

## **KRCL INTEREST ABOVE SELF- AUSTERITY MEASURES**

I always kept the interest of KRCL above my own and my family. I had dedicated myself for improving working and the financials of KRCL.

### **NO FLOWERS:**

I had discontinued the practice of accepting bouquets. Strict instructions were issued in this regard. I had started giving the books to my officers in awards. Some liked it some hated it.

### **NO NAME ON PLAQUES:**

Generally, the practice is to Install a Plaque giving details of the project and who (authority) has inaugurated. While travelling through KRCL I found almost every nook and corner is having big Plaques with the names of MDs and other Senior Officers. I had given instructions to all officers that for any inauguration plaque size should be small and my name should not be there. I feel there should be a policy in this regard with a ban on putting the name of the Executives on Plaques. Once I counted 7 Plaques in one kitchen of the Zonal Training Centre. The surprising thing was all plaques had the names of the wives of Principles of that Zonal Training Centre.

### **NO FOREIGN TRIPS:**

The practice of going abroad was considered as a privilege for Managing Directors, Directors and Senior Officers without any fruitful return to the Corporation. The cost was to be born by KRCL. I had put the ban on foreign trips. My simple message was that the Corporation money is public money and we have no authority to waste it. I was never liked by any Directors and Senior officers for this. I found it ridiculous when a Senior Officer made a trip to USA to attend a Hindi Meeting. My Directors were very unhappy on this count.

Unfortunately, after my retirement the foreign trips have become routine. I always wonder why Senior Officers can be so indifferent to financial position of Konkan Railway. Why they can't think of the organization and the country. I always wondered what moral right we have to splurge on public money. I was told once by my Senior you enjoy and let other also enjoy. Still I couldn't change myself.

### **NO BUSINESS CLASS:**

HAG Officers and Directors were permitted to travel by Business Class. I put a ban on it. I travelled by Economy class. I forced Directors and Officers to travel by economy class. Some of my Directors refuse to travel by economy class. Many a times, it so happened that as MD I was travelling in Economy Class and my juniors were in Business Class. After sometime these officers came around and

started travelling in Economy class. But I could feel their grudge against me, ~~but~~ which I ignored. My main objective was to reduce expenditure and make Konkan Railway profitable. Just before retirement I asked accounts department to calculate the saving for my travelling by economy class in 5-6 years. I was surprised to see the amount. It was more than Rs.25 Lakh.

#### **NO FIVE STAR HOTELS:**

Directors were permitted to stay in five-star hotels while on tour. I put a ban on the practice. I had to hear lot of murmuring of resentment. But I was in a crazy mood to bring down the unwarranted expenditure.

#### **ENTERTAINMENT ALLOWANCE:**

Directors and Senior Officers had almost unlimited powers to spend money on entertaining the guests. The essence was to bring business to KRCL. But this facility was utilised for entertaining self, family and close friends. When I started questioning about the use of Entertainment allowance to my officers, I could feel the hostility. One of the Officer even said that if I am going to be like this who will come to KRCL on deputation. My answer was let it be, I cannot allow the KRCL to bleed who was surviving on doles from Indian Railways. There were bills for Saris too. I always wonder why this facility was available on Konkan Railway. That too it was not with particular post like marketing person, it was a perk attached to seniority irrespective of the department or your area of work.

#### **RAILWAY PROTECTION FORCE:**

It is a practice to provide RPF Post at the residence of GM and above. I found the RPF was posted at the official residence of MD Konkan Railway. Initially I wanted to discontinue them completely. I was advised against it by the Chief Security Commissioner. He advised me that the security is necessary for keeping away unwanted guests including public, staff and contractors barging into the house seeking audience. I realised after 2-3 such incidents. Then I thought of replacing RPF with Local security staff of a private agency. The expenditure could be brought down to 1/3<sup>rd</sup>.

#### **FACILITY OF CAR SERVICE - MOBILE PHONE:**

There was a practice of providing car and mobile phone with SIM to some Officers in Delhi. This was considered as privilege of being connected with Konkan Railway. It took me considerable time and efforts to first reduce it and then discontinuing the so-called unwritten privileges. But I had to suffer in many ways, how, it is better unsaid.

#### **DEPUTATION TO KONKAN RAILWAY FOR HELPING THE CADRE:**

It was always a practice and convention of having many Officers from Indian Railways on deputation to Konkan Railway. It was always stated since the

Konkan Railway is a new system there is a need of support from Indian Railways by the way of posting Officers from Indian Railways on deputation. Officers coming on deputation from Central and Western Railway used to come as a parking place. They were not vacating their houses and continued to stay in their earlier railway accommodation. These officers go back once their cooling off period is over and when they are being able to find the posting in Western or Central Railway. Konkan Railway was paying deputation allowance, a car bringing them to office and back every day from home. On many occasions Konkan Railway was paying penal rent too for them for retaining the railway accommodation. In return, how much benefit was coming to Konkan Railway was a matter of debate. I tried to put a stop to all this circumventing the rules, for care of person and not caring for the organization. My biggest problem was to persuade Officers on deputation to go on field inspection on Konkan Railway. Railway system in India needs a lot of inspections at different levels for ensuring proper functioning. I tried to shift the Headquarter to Goa to stop the misuse of the system but failed as the affected parties were very strong. When I saw it difficult to achieve this, I went for another strategy, 'Go down on number of Officers on deputation'. I started implementing this new strategy with new force and started upgrading Officers of Konkan Railway with training and exposing to wider and higher challenges. I must put it on record most of the Konkan Railway Officers and Staff didn't fail me. Konkan Railway Officers were also happy with new change in thinking of the administration. But it created a problem for me and Konkan Railway. We started getting less support from Railway Board office. We had more criticism and less support. Initially, I could not understand this change in the behaviour of some of the Senior Officers of the Board. We were doing very well in Operations, Financial and other parameters. Still something was missing. The things were very clear after my retirement when one of the retired Board Member mentioned that I was not getting support of Board as I had annoyed the Board Members by not permitting the Officers of Indian Railways on deputation to Konkan Railway. He told me by sending Officers on deputation to Konkan Railway the Members were able to adjust the cadre and could promote Officers. Now I could understand I had earned the ire of my Seniors by taking care of the interests of Konkan Railway.

### **SHIFTING OF HEAD QUARTERS:**

When the construction of Konkan Railway was taken up, the then Chairman of KRCL decided for the Corporate Office at CBD Belapur, Navi Mumbai. As the Corporation was to get funds through Central Railways and many Officers and staff initially came from Central Railway, CBD Belapur was the right choice. Initial mandate of the Corporation was to construct, and hand over/merge the system with the existing Indian Railways System.

The Corporate Office continued at CBD Belapur even after entering into

operations phase in 1998. That time it was considered a temporary arrangement since the Konkan Railway was destined to be merged with the Indian Railways.

In 2008, with the financial restructuring it was decided to give Konkan Railway an independent existence till it discharges all financial liabilities. Now the big question was Is Belapur the right place to have the Head quarter of Konkan Railway when it is in operation phase?

I felt it very strongly that Belapur is a not the right location for the Konkan Railway in Operation Phase. Reasons:

1. The jurisdiction of KR starts from 70+km from Belapur. In fact, we are sitting in Central Railway territory.
2. All Senior Officers were in Belapur away from the action
3. Konkan Railway has become a parking place for Railway Officers. Whenever there is a threat to Western and Central Railway Officers of moving out of Mumbai, they very conveniently come to Konkan Railway for 2-3 years before they can be posted back to Central and Western Railway. These officers very often are able to retain their houses in Central and Western Railway colonies and opt for travelling every day to Belapur by vehicle from their houses.
4. I feel Railways is a system where officers are required to do lot of inspections to keep the system safe and in good fettle. I found it very difficult to persuade these officers to go for inspections.
5. The rough estimate was that Konkan Railway is incurring an extra expenditure to the tune of few crores by maintaining the HQ at Belapur.
6. It was estimated that by shifting HQ to Goa, Konkan Railway would be saving 1 to 2 cr every year.
7. Konkan Railway was having man power of approximately 4800. Out of these 250-300 staff were from Mumbai. This group and the Officers coming on deputation are able to force the issue to keep the HQ at Belapur.

During an informal discussion with the then Chairman PESB and with the then BRPSE Chairman had supported the idea / move to shift Konkan Railway HQ to Goa.

Also, there was a similar request from Chief Minister, Goa and Chamber of Commerce Goa to shift KRCL HQ to Goa.

I had taken the opinion of Staff and Officers regarding this wherein many Officers and staff had shown positive response and given the advantages of shifting HQ to goa.

For Konkan Railway, Goa is natural location for being the Corporate office. Goa is almost at centre of KRCL territory. I tried persuading officers and staff for Goa. But a minority did their best to fail me in this endeavour.

Even Union was against this. The leaders who were controlling the Unions were based in Mumbai. Obviously, there was a fear if we move to Goa their influence will drastically reduce. In fact, the Union campaigned against me and KRWO housing scheme, especially for Goa as they saw it a move towards my decision of shifting of Corporate Office to Goa.