

Making of the Deccan Queen

Restoration of the ZE 28 Narrow Gauge locomotive - article by Mr. Suresh, Sr DME/Diesel, Kazipet



Steam Engines, *the iron horses*, revolutionized the transport sector post renaissance for the past two centuries. It would probably be my generation which had a last glimpse of these black beauties crisscrossing the vast expanse of this country, moving millions of people and material. The men who maintained these locomotives have retired except for the handful of staffers who still talk of the old glory of these mammoth relics.

These engineering marvels have now become heritage with antique value and a proud collectors' item. Most of them are seen in rail museums and are exhibits at important Railway stations.

Falling in line with some of the Railways, which have made progress in reviving and re-commissioning the condemned locomotives for heritage value, Secunderabad Division took up the task of identifying one such locomotive for commissioning.

Pursuing the task of locating one loco, various Zonal Railways were contacted and South Eastern Railway responded positively. Some Narrow Gauge steam locomotive which were working in Baripada Steam shed in Adra Division of the South Eastern Railway, were learnt to have been condemned. Detailed information was available after consulting Sr.DME/Adra of South Eastern Railway that they were lying in a remote location in Adra Division.



These locos were found lined up in an old yard overgrown with rank vegetation, without rail approach. For moving this locomotive, the task of clearing overgrown bushes, providing rail access to this locomotive and then loading on to a BFR had to be organized.

Sr.DME/ADRA & the Engineering Branch of ADRA Division took up the task & loaded the steam engine for onward transmission to Diesel Shed, Kazipet. The efforts of Sr.DME/Adra and his staff in providing rail access and loading the engine needs special mention.

When the locomotive arrived at Diesel Loco Shed, Kazipet, what we saw, didn't leave us too sanguine about the entire idea of commissioning the locomotive. This loco was bereft of link motion, boiler mountings, fittings, suspension springs et al. What arrived was a bare boiler on a frame resting on wheels with a dilapidated tender. The Photographs may explain better.



The locomotive was a ZE class, commissioned in the year 1950 with 2-8-2, wheel arrangement. The engine weighed 35 tons and the tender weighed 10 tons. This loco was condemned in the year 1995. Since then it was left exposed to the vagaries of nature.



The task of making good the missing items became the major obstacle to get along with the Project. But for the dedicated efforts by a group of staff who went scouting across the country, we would not have been able to make good many of the items that were required to commission this locomotive. Among those who helped us were LW/Per and Adra Division.

We sincerely acknowledge the kind gesture of the Officers of Loco Works/Perambur & Adra Division, who rendered material assistance without any hesitation. Otherwise, the entire progress of the work would have completely stalled. Once materials were made available, further progress of assembling this locomotive was taken up on a war footing and locomotive was assembled and commissioned within a short spell of one month.



The concerted effort of a group of steam surplus staff alongwith Sri T.Venugopal, JE-I and Sri Robert John, JE-I(erstwhile supervisors' of bygone steam era), it would not have been possible to bring back this locomotive alive again. Their dedication and unstinted devotion to commission this locomotive will go a long way to keep the flag of Diesel Loco Shed, Kazipet flying higher.

