STRAIGHT TALK

New horizons

Captain Ravee

Security and Intelligence is a new career path and there is a bright future ahead for people with simple graduate degrees and no specialisation

CEO, Fireball Group and Managing Director, OSSIM

Partha P Saikia

Could you outline your career in private security to us right from the beginning?

I hung up my uniform in 1995. When I came out, I saw that there was tremendous scope in this field and joined Hotel Maurya Sheraton as a Security Manager. Thereafter I got a break with Ericsson as Security Manager which was a pan India appointment. I got excellent experience in private security for almost three years working in these establishments. That is when I set up my own business to launch the Fireball brand, which is now a decade old.

What is the eligibility criteria for someone who wants to join this field?

There are two categories in this industry -

- Guards and Supervisors – Those who want to try for these jobs have to be medically fit and conform with the requirements of the Private Security Agencies (Regulation) Act, 2005 (PSAR Act).
- Managers and Officers - There is no criteria mentioned in the PSAR Act for these persons. Usually people hire graduates fluent in spoken and written English with computer proficiency and a diploma in Security and Intelligence from OSSIM.

What are the upcoming opportunities for India's youth in the private security industry?

Security and Intelligence is a new career path and there is a bright future ahead for people with simple graduate degrees and no specialisation. So, those who did not specialise in any subject because their marks were low may find that they have skills which are in demand. The OSSIM Diploma in Security and Intelligence hones the necessary skills that they may not even realise that they possess and such people are soon absorbed in corporates as Security Officers, Security Facilitators, Assignment Managers, or Assistant Branch Managers with attractive pay packets.

What are the prominent institutes where one can get basic courses in security?

There are three kinds of institutes:

- Those that are running courses for captive security requirements – to train, people who will end up working for their own companies. Such institutes are run primarily run by security companies.
- Those who conduct seminars for corporates etc. Prominent among them is ASIS, which is an American body.
- OSSIM, Mohali, which is providing training for levels from guards to Senior Management staff.

What are the average pay scales for an undergraduate, graduate, and a management graduate respectively when they start their careers in private security?

An undergraduate who has done our six-month diploma course could get between Rs 6,000 and Rs 16,000 per month. A graduate who completes our one-year diploma course can get between Rs 10,000 and Rs 20,000 per month while a management graduate would get between Rs 3.6 lakh and Rs six lakh to start with.

Can you tell us some potential employers in the private security industry in India?

A few prominent service providers are Group 4 Securicor, Fireball India, Tops India, SIS India, Checkmate India, SDB CISCO, Force One, Guardwell, AP Securitas, Vislon, BISA Eye, Force Tech, Sentinnels, Walsons and Securitas.

Secure your FUTURE

The private security sector is making rapid strides in India, with around one million jobs being created every year

Partha P Saikia

The popular perception regarding the private security industry revolves around the security guard keeping watch outside a building. There are, however, many lucrative job openings available in this sector. The best part is that there are options available even for those who are just Class X pass-outs.

According to the Central Association of Private Security Industry (CAPSI) an umbrella body of over five million private security personnel and industry experts, the sector is making rapid strides in India, with around one million jobs being created every year. The industry itself is growing at the rate of 25 per cent per annum.

For those who are in a hurry to start working — whether due to straitened financial circumstances or just because they are not academically very proficient — there is no dearth of avenues. A young person can join as a security officer after passing Class X, and upgrade himself to General Manager by studying and acquiring experience on the job. The jobs in this sector can be broadly categorised into two verticals — blue collared and white collared. The former describes security guards, while the latter comprises managerial employees.

"The boom is because of the mushrooming of infrastructure, business establishments, shopping malls and other individual functions in metros as well as other urban and suburban places. In the years to come, the industry will become more organised and will provide the largest number of career opportunities to the Indian youth," says Kunwar Vikram Singh, Chairman, CAPSI, who also heads Lancers Network Limited, a security solutions provider in the Capital. "Private security agencies would require more manpower to meet the increasing demand from the services and manufacturing sector. The Common Wealth Games in 2010 will require large number of security personnel," he adds.

"It is not possible for the police in any state to deploy security personnel everywhere. Encouraging private security agencies to come up is a step in the right direction as this will help the police maintain law and order," says Delhi Police spokesman, ACP Rajan Bhagat, who suggested that security agencies verify the antecedents of all the individuals they hire.

Harjinder Tyagi who shifted to Delhi from Sonepat in 2006, works with G4S and is currently posted in a corporate office in Connaught Place, New Delhi, started out as a security guard and is now a supervisor. "After I completed Class XII, I wanted to work and help my parents. So I shifted to Delhi and joined G4S as a security guard," says Tyagi adding, "I am pursuing my BA through correspondence. Now, I am a Supervisor, earning Rs 12, 500.

The industry has reacted proactively to the stepped-up pressure to produce trained professionals. CAPSI has approached the Ministry of Home Affairs for help in setting up educational institutes to train security personnel. An MoU has also been signed with the Government of Rajasthan for a training institute in Jaipur. A joint venture is also being worked out between CAPSI and the Ministry of Panchayati Raj to set up a Rural Institute of Security Education (RISE).

"There are nearly 3,000 security agencies in the Capital. Across India, the count is more than 10,000. This industry is also attracting foreign investors. The growth of the industry has been helped by the Private Security Agency (Regulation) Act of 2005. The legislation was enacted to enable private security agencies to supplement the task of the state police forces, but only three state governments, Punjab, Gujarat and Maharashtra have accepted the rules under this act," said Captain Ravee, CEO, Fireball Group.

Captain Ravee, who also runs OSSIM, a security and intelligence education and training institute based in Mohali, says that 80 per cent of the professionals in this industry are from suburban towns. "There is an urgent need to have good infrastructure in place for training aspiring students who will cater efficiently to private security needs," he said.

The private security industry today is not restricted only to men but also offers equal opportunities to women. "Thirty per cent of the employees in my organisation are female and most of them are in the white collared segment," said Priyanka Sehgal, General Manager, Fireball Group. "There is also a fast growth in this industry. I started as a coordinator and now I am General Manager — all in just in few years time," she added.

"Women today are not restricted to a specific sector. They are dynamic and can take responsibility in their stride," said Rupal Sinha, Regional Managing Director (India, Bhutan, Mauritius and Sri Lanka), G4S. "There are around 5,000 female security guards in our organisation. Some of them have been promoted to Branch Managers. Female security guards showcase a better response in the hospitality industry, added Sinha.

Kamala Devi, a security guard at a popular cinema hall in Delhi, proudly displays her uniform saying, "There is no stigma attached to women working as security guards. I work hard, earn well and my family is quite proud of me." "There are plenty of jobs here for women now. This was not always the case. Now there is so much demand for women security guards and officers at cinema halls, hospitals, parlours, and night clubs. After few more years of experience, I will be at the operation level (management)," she beams. ■

Course watch

Several private institutes, attached to security agencies offer courses related to the security industry. These courses have some common features:

Undergraduates, as well as ex-Armed Forces personnel can take up a six-month Vocational Diploma in Security and Intelligence Management (VDSIM).

Graduates are eligible for a one-year Diploma in Security and Intelligence Management (DSIM).

Security personnel who are graduates can enhance their skills by appearing for a one-time Certified Security Professional (CSP) certification exam.