Chapter 5 ➡ Preparedness of Indian Railways to handle the enhanced threat environment

Security is the degree of protection against danger, damage, loss and criminal activity. A security system leads to a high-performance system. When used together it is sufficient to ensure adequate levels of protection and is capable of handling disasters in the minimum possible time frame and least number of causalities. Another important aspect is the reduction of disruption to the systems of rail transportation ie the time taken for the railway system to start operating again.

5.1   Preparedness for Crisis Management

Crisis management is the process by which an organization deals with a major event that threatens to harm an organization or its stake holders. It consists of skills and techniques to handle a situation after it occurs to the point that recovery starts. Crisis management in the context of the railways would focus on minimising the loss of life and reduction in disruption in the operation of the Railways.

Crisis /Disasters confronting the Indian Railways can be classified into four main types:

➢   National level crisis which is specific to railways and is required to be managed with the help of other Ministries

➢   National level crisis which affects the country including the railways and different ministries have to help each other viz Earthquake, Cyclone etc. The Ministry of Home Affairs will assist railways in security related crisis situation like sabotage, bomb blast etc.

➢   Crisis situation which is not a national level crisis and is required to be managed with the help of other Ministries. Chemical explosions, fire in trains etc are covered under this type.

➢   Crisis situation which is not a national level crisis and can be managed with the help of internal resources of the railways.

For security related national level crisis, the Ministry of Home Affairs plays the lead role. For other crisis, railways are required to prepare its own crisis management plans. To deal with a crisis situation, the following Committees become activated.

(i)   National Crisis Management Committee (NCMC)–Apex body of Government of India to deliberate on national crisis. For security related crisis member Staff and Member Traffic are members.

(ii)   Crisis Management Group- This is the executive authority responsible for handling the crisis and will work under the broad directives issued by NCMC and will co-ordinate with the zonal management group. For security related crisis DG /RPF is the convenor.

(iii) Zonal Management Group –This group is the same for all crisis and is established at the zonal level. This group is convened by the Additional General Managers and includes the representatives from safety, security and Engineering departments.

During any security related crisis, the railways may need the help of other agencies for their expertise. In these cases the instructions contained in the Railway accident manual /Disaster Management plan become applicable. The disaster management plan at the zonal level plays an important role and has to be dovetailed with the disaster management plan of the State Government and District Administration. In cases of sabotage the GRP and the State Police play an important role as they investigate the criminal cases relating to sabotage /explosion.

Chapter 1 of report No. 8 of 2008 of the C&AG of India (Railways) on Disaster Management on Indian Railways had reviewed emergency preparedness across Indian Railways in handling disasters. While verifying the action taken note of the Ministry of Railways it was observed that full scale disaster management exercise was not conducted in SER during 2008-10 except once each at Hatia- Muri section and Rourkela. IR stated (July 2011) that since there is a lot of traffic and accidents in SER and actual full scale disaster management exercise takes place very often so there was no need to conduct mock disaster management exercise during the period.

The Public Accounts Committee of 15th Lok Sabha in its Sixteenth Report (2009-10) on Disaster Management, noted that achieving rapid access to the accident sites still remains a major hurdle as rescue operation during the Golden Hour cannot be achieved with conventional provision of Accident Relief Train (ART), Accident Relief Medical Van (ARMV) and Self Propelled Accident Relief Train (SPART) etc.   In this context, Public Accounts Committee (PAC) stated that the Indian Railways require a paradigm shift in their approach and integration of railway disaster management infrastructure with those of civil authorities, armed forces etc.

5.2   Restoration of Commercial Traffic

An analysis of restarting of movement of trains after an accident was done by the safety directorate in Railway Board. It observed that after the track is declared fit there are considerable delays in restoring the movement of commercial trains after the restoration subsequent to an accident. Restoration of commercial traffic after "Track Fit[13]" took time ranging from one hour to 20 hours in 171 cases, whereas restoration after 'OHE Fit' took 13 minutes to four hours in 25 cases.

5.3   Man Power Management

Manpower management focuses on the accurate identification of human resource requirements (in terms of both quantity and quality) necessary to

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[13] Track fit condition is the state when track is declared fit for running trains after carrying out repair to the damage caused due to accident /sabotage

perform specific tasks and in which they will be most efficiently and economically used.

5.3.1   Man power shortage

The manpower position as of 1ˢᵗ April for the period 2005-06 to 2009-10 is given in **Annexure-III**. It is seen that in all the five years there was a shortage of staff in all the categories. The combined vacancies of the railway security forces declined from 19 to 11 per cent during the period 2005-10. In GRP, the vacancy position increased from seven per cent in 2005-06 to sixteen per cent in 2009-10. The shortfall in manpower in RPF, RPSF and GRP is depicted below:
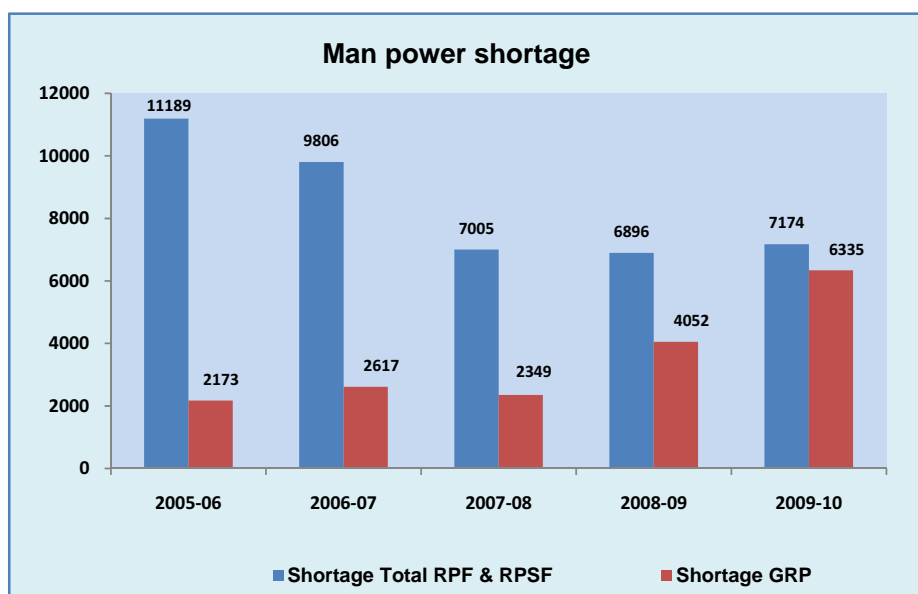
In the aftermath of the bomb blasts in trains in Mumbai during July 2006, the Railway Board in August 2006 called for comprehensive proposals for creation of additional posts so as to strengthen the security in Zonal Railways. In response to this the Railways (including Metro/Kolkata) sent their proposals for additional man power totalling to 23655 personnel[14].

Audit observed that in South Central Railway, the assessment of requirement for additional man power was defective. In July 2006 it was decided that Zonal Railways should not deploy RPF at goods sheds, train examination points etc. which had either been closed or reduced. However, SCR continued deployment of RPF in these areas and the deployment was disproportionately higher than the requirement. RPF personnel were also deployed as safaiwalas and cooks despite the decision that such works be outsourced. The requirement was also worked out without taking into account the deployment made by GRP for train escorting. This position is likely to be persisting in other zones also. It is thus

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[14] SR-2008, SWR-1171, NER-1298, NWR-2671, SER-731, SECR-294, CR- 2638, NCR-737, SCR-1136, ER- 827, WR-5072, ECR-2879, NFR-367, NR-1532, ECoR-150, Metro-.144

essential that the sanctioned strength be re-estimated in all zones based on the above directions issued by Railway Board.

Railway Board instructed the zones to outsource the security duties of non-core activities to private parties. Out of 16 zones, Metro Railway and six production units, only in 9 zones[15] and one production unit the security of some sections (Dongaposi section of SER) administrative buildings, hospitals etc. was outsourced. Out of this, in SCR security of GM Building and in NR security of Central Hospital, New Delhi was being guarded done by both RPF and private security personnel.

Thus it is evident that Railways are reluctant to outsource security even in non core areas to private agencies. Audit attempted a comparison of cost of security arrangements provided by RPF in Carriage Workshop, Perambur (SR) with the cost of engaging private security at Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) Terminal, Korukkupet, Chennai. It was noticed that the average cost per RPF personnel was `24273 whereas the average cost per private personnel at IOC terminal was only `13970. This shows that if the Railways had engaged private security personnel at non core areas they could have saved substantial amounts, besides utilising the RPF personnel for core areas.

Though the manpower position shows that there were a large number of vacancies in the RPF/RPSF, it is felt that if available manpower had been reorganized prioritizing core operations the assessed staff strength required may have declined. Despite proposals for creating more than 25,000 posts, the creation of posts was slow. The use of efficiency multipliers like DFMD's etc. also needs to be factored in before assessing the staff strength required.

The proposals for creation of additional posts were sent to Railway Board during the period 2006 to 2009. The Security Directorate of Railway Board informed Audit in January 2011 that 5134 posts had been created and the recruitment process is underway. Though threat perspective had increased from every angle - terrorist attack or naxalite/maoist attack - the Railways and the State Governments appear to be very slow in filling up the existing vacancies or redeploying man power for meeting the challenge of increased threat.

5.4 Training and Capacity Building

5.4.1 Training facilities

The High Level Committee on security for Indian Railways recommended that training and capacity building in terms of Man – Machine and procedures to counter anti social/extremist activities are required. The Committee brought out the following requirements:

➢ General sensitization of 100 per cent staff on Composite Security Plan to inculcate a professional attitude/ an instinctive response to threat assessment, response skills and post event execution through booklets, Capsule/Short term and specialized courses in a phased manner.

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[15] NWR, ECoR, SER, SECR, NCR, SCR, ECR, WCR, NR and DLW Varanasi.

> ➢ Facilities at Zonal RPF Training centres to be suitably upgraded to meet the requirements and each zone should have at least one training centre as each zone had its own peculiar problems.

> ➢ Every CSC should have his own independent training apparatus and curriculum.

Continuous training to upgrade knowledge levels to handle improved security systems, arms and ammunition is essential. The 15th Lok Sabha Standing Committee on Railways had also recommended that the officers and staff should be provided intensive training at regular intervals followed by refresher courses. There are 13 training centres for imparting training to RPF/RPSF staff over Indian Railways.

Audit reviewed the training programmes conducted in 15 zones (except NFR where the records were not made available). Audit examination revealed that 4112 training programmes were conducted for the officers and staff of RPF during the period 2005-10. Out of the 32622 staff nominated for the training programmes, 1122 staff did not attend the trainings due to various reasons. It was further observed that out of 302 officers in the rank of DSC/ASC nominated, 56 did not attend due to administrative reasons. Since training is an integral part of duties non-attendance on the ground of administrative reasons is not justified.

5.4.2 Up-gradation of training facilities

The Railway planned to upgrade the training facilities provided at the 10 recognised training centres of RPF over various Zonal Railways and to transform the Centralised Training Institute (CTI) at Lucknow in to a World Class training centre. They also planned to add three more training centres at Kanchrapara (ER), Nasik Road and Chinkhill (CR).

Audit observed that the existing training facilities were frequently incomplete and consequently remained underutilised. Regarding upgradation of training facilities at RPF training centres a budgetary allocation of ` 11 crore has been made. However, no expenditure has been incurred and no time frame has also been given for upgrading the training facilities. Thus, even after three years of submission of report by the committee its recommendation remains largely unimplemented. IR stated (July 2011) that phase wise up gradation of training centres is being done.

5.4.3 Multi skill training to all RPF /RPSF personnel

The IR planned to provide training to RPF /RPSF personnel in unarmed combat, disaster management and commando training at par with other para-military forces like CRPF, BSF etc. IR stated that slots have been allocated for RPF at NISA Hyderabad for training of trainer's course in disaster management, counter insurgency and jungle warfare for gazetted officers and subordinate officers at SSB/GWALDUM, and Police commando instructor course at NSG. Efforts are being made to get further slots in reputed training centres for specialised courses.

IR mentioned (May 2010) that RPF staff were/are being sent for Training of Trainers of Disaster Management at NISA, CISF, Hyderabad & Military Engineering College, Pune from time to time. Besides, Disaster Management courses are also conducted at JR/RPF/Academy to tackle the emergent situation. IR's contention is not acceptable as existing training facilities remained underutilised. Further training programmes were not attended by many of the security personnel on the ground of administrative reasons.

Thus, it is seen that the long term action plan for improvement in the security system of the Railways has not yet been implemented. In some of the cases even though action has been initiated no concrete results are yet visible.

5.5   Conclusion

In some of the zones in Railways full scale disaster management exercise was not conducted and the control rooms with communication facilities also remained to be provided. IR was neither able to rapidly access the disaster sites nor could they provide organised rescue and relief during the Golden Hour with the conventional ART, ARMV and SPART etc. Further, considerable delays were observed in restoring the movement of commercial trains after "Track Fit /OHE Fit.

Despite the fact that threat perspective had increased from every angle - terrorist attack or naxalite/maoist attack - the Railways and the State Governments did not respond promptly in filling up the existing vacancies or redeploying man power for meeting the challenge of increased threat.

The existing training facilities were frequently incomplete .and consequently remained underutilised. Further non-attendance of training programmes on the ground of administrative reasons was indicative of casual approach of security personnel towards their duties.

Even though action has been initiated for implementing long term action plan no concrete results are yet visible.

Recommendations

➢ *The Indian Railways needs to integrate railway disaster management infrastructure with those of civil authorities, armed forces etc. The current arrangement of co-ordination for rescue and relief operations with civil authorities need to be further strengthened. Better use needs to be made of infrastructure available with the armed forces like use of hover craft etc.*

➢ *In view of the huge additional staff required for discharging their duties it is essential that the IR re-assesses the staff required for manning its core operations taking into account all efficiency multipliers.*

➢ *To handle the substantially enhanced risk environment, the competence of the departments handling disaster management needs a substantial upgrade. A comprehensive training programme needs to be framed to synergise the security forces and improve their response capabilities.*