

ALL INDIA GUARDS COUNCIL

(Registered trade union for Train Managers of Indian Railways)

Regd. No.4718 :: H.O.: DELHI
(Constituent Unit of AIREC)

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No.AIGC/GS/Admn/RB/2022/02.

Date: 01st September 2022.

The Chairman & CEO of Indian Railways
Ex-Officio Principal Secretary to Govt. of India,
Ministry of Railways,
NEW DELHI.

Respected Sir,

Sub: Operations of the Indian Railways are in Danger.
Ref: E(NG)2021/PM/7/4, Dated 30.08.2022 without RBE Number.

It is an incontrovertible and irrefutable fact that transportation of freight and public from one end to another is the prime business of the Indian Railways. In that transportation, the Running Staff of the Indian Railways strive to ensure hassle free operations. The letter referred above is aimed to perish the Running Staff and the Safety of the operations will definitely cross the great divide. Any wise & discerning operations related administrative official will definitely acknowledge that the operations of the Indian Railways are in destruction with the above letter. We presume it is a wonderful gift from the Railway Board to Running Staff during Azadi ki Amrit Mahotsav Celebrations. The letter states that a Committee of EDs was constituted on 08.02.2022 with the members who were never serious in their career in the beginning and ignorant of the system of prevailing working conditions. It is amazing to note that the said Committee was constituted in the month of February, 2022 and within six months the Committee submitted its report as well as the Board also approved the Committee report with jet speed. It reminds us of totalitarian rule. The Committee neither sought the views of the Recognised Federations nor the concerned staff which clearly manifests that the said Committee purely relied on the half-baked statistical data available at the Railway Board. While soliciting to SCRAP the report in toto, we would like to submit the following preliminary observations. They are not exhaustive but purely preliminary.

- (01) The lives of the travelling public and rail users as well as freight are in a peril condition.
- (02) Rationalisation of Running Staff is an ill conceived idea.
- (03) For Goods crew requirements POL is an essential yardstick and it is an HOER subject. The projected figure of 10,000 posts to surrender is disastrous to the institution.
- (04) Curtailment in 30 % Leave Reserve and 10 Trainee Reserve posts is another suicidal attempt. About 40,000 Running Staff posts have not been filled in from the past 4 years. The supervisory staff will never sanction leave just with one letter but staffs are made to beg repeatedly. Forget about festivals & family functions, the staff are not in a position to attend funerals of their near ones due to refusal to sanction leave in needy situations. Even in Covid pandemic situation also, every employee whether in Government or Private sectors confined to home whereas the Running Staff left their infant children, senile parents and family to their destiny and worked day - in and day - out in the interest of the Nation. As regards Trainee Reserve posts are concerned, the strength for Refresher Courses are full of ups and downs and it depends upon the recruitment batches. In addition to Refresher Courses, Training for renewal of automatic block territory Certificate, safety seminars etc. In addition to these, the Loco Pilots will also have to undergo Technical and other allied training, periodically. It will be a premature conclusion to analyse the last three years because due to Covid, many Courses were reduced to the barest minimum and if it is adopted for long duration, the safety of the services will be in peril. The Existing LR & TR posts from 30% and 10% to bring down to 30 % instead of 40 % are a definitely hare-brained decision.
- (05) Despite advancement of technology, the posts are increased at Apex and Zonal levels for administrative personnel. Whereas 80 % of the Running staff works beyond the prescribed length of the beat. While the other 20 % are due to various terminals, sidings and to ensure HOER etc. As far as the staff utilisation for the prescribed duty hours, the length of the beat is inapt and inconsequential. Any rationalisation in the existing beats which were time-tested will lead to stress and strain on the staff and it will have a cascading effect on the safety.

(Contd...2/-)

- (06) As regards inter-railway and inter-divisional working, the staffs are already at loggerheads with estranged feelings. By-passing major lobbies are not advisable. The HOER, framed under the Indian Railways Act, prohibits beyond 4 nights for Running Staff. Yet the Links have been drawn, in some divisions / zones, with 6 continuous night spells. When the staff are utilised to their maximum working hours, further increase in their work load will be ruinous to the services.
- (07) Pre-departure detention has already been brought down to the barest minimum. However, saturation of yards and sections due to vivid reasons may increase the pre-departure but it is also avoided with unethical measures by Lobby in charges with iron fist. There are conglomerate reasons for Section Controllers to detain a train in a section like invalid BPC, saturation, coaching path, C&W reasons, signal failures, Engineering Constraints etc but intentionally no Controller prefers to detain a train in his section. Thus it is hypothetical.
- (08) It is an iniquitous suggestion to violate HOER and prescribe 6 hours rest as against 8 hours at out-station. It is absolutely clear that the Committee is totally ignorant of Running Staff HOER and its norms. It will be deemed as a violation of HOER.
- (09) Deployment of Running Staff from one lobby to another is also a hare brained decision. When staffs are deployed in another lobby they will have to impart the section with requisite and statutory Road learning. When they are repatriated to their parent lobby, they will have to again impart the statutory Road Learning. Thus considerable man-hours will be wasted apart from finances. When staff are deployed at out - station they are eligible to claim Outstation (Relieving) Allowance, statutorily, as per Para 911 of IREM. If staffs are deployed beyond Zonal Boundaries, they will have to undergo training at ZRTI when the batch starts. They have to wait for a fresh batch to start. The Zonal Rules should be supplied to such staff. Item No. (k) of the impugned Railway Board letter is purely to save the signatories from the judicial accusation.
- (10) If the review is conducted in a holistic manner, the surplus will not arise. First, fill-up the prevailing vacancies. Staffs are under absolute stress due to non-availability of adequate staff.
- (11) It is illogical and inappropriate to seek options from the staff for absorption in alternative categories. The Committee is ignorant about the cost of the skilled training to the Running staff at initial stage and also subsequently. The Dual standards of the Apex Executive is exposed who is seeking options from the willing staff and directs the Zones to apply surplus staff rules when absorbed in alternative posts.
- (12) The Ministry of Railways paid a deaf ear for our repeated requests to create additional posts for increased traffic. Sound and prudent judgment based on realistic growth in freight and passenger services is required to analyse the additional posts for increased freight in million tons with proper perception. The lethargy of Railway administrators to coordinate with the Ministry of Finance is a biggest hurdle. Already many similar issues are pending to draw the attention of the MOF. We welcome the decision of the Committee to seek exemption from the Department of Expenditure for creation of posts of Running Staff from the ban imposed on 04.09.2020. We suggest Ministerial level co-ordination instead of Heads of the Departments. In the meantime, fill-up all the existing vacancies on war footing.

In view of the above preliminary observation we fervently appeal to kindly scrap the Committee Recommendations and repeal the impugned letter, dated 30.08.2022 and save the Railways.

Thanking you,

Yours sincerely,



(S.P. SINGH)

GENERAL SECRETARY.

Copy to all Concerned Officials at the Railway Board for kind information and necessary action, please.

Copy to General Managers of the Indian Railways & Zonal Officials.

Copy to all concerned Divisional Officials of Indian Railways.

Copy to Chairperson, Standing Committee of Parliament on Railways with Board letter.

Copy to Chief Labour Commissioner (C), New Delhi with Board letter.

Copy to CCRS, Lucknow with Board letter.