

Voluntary Agencies in Indian Policing and Other Public Services: Role of The Home Guards and Civil Defence

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Abstract

Prominent voluntary organizations in the service of the nation are many. Yet two have made a mark of their own with their strong presence. They are the Home Guards and Civil Defense organizations working in tandem with state administrations especially the Police department. The Indian Home Guards is an auxiliary to the Police force. It is a voluntary force tasked as an efficient auxiliary to the Indian Police Personnel of the HG and CD are enrolled from amongst a cross sections of the society. And are doing yeoman service to the society from which they come from. Giving sincerely in return what they got from the society and nation.

Keywords: Administration, Public Services, Voluntary Service, Home Guards Organization, Civil Defense Organization, Organization, Training, Equipment, Personnel, Services rendered.

Introduction

The State created initially was a Police State. Its primary duty was to secure its people from dangers from within and outside. It retained so, for long, doing its primary duty of providing security internal and external. With the passage of time, added to its charter of duties were other public services. It was developing in to a welfare state. All round development of the citizens apart from securing them was now to be their duty as well. The list of duties goes long. State and its primary role of providing security suffered as state took up numerous other duties to itself. Cooperation of citizens was thus sought by the formal governmental apparatus in all its duties beginning from policing to others. Here comes in the role of the Home Guards and Civil Defense organizations which are a sort of informal voluntary services rendered by the people. The role of such Non Governmental Organizations is increasing day by day. Thus it becomes imperative to know about voluntary action in policing activities. Homeguards and the Civil Defense are successful examples of voluntary action in policing work and even other public services provided by the State.

Review of Literature

India 2021 by publication division Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Govt. of India is very informative about the Home Guards and Civil Defense but it is devoted more to organizational setup, functions and role as further government perspectives. Compendium of instructions: Civil Defense, Revised Edition 2021. Compendium of instructions: Home Guards, Revised Edition 2021. Both published by the directorate general of Fire Services, Civil Defense and Home Guards, Ministry of Home, New Delhi gives an exhaustive account of the two services. Yet being the government view it doesn't offer a critical account. Bihar Home Guards rule 1953 reprinted Edition 2021 by B.P.R.D Patna, UP Home Guards Adhinyam 1963, Revised and Reprinted 2021, Haryana Home Guard Rules 1980, Edition 2021, Karnataka Home Guard Act 1962 reprinted 2020 offer in details the general as well as specific features of the State Units.

Crime community and Policing by V K Mohanan, Gyan Publishing House New Delhi Edition 2020 critically examines Police behavior towards the community and underlines the home guards and civil defense with a positive note. Police in Democratic Societies by Shankar Sen, IPS Retd. Gyan Publishing House New Delhi Edition 2021 (Reprint) critically and analytically examines various aspects of Policing in India and covers the home guard and Civil Defense in its domain of study. Lectures delivered by M M Upadhyaya Bihar Police Service Retd. former Law instructor, Police Training College



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Hazaribagh and Home Guard Training Center Bihta, Patna made available by police archives O/o DGP Bihar, Patna served a good purpose where the seasoned Police Officer/ Instructor introduces the two organizations in detail and evaluates their role and scope of function in future.

Administration in India has a long history of organized public services which come under the governmental set up. They are under the central as well as the state services controlled by statutory provisions. Post Independence, a number of changes were made to the pattern set by the erstwhile British rulers. One of the remarkable features is

voluntary service by the citizens to a government which they consider their own and working for their welfare. Prominent voluntary organizations in the service of the nation

are many, yet two have made a mark of their own with their strong presence. They are the Home Guards and Civil Defense organizations working in tandem with state administration especially the Police Department.

The Indian Home Guard is an auxiliary police force. It is a voluntary force, tasked as an efficient auxiliary to the Indian Police. The Home Guards Organization was reorganized in India in 1962 after the Sino-Indian War with the People's Republic of China, though it existed in smaller units individually in some places. Home Guards are recruited from various cross sections of the civil society such as professionals, college students, agricultural and industrial workers etc. who give their spare time for betterment of the community. All citizens of India, in the age group of 18-50, are eligible. Normal tenure of membership in Home Guards is 3 to 5 years.

The Home Guard was originally raised in the erstwhile Bombay State in 1946. Apart from Army, Navy, Air Force and other security agencies, the twin voluntary organizations - Civil Defense & Home Guards were raised to provide protection to citizens in any untoward situation. Therefore, 6th of December every year is celebrated throughout the nation as Raising Day of the organization. On that day in 1946, the first Home Guards Unit was conceived and raised in erstwhile Bombay State during turmoil period of civil disorders and communal riots, as a civilian voluntary force in aid of administration, as an auxiliary to Police, under the stewardship of late Morarji Desai, the then Premier of Bombay State and later Prime Minister of the Country, It was organized in accordance with the Home Guards Acts and Rules of States/Union Territories, under the Ministry of Home Affairs.

For example, the Home Guards Organization in Maharashtra was utilized by the Civil Defense which came into existence in 1952 under the name of Home Defense (New Civil Defense Act 27 Of 1968). In view of these the Maharashtra Home Guards and the State Government could assist Central Government in organizing and utilizing the Home Guards and Civil Defense creditably during External aggression in 1962. On some occasions the organization went out of its lawful jurisdiction in order to render help as during the floods in Surat in 1956; civil defense measures organized in Assam in 1962; special services rendered at the exposition of St. Xavier's body in Goa in 1964, etc. They also rendered yeomen's service during several strikes of Bombay Municipal Corporation employees, and fully manned the essential services such as fire brigade, water supply and hospital services for a number of days. At this time the Home Defense was permitted to be brought to limelight by changing the Home Defense to Civil Defense. The policies of State Civil Defense Committee were based on the directives issued by Government of India.

The Home Guard organization is also active in Bengal, Rajasthan, Tamil-Nadu, Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat, Bihar, U.P. and other states.

Functions

The functions to be performed by Home Guards are listed below:

1. To serve as Auxiliary to the Police and generally help in maintaining internal security.
2. To help the community in any kind of Emergency— such as on Air-raided precautions or on any natural disaster.
3. To function as an Emergency Force intended for special tasks directly or indirectly connected with the defense of the country.
4. To maintain functional units to provide essential services such as motor transport, Engineering groups, Fire brigade, Nursing and First Aid, Operation of Power supply, Water installations and Communication systems etc.
5. The Border Wing of 18 battalions assists the Border Security Force in preventing infiltration on the international border/coastal areas, guarding of VA/VPs and lines of communication and vulnerable areas at the time of external aggression.
6. The 18 battalions are deployed as follows: Assam (1 bn), Gujarat (4 bns), Meghalaya (1 bn), Punjab (6 bns), Rajasthan (4 bns), Tripura (1 bn), and West Bengal (1 bn). Marine Units function as an Indian Coast Guard auxiliary.
7. The Fire Wing assists the Indian Fire service.

Strength and Organization

The total strength of Home Guards in the country is 673, 793 against which the present raised strength is 586, 401 Home Guards in the 25 states and the union territories. It doesn't exist in Kerala as its duties are performed by other organizations.

Training

Central Civil Defense training centers were established in various states to impart training to both Civil Defense and Home Guards personnel. The training consists of individual as well as team training. After Independence the task of Civil Defense training was revived only after 1962.

Equipment

The Home Guard is equipped with and trained to use older weapons such as the 303 Lee–Enfield SMLE rifle, Sten and Bren guns which are manufactured indigenously by the Indian Ordnance Factories controlled by the Ordnance Factories Board, Ministry of Defense Government of India.

Personnel

As said above personnel for Home Guards and Civil Defense Organization are recruited from a cross section of the people to include doctors, lawyers, teachers, employees of public and private sector organizations, college and university students, agricultural and industrial workers and others who give their spare time to their communities. All 18 to 50-year-old citizens of India are eligible for membership and normally serve from three to five years each. Members are paid an allowance when called up for service. All members, after their first three-year term of service, are eligible to be trained by the police in the maintenance of law and order, crime prevention, anti-dacoit measures, border control, disaster relief, fire prevention and firefighting, election and social welfare activities

Selection of the members is made by a committee consisting of the Deputy Commissioner, Superintendent of Police and other officials of the concerned district after verification of character antecedents of the candidates by the police.

In the case of the District Commandants the Government makes the appointment from among the candidates not affiliated to any political party. The basic qualification prescribed is a graduation and shall not be more than prescribed years of age apart from being apolitical, resident of India and physically fit. They are now appointed by the respective Public Service Commission's of the states as well. He is a permanent employee of the department assisted by a few subordinates in lower ranks who are also permanent employees assigned the task of imparting training to the volunteers. There is an Honorary District Commandant and subordinate rank holders from amongst the volunteers.

Home Guards and Civil Defense Directorate functions under the Home Secretariat of Government of concerned states The DGP and Commandant General, Home Guards and Director, Civil Defense is the head of the department for both Home Guards and Civil Defense Departments.

Need for a Charter

The charter of Home Guards Department is to showcase the services rendered by this department to the law enforcement machinery of the Government in particular and the public in general. The department is striving hard to enroll, train and deploy large number of trained Home Guards for various law and order duties as requested by police authorities time and again and also during natural calamities like floods, earthquakes, landslides etc.

Objectives of the Study

1. To enlighten the public about the services rendered by the department during crises.
2. To attract more volunteers to this department to serve the country.

Organizational Structure:

At the top is the Commandant General Home Guards, usually an I.P.S. officer assisted by a Deputy Commandant General and Commandants and Divisional Commandants to assist them. Below are District Commandants in the Training centers in the districts who are assisted by Inspectors, Company and Platoon Commanders followed by Havildars and jawans, the volunteers.

Services Rendered by this Department:

Home Guards Department renders the following services:-

1. Save lives and property of the people during exigencies.
2. Provide the required number of Home Guards to assist the police authorities and District administration for law and order duties, election bandobast duties, festivals, jathra's etc., and rescue the people during natural calamities such as floods, landslides, cyclones and earthquakes.
3. Provide the Home Guards to regulate the traffic in Bangalore City and thereby assist the traffic police in the smooth flow of the traffic.
4. Provide Home Guards to the excise department, in curbing the menace of illicit liquor and assist the excise officials in checking the movement of liquor during elections. This helps in conducting free and fair elections.
5. Provide Home Guards to the Food Corporation of India depots for guarding the FCI Godowns spread throughout the state.
6. The Home Guards are also deployed at RTO's and Prisons Departments through out the state for the smooth functioning of Government machinery as there is acute shortage of manpower existing in these departments.
7. The Home Guards are also provided to guard the public buildings.
8. To provide Home Guards for patrolling for the purpose of prevention of crime and enforcement of such regulation and orders made under the police act in force in the respective areas of the state.
9. To provide Home Guards for internal security duties.
10. To provide Home Guards for youth services department
11. To provide Home Guards for All India Radio and Prasara Bharati for guarding duty.
12. To provide Home Guards to the Government Hospitals to monitor the flow of public and safeguard the hospital properties.
13. To provide Home Guards to Geology and mines department
14. To provide Home Guards for Green Policing duty at the important Historical places in the state.
15. Conduct Mock Drills at frequent intervals at various locations in Bangalore City and other places in the State to enlighten the public over looming terrorist threat and its impending disasters and how to minimize the damages to the barest minimum by acclimatizing them to the consequences and how to overcome it.

Civil Defense

Civil Defense measures are designed to deal with immediate emergency conditions, protect the public and restore vital services and facilities that have been destroyed or damaged by disaster.

Organizational Structure

At the top is either a Director or Director General Civil Defense who are I.P.S. or I.A.S. officers assisted by a Dy. Director or Dy. Director General. IN the field are District Controller who is invariably the District Magistrate. The Regional Controllers and Wardens have Sector wardens and Post wardens working with their volunteers, mostly in the urban areas.

Major Tasks of Civil Defense

1. To make sure that the public is warned of danger and provided with instructions on how to avoid hazards.
2. Advice people to protect themselves by either evacuating the area or remain and take shelter.
3. Organizing immediate relief to the survivors.
4. Support emergency services
5. Rescue operations
6. Firefighting
7. Law enforcement
8. Medical care
9. Public works repair
10. Provision of voluntary Food, Shelter and Clothing.
11. Assist in recovery operations
12. Clearance of Debris
13. Restoring utility services
14. Managing relocations centers

Volunteers are the Backbone of Civil Defense

Civil Defense is primarily organized on voluntary basis except for a small nucleus of paid staff and establishment which is augmented during emergencies.

The present target of Civil Defense volunteers is 12.49 lakhs, out of which 6.0 lakhs have already been raised and 4.8 lakhs have been trained. These volunteers are administered and trained by 68 Deputy Controllers, 17 Medical Officers and 503 Nos. of C. D. Instructors, which are full time paid posts.

Although the Civil Defense Act 1968 is applicable throughout the country, the organization is only raised in such areas and zones which are tactically and strategically considered vulnerable from enemy attack points of view.

At present, Civil Defense activities are restricted to 259 categorized towns spread over 36 States/Union Territories.

Activities of Civil Defense Volunteers

A part from intensive training and demonstration of Civil Defense measures during peace time, Civil Defense volunteers are deployed, on voluntary basis, in various constructive and nation building activities. This includes for example the assistance to the administration in relief and rescue work during natural calamities like floods, earthquakes, cyclones and droughts by the State Government/Union Territories.

Civil Defense training is conducted in the country on a three tier concept, i.e., local/town level, at state level and at National level. The National Civil Defense College, Nagpur – a subordinate training establishment of the Ministry - conducts basic and advanced courses in Civil Defense and Disaster Relief Management.

For 2021 National Civil Defense College has projected various courses which cover different walks of national life. Since the inception of the college in 1957, NCDC trained more than 90,000 trainees including number of foreign students.

Home Guards and Civil Defense work by the motto of “community first”. This can be seen crystal clear during their role in national disasters like Covid -19 and Fire Fighting, Floods, Cyclone, Earthquake, etc.

Conclusion

Thus to conclude it can be said with immense satisfaction that the spirit of voluntary services lives in the country despite pressures of a life oriented towards material aims. Home Guards and Civil Defense organizations have come a long way in being an organized and efficient auxiliary to the police, policing and public utility services in the country. It is high time their

organizational and other limitations are taken care of and necessary help given to them to emerge stronger and be more efficient. We shouldn't forget they are backbone to the civil administration in the country. There is absolutely no doubt about it.

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