

ITF/AIRF/SASK Railway Safety Education Seminar
2nd – 3rd June 2010, Hyderabad

BRIEF REPORT

Under the aegis of ITF/AIRF/SASK a 2-day “Railway Safety Education Seminar” was held at Hyderabad on 2nd and 3rd June 2010. 28 participants including 4 female participants representing various zonal railway unions affiliated to the All India Railwaymen’s Federation (AIRF). Copy of seminar programme is enclosed.

The Seminar began with an inaugural session on 2nd June 2010. The inaugural session was attended and guided by a galaxy of trade union and railway officials including Shri Rakesh Saxena, Chief Operating Manager (COM), Shri Pradip Kumar, Chief Principal Engineer, Shri Manoj Pandey, Chief Personal Officer (CPO), Shri Gajabiye, Chief Mechanical Engineer, South Central Railway respectively and Shri Shivagopal Mishra, General Secretary, AIRF, Shri Shankara Rao, General Secretary, South Central Railway Mazdoor Union and Shri Ch. Gandhi, General Secretary, East Coast Railway Shramik Union.

Shri. Sangam Tripathy, Workshop Coordinator, while welcoming the participants and guests to the inaugural session briefed them about the objectives of the Seminar. While speaking on the occasion, he also informed them about various activities and programmes that have been organized by the ITF in the past under the ITF/SASK safety project.

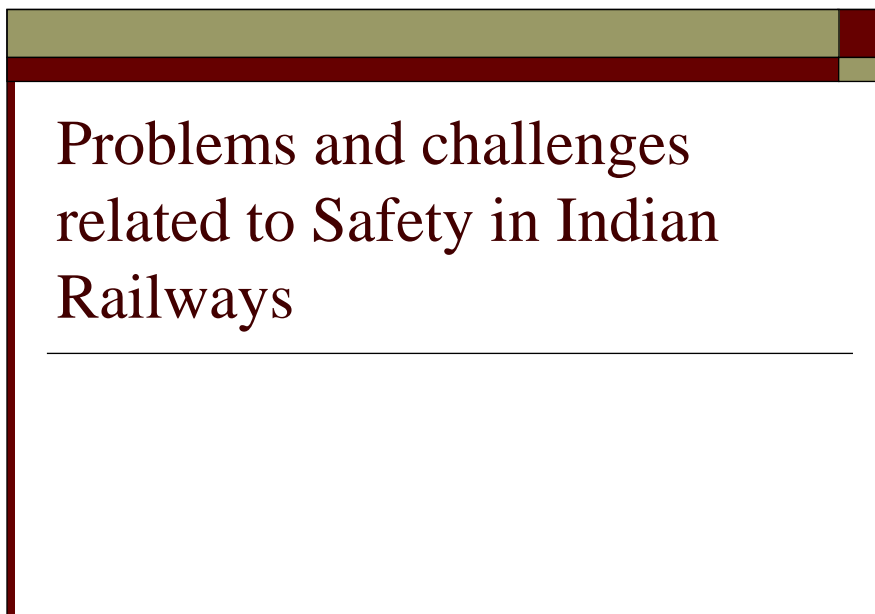
Shri. Shankara Rao, General Secretary, South Central Railway Mazdoor Union (SCRMU), on the occasion thanked ITF and AIRF for reposing confidence on SCRMU for organizing this Seminar at Hyderabad. He briefly described the prevailing situation of safety in the South Central Railway.

Shri Gajabiye, Chief Mechanical Engineer, S.C. Railway, while speaking at the inaugural session emphasized on the need of proper infrastructure, equipment, proper training, procedure and proper manpower to maintain high safety standards in Indian Railways. Mr. Rakesh Saxena, COM, South Central Railway, spoke at length on the occasion and described in details the prevailing situation of safety in Indian Railways in general and South Central Railway in particular. He opined the induction of ex-servicemen to overcome the man-power crunch and also deployment of right people at right place for smooth and safe functioning of Indian Railways. He further said that short-cut methods to be avoided as it will be harmful for the effective operations of Indian Railways. There should be provision for Safety Net/back-up in case of safety related work in Indian Railways and also induction of required man-power on regular basis especially in safety categories in Indian Railways. He further said that use of “Case Studies” in training programmes on Safety will go a long way in making training on the issue of safety more purposeful. Shri Manoj Pandey, CPO, spoke on the manpower policy in Indian Railways and advocated timely recruitment of people in safety categories in Indian Railways. Shri Pradip Kumar, Chief Principal Engineer, South Central Railway, while speaking at this juncture, said that identifying root causes of the rail accidents and their timely rectification are need of the hour.

Shri Shivagopal Mishra, General Secretary, AIRF, thanked all the railway officials present on the occasion. While speaking at the occasion, he informed the participants about various initiatives and programmes that AIRF has under taken on the issue of safety in Indian Railways. The AIRF observed a nation-wide protest day to highlight the ill-effects of deteriorating safety in Indian Railways and impressing upon the authorities to fill-up the over 2 lakh vacancies in the at the earliest. He urged the participants to treat this seminar as a planning seminar and formulate their action plan as such to guide AIRF in its safety related educational and organizational work.

The inaugural session was very informative and in fact set the tone of the seminar. The session was followed by question & answer session wherein participants raised a number of questions and queries which were replied by the resource persons. The inaugural session was also guided by Shri Ch. Gandhi, General Secretary, East Coast Shramik Mazdoor Union.

In the post-lunch session, a power point presentation on the topic “Problems and Challenges related to Safety in Indian Railways” was made by Bro. Rajendra Giri. Copy of the presentation is appended here below.



The participants then discussed in small groups on the subject

Identifying issues and problems related to Safety in Indian Railways and its impact on employees

Key/Specific Issues Related to Safety

1. Systematic neglect of safety in assessing “Man Power” requirement in safety categories viz. ESM, Guards, Trackmen, Gatekeepers, Key-men etc. with a very poor rate of induction (RRB) leading to accumulation of very heavy vacancies and consequent denial of leaves rests, sick-leave, over-work and stress on employees adversely affecting safe performance.
2. Unrealistic low pricing of freight & coaching service – At the whims of political bosses leading to excessive demand of traffic of passengers and escalating losses on subsidy contributing to paucity of funds for ACDs, crucial renewal of assets.
3. Gradual reduction of existing workforce by various attempts likely yearly surrender through work-study, bench marks etc. Change of roster to E.1 from continuous.
4. Ban on creation of new posts against new assets. Unjustified conditions like “Money in surplus Bank”, matching surrender of 2 Group D post for 1 Group C etc. leading to increase of stress on workforce.
5. Safety is subordinated to “Operation” in management and last priority for administration.
6. Technological advancement not matching with technical support needed (old implements like tools for technical staff).
7. Outsourcing in depots, off loading in workshops resulting in poor quality of maintenance of coaches, wagons, engines leading to failures (CBC coupling)/ Accidents.
8. Short-cut methods like running of trains without B/v, BPC, Guard, extended runs, skipping schedules, over-loaded rakes etc.
9. Obsolete redundant 12 hours/8 hours duty roster for ASMs, Running staff, Gatekeepers, points-men.
10. Excessive thrust on rules rather than safety by officers like Whistling, “Sleeping on duty”.
11. Frequent incidents, sabotages, fire-on and public negligence/law & order
12. Lack of safety consciousness in road users/LC gates.
13. Amendment of HOER (12.8) (8.6) 6.4 hours duty rosters.

14. Additional trains needs additional staff.
15. All level crossings to be interlocked.
16. No matching surrender to safety category post
17. All running lines to be track circuited
18. Proper training to OHE, C&W, S&T staff
19. Keyman's 12 km. break length to be reduced.
20. No proper BPCs issues to train.
21. Acute shortage of manpower leading to over-hours working. Main reasons huge number of vacancies and ban on creation of additional posts.
22. Drastic reduction of staff in technical categories such as Electricians, Mechanics, S&T citing upgraded and new technology.
23. Operation of overdue POH, IOH, coaches and locos which are due for trip schedules and periodic inspection.
24. High probability of acts of sabotage and terrorist acts.
25. Inadequate power/engineering block (OHE, Signal, Tracks)
26. Rapid increase in outsourcing with unskilled labour

Issues of Safety related specifically to Railway Workshops

1. Inadequate manpower due to non filling up of vacancies. Surrendering of posts non-creation of additional posts for new works and additional assets.
2. Procurement of poor quality materials. Though RITES inspected. Basically due to policy of acceptance of lowest tender.
3. Reduction in the number of stock items and their conversion to non-stock items and their procurement through local purchase from contractors who are too powerful.
4. Lack of adequate and good quality tools which are technologically superior
5. Inadequate infrastructure to meet the requirements of superior and good quality work.

Impact of Shortcomings in Safety on Employees

- Long-hours working, no- relief, frequent sickness, absenteeism, heart/brain strokes, excessive decategorisation, early diabetes, BP, cardiac trouble. Forcible discharge by doctors from sick list of ASMs, Gatekeepers etc.
- All trains over-crowded pressure on rolling stock and engines skipping maintenance. Track, loco and bridge renewals postponed.
- Staff frustrated, supervisor is confused, officers helpless, more work
- Low morale
- All post creation proposals kept pending. For chaos everyone blames each other Branch officer to accounts, unions to administration.
- Punctuality, loading, diesel Kms, targets hiked without staff
- New gadgets, but no spares, no training
- In sheds, depots poor quality of welding, carpentry, CBC couplers uncoupling
- Staff lose confidence in safety and work under fear
- Sound pollution, deafness
- Railwaymen's integrity is doubted
- LC Gate accidents and stress on the staff.
- Existing HOER gives more stress to employees and causing health hazards.
- Running additional trains with existing staff and tracks. Staff to work with more stress.
- Level crossing accidents maybe minimized if interlocking provided.
- Surrendering of safety category post leads to unsafe working
- Admission of trains on blocked train can be avoided if track circuit provided to running lines
- Latest technical aids to trained staff will improve the quality of work
- Multi/various duties of keyman such as greasing, removal of grass etc. causes less concentration in the safety of track.

- Railwaymen are today forced to work under extremely unsafe, adverse and compelling circumstances leading to stress, causing BP, diabetes, heart ailments leading to medical de-categorisation and sometimes even in validation.
- Gives rise to unhealthy and strained relationship at the workplace specially between the Supervisor and those supervised leading to below par productivity.
- Overburden, stress, psychological problem, accidents
- Shouldering higher responsibilities without the knowledge of technical “Know how”
- More failures
- Mounting pressure to work in unsafe manner/environment
- Poor maintenance which leads to adopt shortcut method
- Compromising safety and quality at the cost of “outsourcing”.

Recent Trends experienced responsible for declining standards of Safety

- O.T. control, TA Control, BOR control, no budget for staff amenities
- False measures of expenditure control, diversion of funds
- India-best benchmark yard stick is forgotten,
- Outsourcing
- Over-enthusiastic officers violates safety norms and clinch awards
- Staff blamed for incompetence
- Staff made scapegoats for unusual
- Victimization
- Health hazards
- Transfer/suspension
- Public revolt on crew and gatekeepers
- Major changes in last 10 years such as outsourcing in safety category

- Outsourcing leads to reduction in employment from 22 lakhs to 14lakhs railway employees today
- Due to increased pressure of work quantity increases but quality decreases.
- Bifurcation of 9 zones into 16 zones. Officers posts have increased but not the workers post. Thus expenses increased.
- The abandoning of the policy of the Railways being a Social Service sector and the compulsion to operate like any other industry to generate profit, be economical viable. This has lead to:
 - Various cost cutting measures,
 - Right sizing
 - Surrendering of posts
 - Ban on creation of new posts without money value for new assets and new trains
 - Outsourcing various activities leading to ill-equipped and poorly trained staff executing crucial safety related works
 - Corporations of different railway activities
 - Outsourcing, Benchmarking, Manpower Planning
 - Surrender of post is thumb rule, ban on creation of posts
 - Nexus between contractor and administration
 - Change in nomenclature of the safety category duty.

Remedial Measures suggested to overcome

- Continuous track circuiting
- Implementation of ACD
- Installation of AWS, AAWS
- Phasing out of unmanned level crossing
- Pragmatic and partial manpower policy
- Creation of a safety directorate on the lines of vigilance directorate
- Fixing of responsibility at executive level
- Sustained and decisive trade union action by staff side.

Another group work was conducted on the topic “Role of Trade Union Education in developing safety culture in unions”. The group reports brought out the following points:

Role of Trade Union Education in developing safety culture in unions

- 1) 1)PNM forum shall have at least 5 issues on Safety, and hard-line approach should be adopted against surrender, filling-up of vacancies, creation of posts with more and more pressure tactics like demonstration, wearing black badges etc.

- 2) Identify the safety lapses by administration, and individual officer violating safety should be punished.
- 3) Role models of safety should be recognized and weakness/defaulters counseled.
- 4) One union's safety team should be available at branch, division, zone to monitor safety issues.
- 5) Safety department should have union's member as advisor.
- 6) In AGC of AIRF, Zone, DCM & BEC meetings safety items should be discussed and report should go to GS/Zone/AIRF.
- 7) Union should print pamphlets, posters and SMS for counseling. Safety TUEP curriculum
- 8) Involve press and media on safety matters and convey our stand on safety
- 9) Union should indoctrinate staff on long term adverse implications of safety lapses
- 10) For devotion to duty. Cost of each and every component/service should be informed to unionists and field workers
- 11) Safety committee to be formed in branch level like youth, women committee. Safety committee to identify the vacancies and enlighten the administration for redressal. Safety practices to be enforced among the staff.
- 12) ITF should take short films and slides in connection of safety. Problems and solutions also to be discussed in trade union education programme. Booklets in regional languages to be circulated.
- 13) Railway training centres to be increased and to promote latest teaching technology systems whenever staff are promoted. Safety Committee to be formed with administration periodically to review safety matters like PNM meetings.
- 14) Increasing of manpower, technological aid in time and provisions of safety standard safety equipments to be stressed by AIRF through discussions, campaign, dharnas to put safety on right track.
- 15) Conducting of safety awareness drive of safety practices of front line categories in their jurisdiction.
- 16) Have divisional Safety committee to monitor and pin point violations of safety and identify their probable causes and take up these issues with administration for remedial action.
- 17) Interacting awareness with the media and rail users and spreading awareness on the prevailing circumstances and their impact on train operations thereby bringing pressure for corrective action.
- 18) Comprehensive knowledge of various codes and safety manuals like SWR, GS&R, SEM should be given.
- 19) Disaster management training can be imparted to grass root level involved in safety. Fire fighting training can be included in this.
- 20) Amendment in HOER.
- 21) Review of policy of accepting L.I. tenders.
- 22) For technology up-gradation by way of:
 - Continuous track circuiting.
 - Installation of ACD, AWS, AAWS.
- 23) Fixing of responsibility at executive level.
- 24) Making training modules more relevant.
- 25) Review of irrelevant code and manuals.
- 26) Identification of Risk involved.

- 27) Category wise meetings.
- 28) Formation of Safety group in divisional and zonal level.
- 29) Case study of major accidents.
- 30) Launching of Safety Campaigns.
- 31) Regular trade union education programme on Safety. Medium of instruction should be in local language.
- 32) Promote stress free programme. Railway Board already recognized Art Of Living course and pays 90% fees for this.
- 33) Quarterly meeting on Safety with administration at all levels.
- 34) Emphasis for training before introducing any state of the art technology in railways.

The concluding session of the seminar was addressed by Shri Shivagopal Mishra, General Secretary, AIRF. While speaking on the occasion, he said that we should not end up blaming each other on the matter of safety, instead we should endeavour to see what we can do on our own to improve the safety in IR. He assured the participants that he will take up various issues related to safety in the Standing committee of AIRF for discussion and further action. On the occasion, he also said that AIRF will endeavour to achieve the following:

- Formation of Safety Committee at 16 Zonal Unions and Production Units and also at various levels such as Divisional and Zonal levels.
- Appointment of a Coordinator at AIRF level for safety education.
- AIRF will continue its agitation against the outsourcing, surrendering of posts and prevail upon the administration for filling of over 2 lakh vacancies.
- Each zonal union should organize minimum two education programmes on Safety one programme at Divisional and 1 programme at zonal level.
- With an aim to create a team of trainers, proposed a 4-days of Training of Trainers Workshop on Safety for AIRF.
- Training Modules on Safety.
- Zero tolerance on safety.

The concluding session was also addressed by Bro. Sangam Tripathy and Shri Ch. Gandhi. On behalf of ITF, Bro. Sangam Tripathy conveyed his sincere thanks to SCRUMU and its officials for extending their support and cooperation enabling ITF to organize this programme. The seminar ended with a vote of thanks to General Secretary, AIRF, resource persons and to the participants.

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PROGRAMME

2nd June, 2010

09.00 – 09.30 : Registration

09.30 – 10.15 : Opening/Introduction/Seminar objectives & Overview

- 10.15 – 11.00 : Problems and challenges related to Safety in Indian Railways (IR) – **Presentation**
- 11.00 – 11.30 : Tea/Coffee Break
- 11.30 – 12.30 : Identifying emerging issues/problems related to Safety in IR (**Group Work-1**)
- 12.30 – 01.30 : Presentation of group reports and discussion
- 01.30 – 02.30 : Lunch Break
- 02.30 – 03.30 : Developing Safety Culture in Unions (**Group Work – 2**)
- 03.30 – 04.00 : Tea/Coffee Break
- 04.00 – 05.00 : Reporting by groups and plenary discussion

3rd June, 2010

- 09.00 – 10.30 : ITF's global campaigns/activities and other efforts and initiatives to promote Safety in Railways worldwide - **Presentation**
- 10.30 – 11.00 : Role of Trade Union Education on Safety
- 11.00 – 11.30 : Tea/Coffee Break
- 11.30 – 12.30 : Role of Trade Union Education on Safety (**Group Work – 3**)
- 12.30 – 01.30 : Reporting and plenary discussion
- 01.30 – 02.30 : Lunch Break
- 02.30 – 03.30 : AIRF's future strategies and response with reference to Safety in IR in times ahead – **Plenary discussion**
- 03.30 – 04.00 : Tea/Coffee Break
- 04.00 – 05.00 : Evaluation/Closing Remarks/Conclusion

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Group Work - 1

ACTIVITY: Identifying issues and problems related to Safety in Indian Railways and its impact on employees

OBJECTIVE: To find out the specific issues and problems related to Safety in Indian Railways and its impact on employees

TASK : Discuss in your group:

1. What are the specific issues and problems related to safety in railway workshops and open line operations which adversely affect the safe working of Indian Railways?
2. What is the impact of these shortcomings in Safety on railway employees and their working conditions?
3. Identify if any specific trends and changes that have been taken place in Indian Railways in last 5 years are instrumental in weakening/declining the safety standards in IR?

Present your group report on a Chart paper

Time: 2 hours

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Group Work - 2

ACTIVITY : Role of Trade Union Education in developing safety culture
in unions

OBJECTIVE: To ascertain which issues and problems related to safety can be addressed
through Trade Union Education

TASK : Discuss in your groups:

1. Identify and outline Union role in developing a safe work culture among its members?
2. Identify issues, subjects that should be incorporated in future Trade Union Education programme on Safety?
3. Identify key future organizational strategies and responses that AIRF should take up with administration on the issue of improving safety in Indian Railways?

Prepare your group report on a Chart paper

Time: 2 hours

