89 auditors resigned voluntarily, while 11 retired after reaching the superannuation age.

In the fiscal year 2023-24 alone, 34 personnel exited the RAA, including 33 voluntary resignations. This represents 14.71 percent of the agency's total workforce, raising concerns about its capacity to maintain audit quality and coverage.

Most of the auditors who left were experienced professionals with more than five years of service, and had held key leadership positions in audit teams.

RAA officials attribute the high attrition rate primarily to auditors voluntarily resigning to upgrade their professional qualifications.

In addition, auditors are increasingly drawn to autonomous agencies, state-owned enterprises (SOEs), and companies under Druk Holding and Investments (DHI), which offer better salaries and benefits.

While the trend of employees leaving for international opportunities has subsided, domestic competition for talent has intensified.

Despite these challenges, the RAA has managed to fulfil its mandate by adopting innovative approaches such as risk-based auditing, consolidating audits under single reviews like dzongkhag-level audits, and conducting remote audits for agencies with limited expenditures.

During the fiscal year 2020-21, the RAA had 274 employees, who managed to conduct 513 audits, achieving 64 percent coverage of its audit universe. By fiscal year 2023-24, the workforce had reduced to 207 employees, yet the RAA conducted 439 audits, covering 96 percent of the audit universe.

From 2021 to 2024, the RAA recruited 51 new auditors, with 22 joining in 2021, 12 in 2022, 13 in 2023, and four in 2024.

To address staffing gaps, the RAA also recruited personnel on contract at the P5B level upon approval from the Royal Civil Service Commission. The organisation also relied on overtime work.

An RAA official acknowledged that employee retention is a challenge faced by many organisations. “Although retaining employees is difficult, the RAA continues to strategise ways to address this issue,” the official said.

Adding to the challenges, the RAA faces a persistent shortage of professionally certified accountants, limiting its ability to meet the growing demand for audit services, particularly in government corporations and financial institutions.

The RAA’s ability to retain talent is constrained by limited funds for training existing employees or hiring qualified professionals from the market.

Despite the constraints, the RAA has resolved to cap its auditor count at 250, focusing instead on optimizing its existing resources to fulfill its responsibilities effectively.

“In the future, we will continue to strategise ways to retain employees and fulfill our audit responsibilities effectively,” said the RAA official.