

SECURITY KNOWLEDGE AND SKILL DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL IN SUPPORT OF THE PRIVATE SECURITY SECTOR



Lt Gen S S Chahal
PVSM, AVSM, VSM (Retd)
CEO



“We cannot continue to rely only on our Military for National Security. We Must Have a civilian/private security force that is just as powerful, strong and well funded.”

Barack Obama

General

1. Traditionally, we in India have believed that provision of security to society at large is a state responsibility. This hypothesis however, has been turned on its head over the last decade with 9/11, attack on parliament, Mumbai, threat from Naxalism and the frequent incidents of violence that keep occurring from time to time. With the state security apparatus fully stretched, it has created a void in the internal security envelope of the country.
2. Interestingly, India has one of lowest police to population ratios of 0.95: 1000 compared to the global average of 03 : 1000. The prevailing situation, throws up a vital role for private security to fill the resultant vacuum by serving as a force multiplier for the security agencies of the state. However, in its present incarnation, the Private Security Sector (PSS) is neither optimally trained, equipped nor motivated to take on the challenges that confront it. Hence the need to train and up skill this force.

Genesis and Potential

3. The PSS came about in the early seventies, on the principal of necessity, albeit with no ethos of training. For various reasons, this has not changed for the better even today. As on date, the industry has about 15000 companies and employs over 07 million people hailing from the weaker sections of society, who lack in education. The salary drawn by them is pegged at minimum wages for unskilled / semi-skilled labour, making it a less preferred option for employment, as the sector suffers from a low image in society.

4. This notwithstanding, the sector which has an annual growth rate of 25 percent has great potential for generating employment as it currently faces a 30 percent shortfall in demand and supply of manpower. Despite its various shortcomings, the sector offers good employment opportunities to a large segment of school dropouts and can be exploited to advantage, if we train and up skill this force, within the Prime Minister's vision of up skilling 500 million youth by 2022.

Recognition of Importance by Government

5. Realising the importance of this sector, Government enacted the Private Security Agencies Regulation Act 2005 (PSARA) with a view to regulating and organising it. Central Association of Private Security Industry (CAPSI) played a vital role in getting this enactment which broadly covers, issues relating to appointment of controlling authority by states, licensing of companies and training to be undergone by security guards before deployment.

6. Going a step further, Cabinet approved the National Skill Policy 2009 with a view to reaping dividends from India's young demographic profile which is the envy of Europe and many others whose populations are ageing. It is estimated that by 2020, while the Western World faces a shortfall of 46 million in its workforce, India will have a surplus of 57 million. However, we shall only be able to reap the benefits of this situation if our workforce is skilled to international standards.

7. Towards this end, National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) has been set up under the PMO and tasked to set up Sector Skill Councils (SSC) in various sectors of the economy. One of the first SSC to be set up through the lead provided by CAPSI, is the Security Knowledge and Skill Development Council (SKSDC) to address issues relating to the PSS.

Setting up of SKSDC

8. SKSDC was formed in 2011 as a Section 25 Company (Not for Profit) with a board of directors comprising lead players of the industry, end users and other stakeholders. These include G4S, Tops Group, Checkmate Services, Bombay Intelligence Security, ISS SDB, SLV, SSMS, Premier Shield, Walson Services, Trig Guardforce etc. Also represented are NSDC, CII, FICCI, CAPSI and Army Welfare Placement Organisation (AWPO) among others.

9. The aim of SKSDC is to transform the PSS from an unorganised industry to an organised one by taking initiatives in developing the driving forces of knowledge and skills to address the interests of all stake holders of the industry. Towards this end, its objectives, as mandated by National Skill Policy 2009, are to undertake skill gap analysis, set National Occupational Standards (NOS), approve course curricula, train the trainers, accredit training providers as also assessment bodies and to put in place a credible system of assessment and certification.

10. Concurrently, SKSDC has been co-opted in the National Vocational Education Qualification Framework (NVEQF) Pilot Project launched for selected schools in Haryana at the behest of the Ministry of Human Resource Development. This project, aims at embedding the education system with both skill development and vocational training. The other states who are now adopting the NVEQF are, West Bengal, Himachal Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh. Eventually, all states are expected to introduce NVEQF in their schools.

11. NVEQF is a broad framework that has been developed to integrate general education and technical vocational education at various levels in the education system. The aim is to provide those who drop out (90%) from the main stream of education at different levels, the wherewithall to seek a suitable job while retaining the option of re-entering the main stream of education at a later stage on a system of credits which enables vertical and horizontal pathways. This has been necessitated by our demography which throws up a huge challenge of tackling unemployment in the country which is currently pegged at 46 million.

12. Setting up of SKSDC has given a voice to the sector which represents the best interests of the industry to include service providers, end users and other stakeholders. This would lead to bringing quality and standardisation of training across the sector pan-India. This professional body would also be in a position to take up important issues with Government that concern the upliftment of the sector. It would also facilitate introduction of diploma and other courses, in a tie up with universities, leading to the creation of professional courses for the sector which

would help in creating career pathways for those employed in the sector. Enhanced efficiency brought about by this training will help secure society and facilitate exporting surplus manpower for security assignments abroad for which a great opportunity exists.

Progress Made

13. During the last 18 months, SKSDC has made substantial progress in completing the Qualification Packs (QP) & NOS for the seven job roles approved by industry. The QP & NOS for the Unarmed Security Guard stands registered by NSDC and QP & NOS for Armed Security Guard and Security Supervisor have been approved by the Qualification Registration Committee (QRC) of NSDC and put up on their website for 30 days of public viewing and comments if any. The QP & NOS for CCTV Supervisor and Personal Security Officer (PSO) have received industry validation and will shortly be sent to NSDC. The QP & NOS for the balance two job roles of Security Officer and Assignment Manager are also ready and awaiting industry validation.

14. The functions of training providers have been separated from those of assessment & certification bodies for which SKSDC has prepared protocols for accreditation. Based on these, SKSDC is moving ahead rapidly to accredit training providers (TP). As on date, 13 TP stand accredited and cases of 15 more are under processing. Simultaneously, SKSDC is also processing the cases of four assessment bodies (AB) who have sought accreditation. Moving forward on its agenda, SKSDC has also launched its programme to train the trainers (T3) and to certify assessors. Four courses have so far been run at Gurgaon, Bangalore and Chennai in which 90 trainers and 53 assessors have been certified. It is intended to run more and more such courses in other parts of the country to create trainers and assessors pan-India.

15. SKSDC has also formalised a protocol for, “Assessment & Certification of the existing Workforce based on Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)”. This protocol has been developed within the guidelines approved by Government and could be used to advantage by the 07 million people working in the industry who need certification under PSARA.

16. Pursuant to a desire by the Government of Kerala, to help in setting up an “Academy of Excellence” for training their youth for high end security jobs for the national and international markets, SKSDC has entered into a MOU with Kerala Academy for Skills Excellence. It has since submitted “a project report” on setting up this academy which has been approved in principle by the State Government.

17. In fulfilling its mandate, SKSDC has also signed MOUs with Skills for Security, UK and National Security Institute, Abu Dhabi (UAE). It is also proceeding ahead in signing a MOU with APSA-India to help in developing the NOS for this sector which is going to play an increasingly vital role in the PSS.

18. As regards the NVEQF pilot project in Haryana, SKSDC has carried out assessment and certification of 722 students in June 13 and is gearing up for another 500 in July 13.

19. In line with its mandate, various livelihood missions in Assam, West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan have begun to demand SKSDC certification for training being conducted for the PSS. In consonance with this, SKSDC has so far conducted 1861 certifications in West Bengal, 1137 in Assam and 112 in Madhya Pradesh.

Conclusion

20. The PSS in India is set to expand significantly reflecting the growth trajectory of the Indian economy and is expected to reach the Rs 300 billion by 2020. This would make it one of the top ten security markets in the world with a workforce crossing the 10 million mark.

21. Towards this end, setting up of SKSDC has given the required impetus for training the rank and file of the sector. Simultaneously, efforts are afoot to improve service conditions which will enhance the image of the PSS making it an attractive option for employment. Statutory backing of PSARA and support provided by CAPSI augurs well for the future of the PSS.

*“Safety and security don’t just happen,
they are the result of,
collective consensus and public investment.
We owe our children,
the most vulnerable citizens, in our society,
a life free of violence and fear.”*

Nelson Mandela