

## **TN Police battle has huge staff shortage**

With over 21,000 vacancies across the State in various ranks and the number likely to go up in the ensuing months, the Tamil Nadu police are battling an acute shortage of manpower as they prepare to handle the huge task of election security in a few months.

As on January 1, 2015, the force had a vacancy of 21,100 against the sanctioned strength of 1,20,996 posts.

Though the decision to induct 8,500 Tamil Nadu Special Police Youth Brigade (TNSPYB) personnel into the force may help to some extent it would affect other aspects of policing, say police officials.

“Hundreds of TNSPYB personnel are now being engaged to assist the police in traffic management, delivery of court summons, crowd regulation, night patrolling and driving police vehicles etc. If they are moved to the police training college, the regular police have to take this burden,” a senior police official said. Going by available data, there are 67 vacancies of Deputy Superintendents of Police (DSPs), 79 Inspectors and 4,136 Sub-Inspectors and 16,718 Head Constables/Constables/Havildars. With no major recruitment done in recent times and thousands of police personnel retiring each year, the vacancies are set to increase, making it difficult for police to manage the election along with routine duties, police sources say.

A chunk of the available strength is deployed to agencies such as the Crime Branch CID, Economic Offences Wing, Directorate of Vigilance and Anti-Corruption, Special branch CID, Special Task Force and other wings of the department that cannot be deployed in Law and Order or Crime duties.

With the increasing rate of crimes, shortage of manpower will have an impact both on crime prevention and detection. Inspectors and SIs at the police station have little time to focus on all cases and investigation is usually confined to sensational cases or grave crimes. This is affecting the process of filing charge sheets and commencing trial. Deployment of police for traffic regulation and accident-prevention activities also takes a beating. Most of the time goes attending to day-to-day functions like VIP security, public agitations etc,” the official said.

Road accidents

In 2014, Tamil Nadu reported 1.93 lakh criminal cases even as 1.03 lakh cases were already pending investigation. National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) data revealed that the State reported 41,550 road accidents resulting in the death of more than 10,000 people. Sources in the police headquarters confirmed that 8,500 personnel of the TNSPYB would complete training and join the force as police constables in six months from now.

About 1,070 candidates were recruited as direct Sub-Inspectors and expected to join duty early next year. Security for the election should not be a problem since there would be deployment of Central paramilitary forces.

“Many policemen who were working in the camp office or residence of some senior police officials are being recalled. The focus is now on optimum utilisation of the available manpower and infrastructure. Enhancing the visibility of police will boost the confidence of the people. We hope to fill the vacancies in a year or two,” another police official, who requested not to be quoted, said.