

VISION 2010 for MECHANICAL DEPARTMENT

A LOOK BEYOND THE HORIZON

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This small presentation was prepared for a seminar on the subject of “ Vision 2010 for Mechanical Department” arranged by Northern Railway in Delhi on 5th May 2000 and attended by the then AM/ME Shri Dhasarathy. My CME, with whose permission this was presented was Shri P.N. Garg, presently MM.

Four years later I find, in my opinion, the issues mentioned still hold good. The views expressed are, however, purely in my personal capacity.

I am pleased to post this article on the newly launched IRSME website in the hope that it evokes some discussion, possibly convergence of views. Silence, however, would be killing !

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VISION 2010 for MECHANICAL DEPARTMENT

A LOOK BEYOND THE HORIZON

Railways are a Public service.
It is a national Asset.
Whatever form the organization takes --

PRIVATIZATION
CORPORATIZATION
Or DEREGULATION

This fact will not change !

Any Vision statement must, therefore, consider :

National Interests
Organization's Interests
Then
Cadre's interest

ANYTHING ELSE WILL FAIL THE TEST OF NATURAL
FORCES and SOCIAL ACCEPTANCE !

OBJECTIVES OF THE DEPARTMENT/CADRE

- RETAIN PRE-EMINENT ROLE IN THE ORGANIZATION
- RETAIN COMBINED LEADERSHIP OF THE RAILWAYS
ALONGWITH CIVIL AND TRAFFIC CADRES
- IMPROVE MARKET WORTH OF THE INDIVIDUALS IN THE
CADRE

- BE READY FOR STRUCTURAL CHANGES IN THE ORGANIZATION SO AS TO GAIN, NOT LOSE WHEN THEY HAPPEN

Can these objectives be met without compromising National and Organizational objectives ?

Yes, but small sacrifices and accommodating others may be necessary.

To use current parlance, freely used by Mr. Thoopal in his VISION 2010 FOR INDIAN RAILWAYS, some **Unbundling** and some **Bundling** would be required.

BUNDLING FIRST

1. UNITY within the Department ----- goes without saying
2. SYNERGY with other Departments

Neither the Cadre,
Nor the Organization,

can afford to continue working with the Electrical and the Stores Departments either as Adversaries or in a Subordinate position. They have to be our partners in achieving the CADRE OBJECTIVES.

Because, surely, their objectives must be somewhat similar to ours !

This can only happen if there is a UNIFIED Cadre of these three Departments.

Separate, each of us will be smothered by the other BIG DADDYS ---- CIVIL and Traffic ---- and maybe even the YOUNG BOYS --- S&T and Personnel .

Together, we will develop the strengths and synergies which will be the natural outcome of a cohesive and efficiently functioning group of Rolling Stock Engineers.

Together, we will benefit the organization and also serve national interests by not looking at crucial issues through individual Blinkers, but objectively.

It will be a natural arrangement.

But moving in this direction will not be easy. The following will be essential steps

- Equal opportunity for all at all levels
- Credibility of the proposers
- Selling the benefits to all the 3 cadres
- Likely (perceived) loss to few individuals must be accommodated for the larger good

3. Upgrading the quality of the constituents of the unified Department

- At least 25 % of Officers must do a 1-2 year Management/Finance/ Material Management Course within first 10 years of service
- Give a serious thought to Recruitment and Training of Supervisors (backbone, future Group B officers) - Was the Apprentice Mechanic Scheme better ? Need it be revived ?
- Debar recruitment of any person who is not a Matriculate into the Department at any level, even if he is a Bungalow peon, or a Compassionate Appointee. This also as an exception, ITI should be the aim.

Now UNBUNDLING

Some Unbundling in the areas of

PRODUCTION UNITS
WORKSHOPS

is inevitable

Do we wait for the axe ?

Or do we plan for it ?

We must take the lead to

- Promote Corporatization of the 7 PU's into individual PSU's with an aim of selective privatization
 - Plan domination of the Corporate Management structures of these PSU's with persons of the Unified Cadre
- Promote separation of the Repair workshops from the Zonal Railway set-up to give them operational freedom and flexibility in improving their decision making
 - 2 -- 3 geographically contiguous or product similar units to be grouped on a rational basis under a CAO and work on the lines of present PU's
 - Allow these grouped workshops to compete with each other and win business for themselves from both inside and outside Railways

CONCLUSIONS

- # Railways are undergoing and will undergo major structural changes
- # The department and cadre should arm itself with
 - Unity
 - Purpose
 - Skilled/educated staff & officers
 - Positive Proposalsin advance of these changes; status quo is reducing our role & importance in Railway's scheme of things.
- # A Stronger, Unified Rolling Stock Department with PU's and Workshops organized in a more effective structure will permit the Department to regain its value in the organization and society.