Thoughts For Better *'Dasha'* And *'Disha'* Of Track Maintenance Cadre On Indian Railways

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Synopsis

Indian Railways have entered the era of running of heavier axle load trains and have also planned to construct high speed corridors. Track maintenance for safe train operation has always been through the dedicated P.Way teams on Indian Railways; but these categories right from Trackmen to SSE/P.Way, have not been given due importance w.r.t. career progression, allowances and modernisation on IR.

While Trackmen, now re-designated as Track Maintainer, perform the important duties on track in connection with safe train operation; but their pay structure is still at the lowest level on Indian Railways, but the fact remains that their counterparts like ESMs who also operate on track, are better structured cadre-wise. Through this paper, efforts have been made for apprising the steps taken by Ministry of Railways with regard to career progression, allowances and facilities planned of Trackman categories. Further, 'Standing Instructions' issued w.r.t. creation of posts and outsourcing of track maintenance activities alongwith USSOR for P.Way items might be helpful tools to field organisations.

Secondly, the field staff at Supervisory level also are too much loaded w.r.t. their assignments regarding mandatory inspections, planning, maintenance, compliance, supervision, response to emergencies, attending inquiries and similar multifarious activities through the single unit of SSE/P.Way. It is the right time to think over laterally and devise a mechanism for re-organizing the work assignments of our P.Way team, so that their inhuman working environment and responsibilities thereto for safe train operation may be duly addressed.

A model cadre structure for the complete team, right from Trackman to SSE/P.Way has also been visualized, so that through intelligent thought process at all levels, Indian Railways may come out with better cadre structure, duties and responsibilities at various levels and thus, organization is benefitted with better productivity & job satisfaction with care to each other and with the prime objective of safe train operation on IR system.



1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Since ages, Indian Railways have been following practices for track maintenance through the P.Way Gangs comprising of Gangmen, Keyman & Gangmate and then supervised by P.Way Mistry, PWI (Permanent Way Inspector) & AEN (Assistant Engineer). With the changing times and incorporation of various concepts in maintenance alongwith re-designation of various posts, the categories became known as Trackman, Keyman, Gangmate, Sr.P.Way Supervisor, Jr. Engineer/P.Way and Sr. Section Engineer/ P.Way under the control of respective Assistant Divisional Engineer (ADEN).

1.2 Simultaneously, the track structure also saw a sea-change since the earlier days of wooden/CST-9/ST sleepers, fish plated tracks, 90R rails, normal formation to presently much advanced PSC sleepers (even at turnouts) with improved fittings, 52kg/60kg rails, continuous welded rails, improved formation, 300mm ballast cushion etc. These improvements with mandatory mechanised track maintenance alongwith mechanized track renewals and linking new tracks by modern means as well, have necessitated additional responsibility on different cadres with better educational qualifications and better career prospects.

1.3 Various Pay Commissions during last 30 years have also played their roles in merging of various categories / cadres which have on one side helped with better designations and career prospects; but on the other side they have created issues of various levels of supervision and work execution in the areas of track maintenance.

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 The earlier track maintenance cadre and structure was as under :

Supervision By : Chief-PWI, PWI-Gd.I, PWI-Gd.II, PWI-Gd.III and P.Way Mistry

Maintenance Gang comprising of : Gangmate, Keyman, Head Gangman, Sr.Gangman and Gangman

2.2 Subsequently, the designation of Gangman was changed to Trackman (Head Trackman, Sr.Trackman & Trackman) and P.Way Mistry became Sr.P.Way Supervisor. Similarly, PWIs were re-designated as Sr.Section Engineer/P.Way, Section Engineer/P.Way, Junior Engineer-I/P.Way and Junior Engineer-II/P.Way. Such a cadre structure reflected career progression as well as different responsibility & varying supervision at various levels.

2.3 As per AVC for Trackman categories in the pre-6th CPC scenario, their pay scales were as under :

(i)	Trackman	-	Rs. 2610-3540	(18% of all Trackmen)
(ii)	Sr. Trackman	-	Rs. 2650-4000	(40% of all Trackmen)
(iii)	Head Trackman	-	Rs. 2750-4400	(42% of all Trackmen)
(iv)	Keyman	-	Rs. 2750-4400	
(v)	Gangmate	-	Rs. 3050-4590	

2.4 However, after 6th CPC, Grade Pay for various categories in Pay Scale of Rs. 9300 – 34800 became as under :

SL	Category	Grade Pay (Rs.)
1.	Gangmate	1900
2.	Keymen	1800
3.	Trackman	1800

2.5 From the above, it is clear that an individual who joins as Trackman would, in all probabilities, retire as Trackman or Keyman after about 35 to 40 years of railway service and that too, in its initial Grade Pay of Rs. 1800 only.

2.6 Moreover, Grade Pay of Keyman was also Rs. 1800 and, therefore, lot of resistance / reluctance is found in promotion, posting & working of Keyman.

2.7 Some important information worth appreciation are as under :

- Sanctioned Strength of Trackmen Categories - 2,68,736
- Requirement as per Railway Board's MCNTM Formula - 2,98,581
- Actual on Roll - 2,18,692
- Shortage w.r.t. Requirement - 79,889 (27%)
- Shortage w.r.t. Sanctioned Strength - 50,044 (19%)
- General Age Profile of available Trackmen on IR :
  - Age less than 45 years - 25%
  - Age between 45 & 50 years - 18%
  - Age between 50 & 55 years - 35%
  - Age between 55 & 60 years - 22%

3. RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

3.1 On the instructions of Hon'ble Minister for Railways, a Joint Committee of five Executive Directors {EDCE(G), EDE(N), EDF(E), EDPC-I & EDPC-II} in Railway Board and General Secretaries of both the Federations (NFIR & AIRF) was constituted. The Committee considered the duties performed by Trackmen as truly skilled assignments and accordingly, recommended unanimously the modified cadre structure for Trackmen categories, i.e. for staff in categories of Trackman, Gangmate and Keyman as Track Maintainers in Grades IV, III, II & I with Grade Pay of Rs. 1800, 1900, 2400 & 2800 respectively.

3.2 The salient features of the approved report are as under :

(i) Career progression - In place of existing Grade Pay of Rs. 1800 & 1900, the revised structure has been made with Grade Pay of Rs. 1800, 1900, 2400 & 2800 with re-designation as Track Maintainer Grades IV, III, II & I.

(ii) Allowances etc. – Following recommendations have been accepted for the allowances and other related benefits to the Trackmen categories :

(a) Washing Allowance for uniform
(b) Re-imbursement of cost of shoes as Rs. 900 per annum
(c) Special allowance of Rs. 375 per month to each Track Maintainer deployed for manning of any of the Engineering level crossing
(d) CUG phone to each Track Maintainer Gr.I and also to each patrolling team
(e) Improved working tools, ergonomically designed with light weight
(f) Protective helmets with miner's light, as T&P item for night patrolling
(g) Mechanization and automation of functioning in track activities
(h) Quality of uniform to be ensured, alongwith its timely supply
(i) Cleaning of track in suburban areas for gang working on track
(j) Development of warning system/hooter system for avoidance of unfortunate cases on track
(k) Night patrolling by the team of two persons

(l) Family accommodation at suitable stations for education and health of children of the family; rent-free barracks/duty huts and payment of House Rent Allowance in lieu of family quarter.

3.3 Reorganisation of Trackman Categories - Afterwards, with the approval of Hon'ble MR, the re-structured Trackman categories emerged as under {Railway Board issued letters no. PC-VI/297/ 2010/CE-I (Spl)/GNS/15(Pt.), dated 17.08.12 and no. E(NG)I-2012/PMS/1, dated 13.08.13} :

Old Category	Grade Pay	New Category	Grade Pay	Promotion
Trackman	Rs. 1800	Track Maintainer Gr.IV Track Maintainer Gr.III Track Maintainer Gr.II	Rs. 1800 Rs. 1900 Rs. 2400	Recruitment Seniority Seniority
Keyman	Rs. 1800	Track Maintainer Gr.I	Rs. 2800	Selection By Test
Gangmate	Rs. 1900	Track Maintainer Gr.I	Rs. 2800	

3.4 In this way, skilled staff structure has been conceptualized for Trackman categories with a view for better career progression. Such a scenario could be possible because of emphasis laid during deliberations that Trackmen have to function more scientifically and higher skill is required in track maintenance activities. Accordingly, higher Grade Pay was recommended by the Committee and accepted by Hon'ble MR. It is, therefore, all the more necessary that duties of the Track Maintainers Gd.IV to Gd.I are meticulously reformulated, decided and implemented in the field.

3.5 While the present category of Trackman (which includes four categories of Trackman, Gateman, Trolleyman & P.Way Watchmen) has been structured as Track Maintainer Gd.IV, Gr.III & Gr.II for the career progression; existing categories of Keyman and Gangmate (who work for each other once a week and also Keyman supervises Gang's work in absence of Gangmate) were structured as Track Maintainer Gd.I.

3.6 At present, the strength of Keyman and Gangmate are about 6.5% and 3.5% of the total sanctioned strength in Trackman categories and, therefore, putting these two categories in the restructured cadre of Track Maintainer Gr.I will necessarily require the proportion equal to 10% (6.5% + 3.5%) for proper implementation and working in the field. Any other percentage, adhocly proposed as 6% or 3% will not serve the basic purpose and will have lot of resentment in proper railway functioning for track maintenance in the field. Therefore, percentage for Track Maintainer Gd.I needs approval for 10% only and not any other percentage, i.e. 3% or 6%.

3.7 From the details in Para 2.3 above, it is clear that total strength of Trackman was earlier distributed in three pay scales and the distribution to the lowest grade was only 18%, while in the next two grades the distribution was @ 40% and 42% respectively. In this way, the Trackman categories had reasonable career progression through three pay scales and then, subsequently promotion as Keyman, Gangmate, Sr.PWS etc. Therefore, any recommended higher proportion of 50% or so in the lowest grade of T.M. Gd.IV, will not be justified and it should be towards even lower percentage for the lowest grade, i.e. for Track Maintainer Grade-IV.

3.8 Trackman vis-a-vis other Categories -

3.8.1 As an illustration & comparison, it may be well appreciated with the fact that the existing percentage distribution for artisan categories on IR (even for Electrical Signal Maintainers (ESM) whose working on open line is quite similar to Track Maintainers) are 20%, 30%, 30% & 20% respectively in Grade Pay of

Rs. 1900, 2400, 2800 & 4200 as ESMs - Grades III, II, I & MCM; i.e. only 20% in the lowest grade.

3.8.2 Further, as far as promotion part is concerned, even the Accounts Clerk who join in Grade Pay of Rs. 1900, on promotion to next level, are posted as Accounts Assistants in Grade Pay of Rs. 2800/4200. Therefore, some department's mentioning that Track Maintainer will get promoted from GP of Rs. 1800/1900 to GP of Rs. 2800 is not anything abnormal. In any case, earlier also, Gangmate in GP of Rs. 1900 was getting promoted after selection to Sr.PWS in GP of Rs. 4200.

3.8.3 The above requirement also gets well settled with following observation :

"An employee joining as Trackman in GP of Rs. 1800 at an age of about 20 years will normally serve the Railways for about 40 years, as per existing rules and he will be entitled for three MACPs after 10, 20 & 30 years of his service. If the vacancies are filled on a regular basis or otherwise also, the strength of Trackman categories in lowest GP of Rs. 1800 will ideally be ¼th of the total sanctioned strength, i.e. at any time not more than 25% of the Trackman strength is in lowest grade (T.M. Gd.IV).

Therefore, while designing a new cadre structure for Track Maintainers, the MACP element should not be per force given, while it can always be structured in a better way with proportion of not more than 25% in the lowest category of Track Maintainer Gd.IV. Hence, putting 50% in Track Maintainer Grade-IV, is also not correct and it should rightly be brought down to 25% or so."

3.9 Moreover, Trackmen are already getting higher GP of Rs. 1900 & Rs. 2000 due to MACP provisions. Therefore, the modified cadre structure as Track Maintainers Gd. IV, III, II & I to the existing track maintenance staff will also not add much to Railway expenses; which is quite justified and reasonable cost for a very big cadre strength of about 2.5 lakh Railwaymen and that too, when Hon'ble MR decided to give justified career progression to these important and least cared categories of Trackmen, in which very few newcomers are willing to work under arduous conditions.

3.10 Thus, ideally it would be more justified to have the proportion of Track Maintainers in the revised cadre structure of Track Maintainer Gd. IV, III, II & I in the proportion of 25%, 45%, 20% & 10%. It will satisfy both the needs, i.e. first of putting Mate & Keymen strength in Grade I, i.e. by 10% of the total sanctioned strength and secondly, of putting Track Maintainer in the initial grade (Grade-IV) at 25%, because presently also, not more than this percentage is working in Grade Pay of Rs. 1800, due to provisions of MACP.

<u>Issues of Sr.PWS And JE/P.Way</u> :

3.11 Also, the cadre of Sr.PWS has now been merged (Railway Board's letter no. PC-III/2012/FE-II/2, dated 03.07.2013) with that of JE/P.Way, as was already done way back, in all other departments except for Engg.(P.Way); although the Grade Pay of both these supervisory categories, i.e. Sr.PWS and JE(P.Way) was same of Rs. 4200 and such a scenario was also one hindrance to the career progression of P.Way staff.

3.12 Gangmates who were or rather, are still working in Grade Pay of Rs. 1900, are presently getting promoted to the next stage, i.e. to Sr.PWS category (Grade Pay of Rs. 4200) after prescribed selection process. Therefore, with this merger of Sr.PWS with JE/P.Way, instead of getting promoted to Sr.PWS, these eligible staff (Gangmate or now designated as Track Maintainer Grade-I in GP of Rs. 2800) will get promoted to JE/P.Way category (Grade Pay of Rs. 4200) through selection process and there is absolutely no issue involved.

4. SANCTIONING OF MANPOWER AND OUTSOURCING OF TRACK MAINTENANCE ACTIVITIES

4.1 In terms of Railway Board's letter no. 97E/MPP/1/9, dated 13.10.97, issued with the approval of Board (FC, MS & ME) for 'Special Committee Formula', it was advised as under :

- Immediate action to be taken to post required no. of Gangmen in each Gang as per "Special Committee Formula" (SCF).
- Any shortage to BOS should be reflected in the Decasualised Gang Strength, which should be filled up immediately.
- Duties of Gangman as per Annexure-A
- Various other works as per Annexure-B, which are to be carried out by Decasualised Gangmen and in case of shortfall in working strength of Decasualised Gangmen, works to be let out on contract to avoid accumulation of arrears in track maintenance activities.

Annexure 'A'

List Of Items Of Works To Be Executed By Permanent Way Gangs

(1)	Shallow screening	-	('R' of MCNTM)
(2)	Systematic through packing	-	('R' of MCNTM)
(3)	Picking of slacks	-	('R' of MCNTM)
(4)	Lubrication of rail joints	-	('R' of MCNTM)
(5)	Minor attention to cess	-	('R' of MCNTM)
(6)	Cleaning of catch water drains, side drains & waterways	-	('R' of MCNTM)
(7)	Casual renewal of rail sleepers	-	('R' of MCNTM)
(8)	Adjustment of minor creep	-	('R' of MCNTM)
(9)	Opening, examining & over-hauling of Level Crossing	-	('R' of MCNTM)
(10)	Special attention to point & crossing	-	('R' of MCNTM)
(11)	Miscellaneous petty items including renewal of bridge timbers, cleaning weeds from tracks, cleaning station yard etc.	-	('R' of MCNTM)

Annexure 'B'

List Of Items Of Works To Be Executed By Casual Labour/Contract

(1)	Loading & unloading of materials	-	Not covered in MCNTM
(2)	Carrying out of materials other than for causal renewal of rails and sleepers	-	Not covered in MCNTM
(3)	Monsoon patrolling	-	('M' of MCNTM)
(4)	Security & Special patrolling	-	('M' of MCNTM)
(5)	Repairs to bridges	-	('S' of MCNTM)
(6)	Cleaning of Goods sheds & platform surfaces	-	Not covered in MCNTM
(7)	Stock Verification	-	Not covered in MCNTM
(8)	Painting of rails in station yards	-	('R' of MCNTM)
(9)	Deep screening of ballasts	-	Not covered in MCNTM
(10)	Re-surfacing of points & Crossings	-	('R' of MCNTM)
(11)	Watching of materials	-	('M' of MCNTM)
(12)	Painting of bridges	-	Not covered in MCNTM
(13)	Heavy repairs to tracks including lifting	-	Not covered in MCNTM
(14)	Complete renewal of point & crossings	-	Not covered in MCNTM
(15)	Complete re-alignment of curves	-	Not covered in MCNTM

4.2 Further, in terms of Railway Board's letter no. 95/CE-I/GNS/2/Vol.II/Pt.II, dated 03/06.03.2006, approval of Board (FC, MS & ME) was accorded to 'MCNTM' (Manpower & Cost Norms For Track Maintenance) Report and it was advised as under :

Various Activities In Track Maintenance

4.2.1. Activity 'T' - Affected By Traffic Density :

(A) Machine Packed Track (Non-Suburban) :

T.1	Slack Attention To	-	Corresponds to Item A-3 of SCF
T.2	For Tie Tamper Working	-	Corresponds to Item A-2 of SCF
T.3	Casual Renewal Of	-	Corresponds to Item A-7 of SCF
T.4	Repair Welding	-	Does not correspond to SCF

(B) Manually Packed Track (Non-Suburban) :

T.1	Through Packing	-	Corresponds to Item A-2 of SCF
T.2	Slack Attention To	-	Corresponds to Item A-3 of SCF
T.3	Casual Renewal Of	-	Corresponds to Item A-7 of SCF
T.4	Creep Pulling	-	Corresponds to Item A-8 of SCF

(C) Machine Packed Track (HD sub-urban) :

T.1	Slack Attention To	-	Corresponds to Item A-3 of SCF
T.2	For Tie Tamper Working	-	Corresponds to Item A-2 of SCF
T.3	Casual Renewal Of	-	Corresponds to Item A-7 of SCF
T.4	Repair Welding	-	Does not correspond to SCF

4.2.2 Activity 'R' – Un-Affected By Traffic Density :

(A) Machine Packed Track (Non-Suburban) :

R.1	Lubrication of ERCs	-	Does not correspond to SCF
R.2	Shallow Screening (1/5 length)	-	Corresponds to Item A-1 of SCF
R.3	Loading, leading, unloading	-	Corresponds to Item B-1 of SCF
R.4	Overhauling of level crossing	-	Corresponds to Item A-9 of SCF
R.5	Watching caution spots & Miscellaneous	-	Does not correspond to SCF
R.6	Tree cutting for visibility	-	Does not correspond to SCF
R.7	Lubrication of rails in curves	-	Does not correspond to SCF
R.8	Accident relief & carcass removal	-	Does not correspond to SCF
R.9	Bridge sleeper attention & renewal	-	Corresponds to Item B-5 of SCF
R.10	Pre-monsoon attention, such as clearing of drains and waterways, cess repairs, de-weeding of track and attention to cuttings and trolley refuges : Corresponds to Item A-5 of SCF		
R.11	Creep pulling (approaches of bridge, turnout)	-	Corresponds to Item A-8 of SCF
R.12	Rectifying damage to Level Crossings	-	Does not correspond to SCF

(B) Manually Packed Track (Non-Suburban) :

R.1	Lubrication of rail joints	-	Does not correspond to SCF
R.2	Shallow screening (1/5 length)	-	Corresponds to Item A-1 of SCF
R.3	Loading, leading, unloading	-	Corresponds to Item B-1 of SCF
R.4	Overhauling of level crossings	-	Corresponds to Item A-9 of SCF
R.5	Watching caution spots & miscellaneous	-	Does not correspond to SCF
R.6	Tree cutting for visibility	-	Does not correspond to SCF

R.7 Lubrication of rails in curves - Does not correspond to SCF
R.8 Accident relief and carcass removal - Does not correspond to SCF
R.9 Bridge sleeper attention & renewal - Corresponds to Item B-5 of SCF
R.10 Pre-monsoon attention, such as clearing of drains and waterways, cess repairs, de-weeding of track and attention to cuttings and trolley refuges : Corresponds to Item A-5 of SCF
R.11 Rectifying damage to LC posts and gates - Does not correspond to SCF

(C) Machine Packed Track (HD sub-urban) :

R.1 Through packing - Corresponds to Item A-2 of SCF
R.2 Shallow screening (1/5 length) - Corresponds to Item A-1 of SCF
R.3 Loading, leading & unloading - Corresponds to Item B-1 of SCF
R.4 Lubrication of ERCs (Joints) - Does not correspond to SCF
R.5 Overhauling of level crossings - Corresponds to Item A-9 of SCF
R.6 Watching caution spots & look-out men - Does not correspond to SCF
R.7 Tree cutting - Does not correspond to SCF
R.8 Lubrication of rails in curves - Does not correspond to SCF
R.9 Bridge sleeper attention & renewal - Does not correspond to SCF
R.10 Accident relief and carcass removal - Does not correspond to SCF
R.11 Pre-monsoon attention - Corresponds to Item A-5 of SCF
R.12 Creep pulling - Corresponds to Item A-8 of SCF
R.13 Rectifying damage to LCs - Does not correspond to SCF
R.14 Painting of weld collars - Does not correspond to SCF
R.15 Emergency attention - Does not correspond to SCF
R.16 Extra assistance to Keymen & Black Smith - Does not correspond to SCF
R.17 Extra work in night blocks - Does not correspond to SCF
R.18 Extra assistance for S&T items - Does not correspond to SCF

4.2.3 Activity 'S' – Site Specific :

S.1 Tunnel Maintenance - Does not correspond to SCF
S.2 Bridge sub-structure maintenance - Corresponds to Item B-5 of SCF
S.3 Long girder maintenance - Does not correspond to SCF
S.4 Extra maintenance due to very sharp curves, deep cutting and steep gradients - Corresponds to Item A-3 of SCF
S.5 Maintenance of track on extremely bad formation - Corresponds to B-13/SCF
S.6 Lookout man Duty - Does not correspond to SCF
S.7 Fog Signal man Duty - Does not correspond to SCF
S.8 Filth removal from track - Does not correspond to SCF
S.9 Security patrolling - Corresponds to Item B-4 of SCF
S.10 Watching water level in suburban sections - Does not correspond to SCF

4.2.4 Activity 'M' – Miscellaneous :

M.1 Monsoon Patrolling - Corresponds to Item B-3 of SCF
M.2 Hot weather patrolling of LWR track - Does not correspond to SCF
M.3 Cold weather patrolling of LWR track - Does not correspond to SCF
M.4 Watching vulnerable locations - Does not correspond to SCF
M.5 Gate keeping at level crossings - Does not correspond to SCF
M.6 Rest giving for Keymen - Does not correspond to SCF
M.7 Waterman duty - Does not correspond to SCF
M.8 Store-watchman Duty - Does not correspond to SCF

4.2.5 Also, further list of activities which need to be out-sourced {not covered in MCNTM calculations for sanctioned strength of Trackman} are as under :

1. Formation treatment works
2. Collection of ballast, training out ballast by materials train, leading ballast from stack to track, insertion of ballast in track and profiling
3. Deep-screening of the ballast in track, carried out manually or by deploying Ballast Cleaning Machine in which case manpower support is provided by the contractor
4. Introduction of sub ballast and ballast layers
5. Heavy repairs to track, including lifting
6. Complete realignment of curved track
7. Through renewal of rails, sleepers and fasteners
8. Complete renewals of points and crossings, SEJs, traps, etc.
9. Resurfacing of crossings and switch rails
10. Loading and unloading of P.Way materials in bulk
11. Lorrying out of P.Way materials for other than casual renewal
12. Security of materials in a depot which is closed and locked
13. Painting of rails and weld collars
14. Painting of bridge girders
15. Heavy repairs (measurable) to formation, cutting, side drains and catch-water drains
16. Heavy repairs (measurable) to bridges, bridge protection works, river training works and tunnels
17. Providing/repairing road surface at level crossings, including speed breakers
18. Removal of major sand breaches
19. Works arising due to restoration, following breach or accident
20. Clearing of rank vegetation in platforms and in the vicinity of tracks in coaching and goods yards, repairs depots and workshops of Engineering, Mechanical, Electrical and S&T departments

4.3 Current Scenario vis-à-vis Outsourcing Of Activities :

4.3.1 During last few years, IR have been facing lot of difficulties due to non-filling of vacancies to the tune of even 40% of sanctioned strength, especially in Trackman categories. Also, non-sanction of adequate manpower by GMs and also by Railway Board as per approved MCNTM formula for the mandatory track maintenance activities in case of newly created assets of New Line, Doubling, Gauge Conversion, Traffic Facility Works etc., it became necessary for the Railways to go for selected outsourcing of the activities which were otherwise to be done through Railway's manpower. Such issues were considered in Board at all levels including ME, MS, FC & CRB and some of the Railways were advised to go ahead accordingly on the proposals sent by them to Board.

4.3.2 Further a comprehensive instructions on the subject of "Organising the resources for Track Maintenance Activities on Indian Railways - Standing Instructions" have recently been issued by Board vide letter no. 2011/CEDO/ SR/15/O/Vol.I, dated 16th December 2013.

4.3.3 All the General Managers have been advised that as per Clause 4(2) of The Railway Act 1989, *"The General superintendence and control of a Zonal Railway shall vest in the General Manager".* Therefore, the responsibility of making available with the field units, all requisite arrangements including manpower through departmental staff as well as through outsourcing as per

needs, for maintenance of all assets including track, so as to ensure safe running of trains, lies with the General Manager.

4.3.4 Railways have been asked to do regular annual exercise for working out the required strength of Trackman as per MCNTM formula, for maintenance of all running sections on the Railway on every 1st April jointly by PCE, FA&CAO and CPO. This will ensure zero based review, as per actual traffic and other related conditions every year. The resultant status w.r.t. total requirement of Trackman on Zonal Railway as a whole (for surrender or creation or re-distribution) shall accordingly be worked out every year in a systematic manner.

4.3.5 Such an exercise shall, thus, also serve purpose of possible redistribution on Zonal Railway and for managing the gap between 'Actual Trackmen on Roll' & 'Requirement of Total Trackmen', by a rational deployment of contractual agencies till requisite posts, as needed, are created and vacancies are filled up. This exercise shall also take into account the actual mandays loss beyond what is accounted for. A 'sample calculation format' for this annual exercise for working out the maintenance requirement based on MCNTM formula and shortfall, keeping in view the vacancies and for the absence of staff on duty beyond the prescribed provisions, has also been circulated.

4.3.6 As an helping tool and means for systematic outsourcing of track maintenance activities & allied items, Railway Board is also issuing shortly the Unified Document for "IR's Unified Standard Schedule of Rates for P.Way Items" on the lines of already approved and practised USSOR for Works & Materials on IR. It will also help in proper contract execution in field.

5. SUPERVISION AND EXECUTION OF TRACK MAINTENANCE ACTIVITIES – THE REVISED MODEL

5.1 There is genuine need for lateral thinking at all levels w.r.t. the prevailing maintenance practices etc. in functioning on P.Way side by the P.Way maintenance units, their in-charges including senior officers. While we are still continuing with the approach of loading a single Supervisor (SSE/P.Way) with all types of activities of inspections, maintenance, compliance, planning, accident restoration, enquiry etc.; in advanced railway systems, these activities are judiciously structured and reasonably well distributed amongst various supervisors.

5.2 It is, therefore, desirable that all the Zonal Railways apply themselves on the above-mentioned subject under the present scenario w.r.t. now existing cadre on P.Way side and suggest a more realistic & practicable structure for P.Way maintenance activities, incorporating all the advancements and requirements/ responsibilities thereto with mode of maintenance, both through departmental manpower and with suitable contractual agencies as well, in respect of inspections, maintenance, compliance, planning, accidents restoration, enquiry etc.

5.3 At present, the sanctioned strength of SSE/JE(P.Way) and Sr.PWS on Indian Railway is as under :

SSE/JE(P.Way)	-	6,317 nos.
Sr.PWS	-	4,351 nos.
Total	-	10,668 nos.

5.4 In terms of Railway Board's letter no. PC-III/2013/CRC/4, dated 08.10.13, restructuring of various categories of Group 'C' has been implemented by Ministry of Railways, according to which now 66.67% of the total strength of

SSE/JE(P.Way) will be SSE/P.Way and balance 33.33% will be JE/P.Way. Thus, net availability of SSEs and JEs on P.Way side on IR shall be as under :

SSE (P.Way)	-	7,112 nos.
JE (P.Way)	-	3,556 nos.
Total	-	10,668 nos.

5.5 The inference from the above distribution could be that the supervision in the field will be through only SSE and JE and then under them, Track Maintainers Grade I, II, III & IV will be working, performing the duties of present categories of Gangmate, Keyman & Trackman. In fact, all the individuals, presently working as JE/P.Way will get upgraded to SSE/P.Way and all the Sr.PWSs will become JEs/P.Way.

5.6 This is, therefore, the right & opportune time to re-organize the full track maintenance cadre & teams when the adequate manpower as per MCNTM formula may not be available with the Zonal Railways and some of the track maintenance activities might be got executed through contractual agencies. Hence, the suggested structure of maintenance team may look as being discussed hereunder.

5.7 SSE/P.Way (in-charge) should have a jurisdiction of about 100 km track length. He needs to be supported by a team of SSEs who will separately be responsible for 'Inspections & Monitoring', 'Maintenance & Compliance', 'Planning & Stores' and 'Special Works' including Welding and Track Machine working. However, for major track renewal activities, separate SSEs/JEs may be deputed. These SSEs will perform their respective allotted assignments.

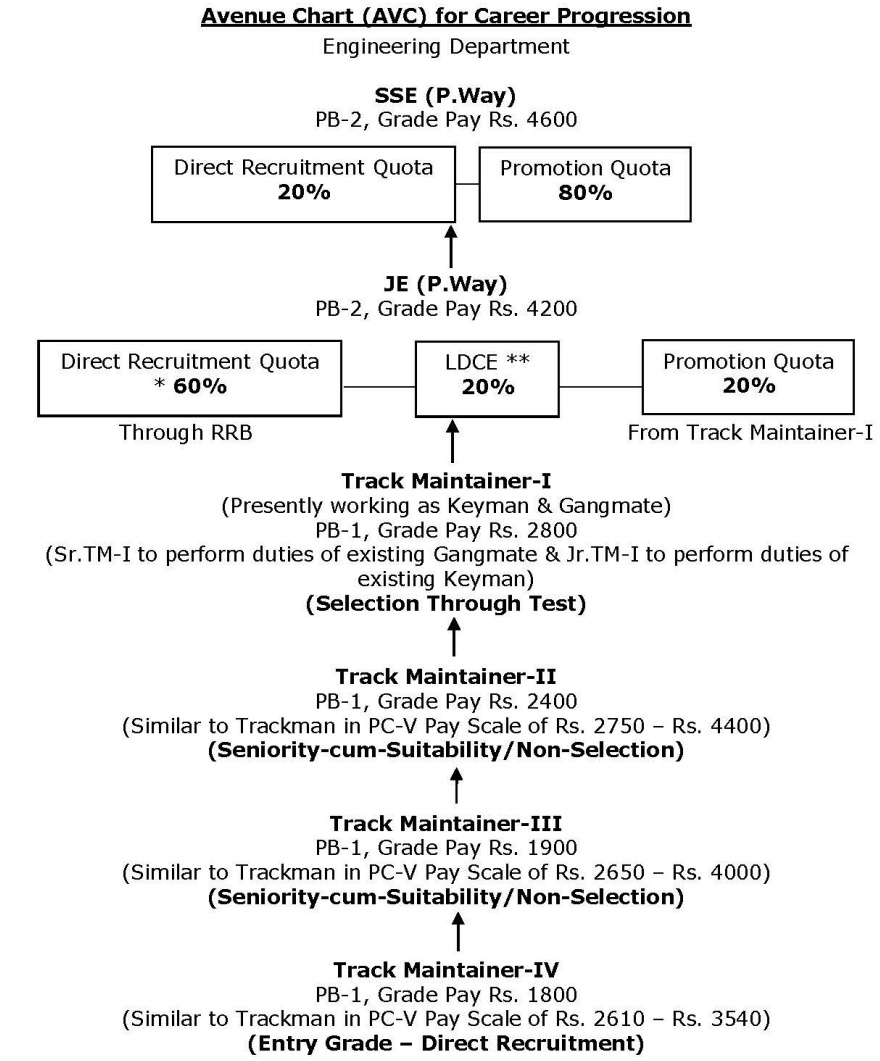
5.8 SSE/P.Way (Maintenance & Compliance) will be supported by three JEs/P.Way and each JE/P.Way to be in-charge of three P.Way Gangs each (having track length of about 10 kms), who will perform the track maintenance assignments in their respective gang beats.

5.9 Right now, SSE/P.Way in-charge is responsible for all the assignments including mandatory inspection schedules in his jurisdiction, alongwith accompanying inspections of all the senior officials from ADEN to Divisional Officers & HQ officers, due to which his own inspection schedules go to accumulation.

5.10 Through the proposed structure of the supervising team; while the mandatory inspection schedules, monitoring, planning etc. may be separately completed by the nominated SSE/P.Way, the maintenance & compliance part can be done by another nominated SSE/P.Way. Further, as far as inspection schedule of SSE/P.Way/In-charge is concerned, it may be kept 20% to the schedule being followed by SSE/P.Way/Inspection, so that while the element of test check in supervision is incorporated, the in-charge SSE/P.Way is fully aware of his section, ensuring safety in train operation.

5.11 Presently, if there are about 1200 SSE/P.Way In-charges on Indian Railways, the teams, so proposed above can very well be managed through the sanctioned strength of these about 7000 SSEs/P.Way and the 'gang working' can very well be supervised through the available 3600 JEs/P.Way.

5.12 As far as allotment of inspection trolley is concerned, it shall be with SSE/P.Way/In-charge, SSE/Inspection & Monitoring and SSE/Maintenance & Compliance. JEs/P.Way shall supervise the working of Gang and allied activities in their respective jurisdictions and therefore, they have to be on foot. However, for their mobility, suitable convenience allowance or moped allowance may be provided to JEs/P.Way.



6. FURTHER THINKING

6.1 For the intake & recruitment to the P.Way maintenance, going ahead a step further from the recently approved cadre structure of Track Maintainer category, a concept of 'Track Maintenance Helper' (TMH) in Grade Pay of Rs. 1800 may be introduced, as available with ESM category in S&T department. For this new category of Track Maintenance Helper (TMH) the educational qualification may be kept Matric or ITI and after three years' experience in this category, they will be eligible for promotion automatically to next level, i.e. to Track Maintainer Gd.III in Grade Pay of Rs. 1900.

6.2 However, in the category of Track Maintainer Gd.III, the direct recruitment will be 80% and balance 20% of the posts will be filled from the Track Maintenance Helper category. For Direct recruitment quota, educational qualification might be 12^{th} pass or 10^{th} pass alongwith ITI.

6.3 Track Maintainer Gd.III will then be promoted to Track Maintainer Gd.II in GP of Rs. 2400 as per seniority and subsequently, to Track Maintainer Gd.I in Grade Pay of Rs. 2800 (performing the duties of present designations of Gangmate & Keyman). Next level of promotion in Junior Engineer/P.Way in GP of Rs. 4200 will be from Track Maintainer Gd.I and if sufficient no. of candidates are not available, then these can be taken from the next level, i.e. from Track Maintainer Gd.II having GP of Rs. 2400.

6.4 The percentage distribution of total strength of 'Track Maintainers' Grade III, II & I alongwith 'Track Maintenance Helper' may be as under :

Track Maintenance Helper	-	20% of strength in Track Maintainer Gd.III category
Track Maintainer Gd.III	-	40% of total strength of Track Maintainer Gd.I, II & III
Track Maintainer Gr.II	-	50% of total strength of Track Maintainer Gd.I, II & III
Track Maintainer Gr.I	-	10% of total strength of Track Maintainer Gd.I, II & III

Note : Track Maintainer Grade-I (presently working as Gangmate & Keyman) may subsequently be re-designated as 'Track Maintainer In-charge'.

6.5 Further entry & promotion to JE/P.Way category may, however, be in the following ratio :

60% - Direct Recruitment Quota

20% - Promotion Quota from Track Maintainer Gd.I and if eligible staff not available, then from Track Maintainer Gd.II

20% - LDCE Quota - *from all the categories of staff working under all the units of SSE/P.Way of respective Divisions with three years of service in Railways, subject to other conditions as prescribed below Para 5.12 above.*

It will help and motivate other qualified staff in 'TMH' or 'TM' categories in moving up with promotion to Supervisor category as their career progression and will help in less attrition from 'TM' categories.

7. ISSUES OF FINANCIAL IMPLICATION

7.1 There are always the issues of financial implication, surrender etc. when restructuring or similar matters are approved by Railway Board. There is system of quoting some circulars of Finance Ministry based on 6th CPC with interpolation on 5th CPC, due to which unreasonable surrenders are sometimes worked out and forced on Railways which is not correct & practicable. The main objective is that additional financial burden, if any due to restructuring etc. is to be neutralised through matching surrender of equivalent no. of posts. Therefore, financial implication needs to be worked out on actual basis in current scenario on the sanctioned strength and upgradation or resultant upgradation to various grades.

7.2 For example, in case of merger of the categories of Sr.PWS with JE/P.Way, when both these categories are of same Grade Pay of Rs. 4200; there is no financial implication to Railways except for the resultant increase in number of posts in SSE(P.Way) category which is in Grade Pay of Rs. 4600.

7.3 Thus, if a person is getting upgraded to GP Rs. 4600 Grade Pay in the same Pay Scale of Rs. 9300-34800, then the extra financial burden on Railway works out to only Rs. 400 plus Rs.360 (DA), i.e. total Rs. 760. If salary of one JE(P.Way) in Grade Pay of Rs.4200 works out to about Rs. 40,000 per month, then surrender of one post of JE/P.Way, in fact, will help in upgradation of at least 50 JEs/P.Way to SSE/P.Way category.

7.4 Therefore, it needs to be examined properly in correct perspective by the concerned Directorates in Railway Board and unnecessary surrender should not be forced upon Zonal Railways for effecting the genuine upgradation to the field personnel which is otherwise creating confusion, thereby affecting the important activities of track maintenance and also safe train operation.

8. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 The dedicated P.Way teams from Trackmen to SSE/P.Way on Indian Railways need to be given due importance w.r.t. career progression, allowances and modernisation.

8.2 Various Pay Commissions during last 30 years have merged various categories / cadres resulting into better designations and career prospects, but have also created issues of various levels of supervision and work execution in the areas of track maintenance; these need to be addressed.

8.3 As per AVC for Trackman categories in the pre-6th CPC scenario, their pay scales were as under :

(i)	Trackman	-	Rs. 2610-3540	(18% of all Trackmen)
(ii)	Sr. Trackman	-	Rs. 2650-4000	(40% of all Trackmen)
(iii)	Head Trackman	-	Rs. 2750-4400	(42% of all Trackmen)
(iv)	Keyman	-	Rs. 2750-4400	
(v)	Gangmate	-	Rs. 3050-4590	

8.4 However, after 6th CPC, Grade Pay for various categories in Pay Scale of Rs. 9300 – 34800 became as under :

SL	Category	Grade Pay (Rs.)
1.	Gangmate	1900
2.	Keymen	1800
3.	Trackman	1800

8.5 Due to 6th CPC, an individual joining as Trackman would, in all probabilities, retire as Trackman or Keyman after about 35 to 40 years of railway service and that too, in its initial Grade Pay of Rs. 1800 only. Moreover, GP of Keyman is also Rs. 1800 and, therefore, lot of resistance / reluctance in promotion, posting & working of Keyman.

8.6 General Age Profile of available Trackmen at present on IR is as under :

- Age less than 45 years - 25%
- Age between 45 & 50 years - 18%
- Age between 50 & 55 years - 35%
- Age between 55 & 60 years - 22%

8.7 On the instructions of Hon'ble Minister for Railways, a Joint Committee of five EDs of Railway Board and General Secretaries of both the Federations (NFIR & AIRF) was constituted. On the recommendation of the Joint Committee, Hon'ble MR has approved the recommendations w.r.t. career progression and allowances for these categories. The salient features are :

(i) Career progression - In place of existing Grade Pay of Rs. 1800 & 1900, the revised structure has been made with Grade Pay of Rs. 1800, 1900, 2400 & 2800 with re-designation as Track Maintainer Grades IV, III, II & I. Thus, an individual who was earlier structured to retire in his recruitment GP of Rs. 1800 will have career progression and be benefitted with a GP of even Rs. 2800 or more.

Old Category	Grade Pay	New Category	Grade Pay	Promotion
Trackman	Rs. 1800	Track Maintainer Gd.IV	Rs. 1800	Recruitment
		Track Maintainer Gd.III	Rs. 1900	Seniority
		Track Maintainer Gd.II	Rs. 2400	Seniority
Keyman	Rs. 1800	Track Maintainer Gd.I	Rs. 2800	Selection By Test
Gangmate	Rs. 1900	Track Maintainer Gr.I	Rs. 2800	

(ii) Allowances etc. –

a. Washing Allowance for uniform
b. Re-imbursement of cost of shoes as Rs. 900 per annum
c. Special allowance to each Gateman at Engineering level crossing
d. CUG phone to TM Gd.I and Patrolling team
e. Improved working tools, ergonomically designed with light weight
f. Protective helmets with miner's light, as T&P item for night patrolling
g. Better quality & timely supply of uniform
h. Cleaning of track in suburban areas for gang working
i. Warning system/hooter system during working on track
j. Night patrolling by the team of two persons
k. Family accommodation or rent-free duty huts with payment of HRA

8.8 Keyman and Gangmate are about 6.5% and 3.5% of the total sanctioned strength in Trackman categories on Indian Railways. Therefore, proportion in the restructured cadre of Track Maintainer Gd.I will necessarily be required as 10% for proper implementation and working in the field. Any other percentage, adhocly proposed as 6% or 3% will not serve the basic purpose and will have resentment in proper railway functioning for track maintenance in the field.

8.9 In Pre-6th CPC, total strength of Trackman was distributed in three pay scales and the distribution to the lowest grade was only 18%, while in the next two grades the distribution was @ 40% and 42% respectively, thereby giving them a reasonable career progression through three pay scales and then, promotion as Keyman, Gangmate, Sr.PWS etc.

Existing percentage distribution for similar other categories, e.g. ESMs are 20%, 30%, 30% & 20% respectively in Grade Pay of Rs. 1900, 2400, 2800 & 4200 as ESMs - Grades III, II, I & MCM; i.e. only 20% in the lowest grade.

Therefore, any recommended higher proportion of 50% or so in the lowest grade of T.M. Gd.IV, will not be justified and it should be towards even lower percentage for the lowest grade, i.e. for Track Maintainer Grade-IV.

8.10 Sanctioning of manpower for track maintenance activities should be done in terms of Railway Board's letter no. 95/CE-I/GNS/2/Vol.II/Pt.II, dated 03/06.03.2006 through which approval of Board (FC, MS & ME) was accorded to 'MCNTM' (Manpower & Cost Norms For Track Maintenance) Report.

8.11 All the General Managers have been advised that as per Clause 4(2) of The Railway Act 1989, "The General superintendence and control of a Zonal Railway shall vest in the General Manager". Therefore, the responsibility of making available with the field units, all requisite arrangements including manpower through departmental staff as well as through outsourcing as per

needs, for maintenance of all assets including track, so as to ensure safe running of trains, lies with the General Manager.

8.12 Further a comprehensive instructions on the subject of "Organising the resources for Track Maintenance Activities on Indian Railways - Standing Instructions" have recently been issued by Board vide letter no. 2011/CEDO/ SR/15/O/Vol.I, dated 16th December 2013. Railways should do regular annual exercise for working out the required strength of Trackman as per MCNTM formula, for maintenance of all running sections on the Railway on every 1st April jointly by PCE, FA&CAO and CPO. Such an exercise shall serve purpose of managing the gap between 'Actual Trackmen on Roll' & 'Requirement of Total Trackmen', by a rational deployment of contractual agencies till requisite posts, as needed, are created and vacancies are filled up.

8.13 The Unified Document for "IR's Unified Standard Schedule of Rates for P.Way Items" should be used for proper contract execution in field.

8.14 Field staff at Supervisory level are too much loaded w.r.t. their assignments regarding mandatory inspections, planning, maintenance, compliance, supervision, response to emergencies, attending inquiries and similar multifarious activities through the single unit of SSE/P.Way. A suitable mechanism needs to be devised for re-organizing the work assignments of P.Way team, so that their inhuman working environment and responsibilities thereto for safe train operation may be duly addressed.

8.15 SSE/P.Way (in-charge) should have a jurisdiction of about 100 km track length. He needs to be supported by a team of SSEs who will separately be responsible for 'Inspections & Monitoring', 'Maintenance & Compliance', 'Planning & Stores' and 'Special Works' including Welding and Track Machine working. However, for major track renewal activities, separate SSEs/JEs may be deputed. These SSEs will perform their respective allotted assignments.

8.16 SSE/P.Way (Maintenance & Compliance) will be supported by three JEs/P.Way and each JE/P.Way to be in-charge of three P.Way Gangs each (having track length of about 10 km), who will perform the track maintenance assignments in their respective gang beats.

8.17 Through the proposed structure of the supervising team; while the mandatory inspection schedules, monitoring, planning etc. may be separately completed by the nominated SSE/P.Way, the maintenance & compliance part can be done by another nominated SSE/P.Way. Further, as far as inspection schedule of SSE/P.Way/In-charge is concerned, it may be kept 20% to the schedule being followed by SSE/P.Way/Inspection, so that while the element of test check in supervision is incorporated, the in-charge SSE/P.Way is fully aware of his section, ensuring safety in train operation.

8.18 Presently, if there are about 1200 SSE/P.Way In-charges on Indian Railways, the teams, so proposed above can very well be managed through the sanctioned strength of these about 7000 SSEs/P.Way and the 'gang working' can very well be supervised through the available 3600 JEs/P.Way.

8.19 For their mobility, suitable convenience allowance or moped allowance may be provided to JEs/P.Way.

8.20 Some New Thinking : A model cadre structure for the complete team, right from Trackman to SSE/P.Way has also been visualized -

(i) Concept of 'Track Maintenance Helper' (TMH) in Grade Pay of Rs. 1800 may be introduced, as available with ESM category in S&T department.

(ii) However, in the category of Track Maintainer Gd.III, the direct recruitment will be 80% and balance 20% of the posts will be filled from the Track Maintenance Helper category.

(iii) Track Maintainer Gd.III will then be promoted to Track Maintainer Gd.II in GP of Rs. 2400 as per seniority and subsequently, to Track Maintainer Gd.I in Grade Pay of Rs. 2800 (performing the duties of present designations of Gangmate & Keyman). Next level of promotion in Junior Engineer/P.Way in GP of Rs. 4200 will be from Track Maintainer Gd.I and if sufficient no. of candidates are not available, then these can be taken from the next level, i.e. from Track Maintainer Gd.II having GP of Rs. 2400.

(iv) The percentage distribution of Track Maintainers may be as "TMH to be 20% of TM Gd.III and TMs Gd. II, II & I to be 40%, 50% and 10% respectively of the total strength of Track Maintainers".

(v) Subsequently, Track Maintainer Grade-I (presently working as Gangmate & Keyman) may be re-designated as 'Track Maintainer In-charge'.

(vi) Further entry & promotion to JE/P.Way category may, however, be in the ratios of 60% (Direct Recruitment Quota), 20% (Promotion Quota from Track Maintainer Gd.I & Gd.II) and 20% (LDCE Quota from all the categories of staff working under all the units of SSE/P.Way)

8.21 System of quoting some circulars of Finance Ministry based on 6^{th} CPC with interpolation on 5^{th} CPC, resulting into unreasonable surrender of posts should not be forced upon. Financial implication needs to be worked out on actual basis in current scenario on the sanctioned strength and upgradation or resultant upgradation to various grades for bringing in the cost neutrality.

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