

S.K. BANSAL

Chief Rolling Stock Engineer (retd.)
Former President
Indian Railway Promotee Officers Federation
B-3/4, Jeevan Jyoti Appts.
Pitampura, Delhi- 110034

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SH. PIYUSH GOEL

Hon'ble Minister for Railways and Coal
Rail Bhawan, New Delhi

Sub.: **Safety on Indian Railways – Causes and Remedy.**
Human Resource Management

Sir,

The recent unfortunate incidents regarding safety on Railways have jolted the Railway system and a tarnished image of Railway has been perceived by people of India. This has put tremendous pressure on Railways as a whole and therefore on you as Minister in-charge who have been given this onerous responsibility of putting the Railways on right track and to bring back its post glory of a safe public carrier. During your short period of your taking over as Railway Minister, the dedication shown, the labour put in, dynamism reflected in action oriented policies and leading from front are few praiseworthy initiatives on your part have been able to motivate the railwaymen to work as a team for achieving the cherished goal of safe running of trains.

2. I, being an ex-Railway men having put in a record length of service (43 years 5 months) and having retired as Chief Rolling Stock Engineer, N.Rly. risen from the cadre of Train Examiner- all being belonging to the safety category. Have distinction of leading first the cadre of Train Examiner and then All Indian President of Indian Railway Promote Officers Federation, feel that I should give some radical suggestions out of my sheer experience for the better safety environment and lay as under;

3. Sir, a cursory look at the accident statistics of the railways over the years since its inception, shall show that the major cause of accidents is **human failure**, which alone attribute around 85% of the total number of accidents, whereas the technical aspects contribute only remaining 15% of the accidents. It is also interesting to note that out of 85% accidents on Human failure approx. 55% are on account of Railway employees and about 30% on other than Railway employee basically the level crossing accidents. However, it is an irony that most of the Commissions and large number of reports have been putting main emphasis only, on improving the technical aspects and very little has been said regarding the human failures (constituting to the 85% of the accidents). Even if, some recommendations have been made the same have been put on back burner and

have never been thought of implementing. If anything has been dealt with by all these high level committees, it is only a very small reason of the accident. Evidently, major portion of accident causing issues i.e. **human failures** have been left aside without any in depth study or recommendations. It is therefore felt that a comprehensive study on this aspect is the need of the time that too urgently.

4. I know that all the ills of the railway inefficiency, operations failures and safe working cannot be discussed in one paper or in one sitting. Therefore, I wish to take up only one aspect and that also to a very small aspect through this paper of mine i.e. **Human Resource** and absence of humane touch to the employees of Railway without being biased and prejudiced. The secret of the downfall of the Railway efficiency and performance quality as a proper balance being maintained for years thereby most splendid show of efficiency and operation started falling on account of presence of departmentalism and the most biased prejudiced to the extent utter foolishness neglect of the middle management i.e. Supervisors and Group-B officers. It is widely accepted by each and every one right from top most to the down below that Senior Supervisors and the Group-B officers are the back bone of railway functioning in view of the pivotal and vital role being played by these cadres day in and day out in the overall efficiency operation and safety on the railways. Naturally, the efficient working, dedication of these cadres of employees are in fact the life lines of its efficiency and safe operations. Any demotivation/ demoralization and factors affecting their dedications have resulted in utter adverse situations and thereby affecting the overall working of the organizations to a large extent.

5.0 Problems of SUPERVISORS:

Defective recruitment policies, non-provision of proper staff, tools, equipment, lack of training, wrong and inadequate syllabus for training inadequate refreshers courses almost abysmal inputs for technological improvements, defective promotion policy and on the top of everything total lack of consideration and respect for their contribution, biased treatment of their problems are some of the major reasons for their demotivation. **It is also worth of mentioning that a proposal duly accepted by all concerned to upgrade 20% posts of Senior Supervisors to that of gazetted cadre (Group B) is hanging for implementation for the last about 10 years.**

6.0 Problems of Group-B Officers

The treatment of Group-B officers is worse than the supervisors. These officers are not being treatment as officers despite being empirical study and recommendations in their favour. It is a fact that the Gr-B officers perform the same duties shoulder same responsibilities exercise same powers the post are completely inter changeable and can not be segregated as much as per Railway Board letter No.94E(GR)11/15/B dated 02.03.94, says that **a Junior Scale post is treated as a Junior scale post when it is occupied by directly recruited junior scale officers and when it is occupied by a group-B officers it is treated as junior scale Group-B post.**

6.2 That the status today is that the directly recruited officers are first instigated to raise unrealistic demands by one of the ex -General Managers and other higher ups and the present administration who feel themselves belonging and representing the Direct Recruit cadre, and then they initiate the notes to justify the same and implement their unjustified demands. The unfortunate aspect of all this is thatgiving consideration to all these the aspect on and interest of the Gp.-B officers, even its effect on the total administration is not taken care of.

6.3. That sir some of the decision taken affecting adversely during the last 3-4 years can be seen and prove all the above

- Withdrawal of priority for promotion to Senior Scale (Adhoc) thereby given priority to the Direct Recruits of 3 years (including 1.5 years probation period over the group-B officers of more than 6 years to 15 years of equal responsibility. (presently as many as 1255 group-B officers having 8 years equivalent service or more (712 of these more than 10 years) are waiting for Sr Scale Adhoc promotions). Against the 3 years eligibility, Average period is about 10 years (As many as 2693 eligible Group B officers waiting including 712 with service of 10 years or more).
- ii. **Delay in induction in Gp. A** - eligibility criterion for group-B officers for Group-A induction is 3 years group-B regular service. But not a single persons get inducted in 3 years' service. Average period is 12 years (Civil Engg, Accounts, and Personnel-17 yrs) as many as 4445 otherwise eligible are waiting for their induction including 1438 with service of 10 years or more. Their DPCs are held up for last 3 years, and has always been delayed for 2-3 yrs (average) for the last more than 50 years, despite repeated directions by authorities and issue of Model calanders.
- iii. The recruitment of Group-B officers which was in the range of 600/years from 2008 to 2012 has considerably been reduced to less than 300/years only in 2014 to 2016 thereby reducing the prospects of Group-B Officers of getting benefit of 80:20, even ,resulting in the fact that the benefit of 80:20 is not being in 8-9 years (against 3 years eligibility) in addition resulting in a large number of vacancies, thereby forcing the Group-B Officers (largely) to shoulder the responsibilities of 2-3 posts at a time and that also without any dual charge.
- iv. Calculation system of vacancies of assistant officers has been modified resulting in non-filling of JS/Group-B posts thus forcing of vacancies on the railways.
- v. Following proposals initiated by Railway Board in violation of Codes/ IREM gives clear indication of the biased attitude/to harm the group-B officers as evident from following
 - a. That no benefit of seniority/promotion can be given before the completion of 3 years eligibility.

- b. that system of giving weightage of service has no logic
- c. there is no logic of given a weightage based on concordance table.

That sir irony of fact is that of all these things/decisions are not going to add to the overflowing kitty of Direct Recruited Officers, but would certainly deprive large chunk of Group B officers.

- vi. **No cadre structuring group-B officers** : As per Govt. Orders cadre restructuring is required to be done every 5 years for all A, B, C & D cadres. While cadre restructuring of A, C & D group is ensured, Group-B have always been deprived for this. On the contrary, The Cadre structuring of group-A is always done at the cost of group-B. As many as 800+ of SS posts were surrendered in the last cadre structure of group-A in 2003 whereas a surrender of more than 1200 is being proposed for this years cadre restructuring. Railway is only department where despite large scale expansion of train operation, cadre restructuring is being done with cost neutrality and causing loss of posts manned by Group B officers. (Ref-Deloitte's recent report). The very important facts is essential to be told that whenever any study is ordered/made at the cost of govt exchequer (recently by Deloitte), it is always to look into the cadre of group-A and never for total gazetted cadre.

7. Sir, list of injustice discrimination with Group-B officers is endless can not be discussed in few pages. Fact is that the total attitude towards Group B Officers and the treatment is being given is totally biased discriminatory and disgraceful.

8. Sir, I may state categorically that we are not against the consideration to be given to DRs and their aspirations at all, but there should be comprehensive analysis keeping in view the need of the administration for better efficiency operations and safety, not for DRs or Group B officers.

9. In the end I may state that the perpetual delay in finding the solution of problems being faced by Supervisors and Group B officers, as enumerated above, is just causing deep frustration among them and ultimately leading to total disenchantment towards their working, which is a very bad sign for Railway. It is writing on the wall which Railway Board/Administration is not reading intentionally.

10. I beseech upon you to look into the matter personally, so that the attitude of higher ups in the Railways, to think themselves as the representative of DRs only is mended which is possible only, if the artificial classification of officers – Group B and Group A, should be abolished for the betterment of railway and nation at large. Incidentally that shall be just a implementation of the governments declaration on the floor of Parliament on Feb. 1944, as under:-

- 1. Extract of unambiguous declaration in the **Central Legislative Assembly** by the then War & **Transport Minister** during his budge speech in **February, 1944**, Viz.,

*“During the year, the Government have had under discussion with the Standing Finance Committee the question of **abolition of the lower gazetted service**. Government do not accept as valid the reasons advanced by the majority of the Committee against the step and **purpose to carry the measure through**, at the appropriate time”.*

2. Extract of subsequent decision by **Railway Board (refer Standing Finance Committee Meeting 17th & 18th July, 1946)**

*i. The **lower gazetted service shall be abolished** and all the present confirmed lower gazetted service officers who are considered suitable shall be promoted to the Superior Services placing them junior to all the confirmed officers already in the later service.*

*ii. The **promotion of subordinates** shall be so arranged in future that the total number in the junior scale never exceeds **35% of the total strength of that cadre**.*

I think this is high time to have a look on this issue with utmost sincerity for the sake of safety.

Yours truly

S.K. BANSAL

Copy for kind consideration to:

1. The Chairman, Railway Board, Rail Bhawan, New Delhi
2. The Member Staff, Rly. Board, Rail Bhawan, New Delhi