

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON RAILWAYS  
(2005-06)**

**FOURTEENTH LOK SABHA**

**MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS  
(RAILWAY BOARD)**

**[Action taken by the Government on the recommendations/  
observations contained in the 4<sup>th</sup> Report of the Standing  
Committee on Railways (Fourteenth Lok Sabha)  
on 'Passenger Amenities']**

**FIFTEENTH REPORT**



**LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT  
NEW DELHI**

November, 2005/Agrahayana, 1927 (Saka)

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*Presented to Lok Sabha on 24.11.2005  
Laid in Rajya Sabha on 25.11.2005*



**LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT  
NEW DELHI**

November, 2005/Agrahayana, 1927 (Saka)

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## **STANDING COMMITTEE ON RAILWAY (2005-06)**

**Shri Basudeb Acharia                      -                      Chairman**

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3. Shri Dharendra Agarwal
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#### **LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT**

- |                           |   |                         |
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| 2. Dr.(Smt.) P.K. Sandhu  | - | Additional Secretary    |
| 3. Shri A.K. Singh        | - | Joint Secretary         |
| 4. Shri V.S. Negi         | - | Director                |
| 5. Smt Archana Srivastava | - | Sr. Executive Assistant |

## **INTRODUCTION**

I, the Chairman of the Standing Committee on Railways (2005-06), having been authorized by the Committee to present the Report on their behalf, present this Fifteenth Report of the Committee on Action Taken by the Government on the Recommendations/Observations contained in the Fourth Report of the Standing Committee on Railways (2004-05) on 'Passenger Amenities'.

2. The Fourth Report was presented to Lok Sabha on 10.12.2004 and it contained 28 recommendations/observations. The Ministry of Railways have furnished their Action Taken Replies on all the recommendations/observations on 22.03.2005.

3. The Committee considered and adopted the Draft Action Taken Report at their sitting held on 08.11.2005.

4. An analysis of the action taken by the Government on the recommendations/observations contained in the Fourth Report of the Standing Committee on Railways (2004-05) Fourteenth Lok Sabha is given in Appendix-II.

NEW DELHI;  
November, 2005  
Agrahayana, 1927 Saka

**BASUDEB ACHARIA**  
**Chairman,**  
**Standing Committee on Railways**

## CHAPTER I

## REPORT

This Report of the Committee deals with the Action Taken by the Government on the recommendations/observations contained in the Fourth Report of the Standing Committee on Railways (2004) on 'Passenger Amenities' which was presented in Lok Sabha on 10.12.2004.

2. Action Taken Notes have been received from the Government in respect of all the 28 recommendations/observations contained in the Report. These have been broadly categorized as follows:-

- (i) Recommendations/Observations which have been accepted by the Government – Para Nos. 126, 127, 128, 129, 132, 133, 134, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 145, 146, 151 and 152.
- (ii) Recommendations/Observations which the Committee do not desire to pursue in view of the Government's replies – Para Nos. 130, 131, 142, 143, 144, 147, 148, 149 and 150.
- (iii) Recommendations/Observations in respect of which replies of the Government have not been accepted by the Committee – Para No. 125.
- (iv) Recommendations/Observations in respect of which final replies are still awaited – Nil.

3. The Committee will now deal with the Action Taken by Government on some of their Recommendations/Observations.

GUIDELINES GOVERNING PASSENGER AMENITIES  
(Para No. 125)

4. The Committee had noted in the aforesaid paragraph that the guidelines governing passenger amenities issued in 1952 were reviewed by the Railways for the first time in the year 1995 and the Ministry of Railways had issued revised guidelines under which the facilities which were operationally required and were an essential feature of the infrastructure of station such as booking office, platforms,

platform shelter, lighting etc. were excluded from the list of passenger amenities and termed as 'infrastructure facilities'. The facilities provided over and above that infrastructure facility were covered under the passenger amenity. As some deficiencies were still found in the 1995 guidelines, the Ministry of Railways had made a further revision of the guidelines in 1999 to overcome these deficiencies and issued revised guidelines classifying the facilities to be provided at stations into three categories viz. 'Minimum Essential Amenities', 'Recommended Amenities' and 'Desirable Amenities'. Since then the Railways have been following the guidelines of 1999 till date while providing passenger amenities. However, the Committee were informed that further revision of these guidelines were made in 2003. The Committee were of the opinion that in view of the change in living standard of people at large and technology developments the guidelines should be updated and reviewed regularly so that any deficiency occurring in the guidelines with the fast changing time could be rectified immediately.

5. In their Action Taken Reply, the Ministry of Railways have stated:-

"With a view to overcome the deficiencies and also to meet the present day passengers expectations for visible, qualitative and effective improvements on amenities provided at the stations, Railways in 1999 reviewed the guidelines of 1995 followed by further revision in 2003.

Indian Railways has more than 8000 stations. It has always been the endeavour of the Railways to provide adequate amenities to the passengers at the stations. Certain amenities are provided at the time of construction of new stations based on anticipated traffic. Amenities are further augmented from time to time based on the needs and expectations of the traveling public and the availability of funds.

Regarding regular update and review of extant guidelines, it is to be mentioned that such review is being carried out periodically as warranted. The thrust is on providing amenities at various stations as per laid down norms. More frequent changes of norms may complicate the implementation and monitoring process."

6. The Committee had opined that in view of the change in the living standard of people and technological developments the guidelines governing passenger amenities should be updated and reviewed regularly so that any deficiency occurring with the fast changing time could be rectified immediately. The Ministry of Railways in their action taken reply have inter-alia stated that regular update and review of the extant guidelines is carried out periodically as warranted and more frequent changes of norms may complicate the implementation and monitoring process. While not agreeing with the Ministry's contention that the frequent change of norms may complicate the implementation and monitoring process, the Committee stress that the existing guidelines be reviewed at regular intervals of about five years so as to meet the passengers expectations in the fast changing time.

#### DISPLAY OF STATION CATEGORY

(Para No. 129)

7. The Committee had found that on number of occasions the basic amenities such as drinking water taps, lights, fans etc. are not functional in trains and at stations. At the same time the passengers are unaware of the facilities/amenities which are actually sanctioned or available at that particular station and the authority with whom the complaint can be lodged for rectification. The Committee had, therefore, desired that category of stations should be displayed appropriately at stations through signboards indicating the sanctioned list of facilities/amenities and those which are available together with the name, designation, telephone number of the officer responsible and accountable for maintaining those amenities. They were of the firm view that this practice will make the passengers aware of the various amenities which they are entitled to and help them to procure the same.



8. In their Action Taken Reply, the Ministry of Railways have stated:-

“Zonal railways have been advised that the list of amenities and facilities available at the stations be displayed at a prominent location in the station premises.”

9. The Committee had desired that the category of particular station should be displayed appropriately through signboards alongwith the sanctioned list of facilities/amenities available at the station and name, designation and telephone number of the officer liable for maintaining these amenities. The Committee in the action taken reply find that the Ministry of Railways have now advised Zonal Railways to take appropriate action in this regard. The Committee desire that the zone-wise implementation status of the directions issued by the Railway Board be intimated to them.

#### TATKAL RESERVATION SCHEME (Para No. 134)

10. The Committee were informed that the facility of ‘Tatkal Reservation’ which was available on 110 Mail/Express trains in nominated classes only was being extended to all the trains by 14 November, 2004. The Committee had noted that of late the charges for tatkal reservation had been raised drastically to Rs.150/- and Rs.300/- for sleeper class and first class respectively. The Committee had desired to know the logic in drastic and abrupt raising of the charges for ‘Tatkal Reservation.’ They would also like to be apprised of the status of extension of the scheme to other trains.

11. In their Action Taken Reply, the Ministry of Railways have stated:-

“The Tatkal Reservation Scheme, which was first introduced in December, 1997 had a number of shortcomings like availability of this scheme in limited number of trains, stringent condition of issuing of ticket on the authority of Identity Card and carrying the same proof during journey accommodation going vacant and

its misuse etc. To remove these shortcomings and to make this scheme more user friendly it was decided to revise this scheme completely. Accordingly, Tatkal Scheme was revised and issued in August 2004. One of the major change made in this scheme was that the condition of production of proof of identity by the passenger booth at the time of booking ticket and also during the journey has been removed. In order to prevent the misuse of this facility by unscrupulous elements, the tatkal charges had to be enhanced during peak rush period when there is a great demand for reservations. The scheme has already been extended in almost all the trains. A few trains left will be covered within this month itself i.e. January, 2005. It may be mentioned that there is a positive response from the users for the new Tatkal Scheme."

12. The Committee in the above paragraph had noted inter-alia that the 'Tatkal Reservation Scheme' available on 110 mail/express trains, is being extended to all the trains by 14<sup>th</sup> November, 2004. They desired to be apprised of the status of the extension of scheme to other trains. The Ministry of Railways in their action taken reply have stated that the 'Tatkal Reservation Scheme' introduced in December 1997 had a number of shortcomings and to remove those shortcomings and also to make the scheme more user friendly, the scheme was revised in August 2004. The Ministry also stated that the scheme has already been extended to almost all the trains and a few trains left will be covered by January 2005. The Committee note that in Metropolitan cities most of the tickets under 'Tatkal Reservation Scheme' are booked by the agents/touts particularly and genuine passengers including the Members of Parliament are denied of these tickets when approached being exhausted. Further they are astonished to find that the agents/touts are selling the tatkal tickets on payment of higher amount to the passengers. The Committee, therefore, disapprove the manner in which such a sensitive issue is dealt with by the Railways and desire that concrete steps be taken to ensure that the scheme is not misused by unscrupulous elements. They also recommend that wherever there is a long queue before the Tatkal Reservation

Counters, additional windows may be opened to avoid inconvenience to the passengers.

ENQUIRY SYSTEM  
(Para No. 135)

13. In this paragraph, the Committee had noted that the enquiry system consisting of Public Address System, Electronic Train Display Board, Auto Answering System, Interactive Voice Response System (IVRS), National Train Enquiry System (NTEs) and the Staff manning the enquiry counters play a vital role in enhancing the customer friendly image of Railways. However, the behaviour of front line staff at the enquiry booths were often found to be improper to the extent of being, rude and non-cooperative at times. Sometimes the information given by them are also found to be incorrect. The Committee found that 9 per cent of the complaints received were regarding improper behaviour of the Railway staff and 7 per cent were regarding the enquiry. Although to improve the enquiry system by minimizing the human interface, though Railway have started computerized enquiry system and non telephone based enquiry system is also being planned, yet the Committee opined that the human factor can not be eliminated completely. The Committee had, therefore, stressed that the front line staff manning the enquiry booths must be imparted training for effecting improvement in their behavior/attitude before being deployed to man these counters so that they are available at the counters alert with updated information, well behaved, helpful and courteous in their approach while dealing with customers. The Committee had also emphasized that at 'A', 'B', 'C' category stations enquiry system should function round the clock and at the same time more telephone lines should be provided at the enquiry offices so that the public in general and passengers in particular may not face inconvenience.

14. In their Action Taken Reply, the Ministry of Railways have stated:-

"The complaints regarding enquiry both face to face and telephone, are mainly on account of non-dissemination of correct and updated information. Improper and non-cooperative behaviour of the frontline staff has also been a cause of concern. In order to reduce the human interface the Railways are setting up Integrated Train enquiry System (ITES) in all the telecom circles of the country with

mega IVRS in each telecom circle equipped with large number of telephone lines catering to rail enquiry needs of the whole circle round the clock. Besides this, training is also imparted to the staff found deficient in working knowledge and courtesy. In addition, a new system of on-job-training to frontline staff is being developed for a number of important stations so as to train such staff in dealing appropriately with the passengers."

15. The enquiry system and the staff manning the enquiry counters play a vital role in enhancing the image of Railways. Generally it is found that the behaviour of front line staff are improper, rude and non-cooperative and the information aired through them are also found to be incorrect. The Committee had, therefore, stressed that the frontline staff manning the enquiry booths be imparted training for improvement in their behaviour/attitude before being deployed to man these counters. The Committee had also emphasized upon the functioning of enquiry system round the clock at A, B, C category stations.

The Committee note that certain steps are being initiated by the Ministry of Railways in this direction. However, they stress that the training should be a continuous process and the same be imparted to the staff manning the enquiry counters at regular intervals.

#### CLEANLINESS (Para No. 138)

16. The Committee noticed that the Indian Railway carries over 13 million passengers daily. The cleanliness was supposed to be checked strictly at different levels from the supervisors in charge at the stations to officers of different departments located at stations, divisions or headquarters. However, the cleanliness in trains and at stations was not maintained properly. Given the mammoth size of the Railways, it is not physically possible for the Railway Board to verify and check each and every station and train. Nevertheless, the Committee had desired that a system of random checking by special inspection teams might be conceived at the Railway Board level and based on the feed back of reports of those

teams, corrective measures might be taken to improve the cleanliness at stations as well as in trains. They had urged the Railways to extend further the innovative and mechanized cleaning method of Ratlam type to other stations as well at the earliest. They had emphasised that control discharge type and modular type toilets might be installed in new coaches and in coaches which were sent to the coaching depots for maintenance. The Committee had also recommended that manual & physical cleaning of tracks at stations, platforms and trains might be carried out regularly till the aforementioned systems were installed. They had also desired that cleanliness should be ensured by spraying of bleaching powder etc. so that no stench was there. Special attention should be given towards the cleanliness as well as maintenance of the toilets. Since the year had been declared as a cleanliness year by the Railways, the Committee had desired that the precincts of the Railway Stations including the tracks be kept thoroughly neat and clean as that it would provide desirable environment to the tourists/passengers from all over the world.

17. In their Action Taken Reply, the Ministry of Railways have stated:-

At Stations:-

“Cleanliness is a continuous process and all out efforts are being made to ensure a satisfactory level of sanitation at stations. With a view to improve the standard of cleanliness in Railway premises and on trains, a number of initiatives have been taken which include introduction of mechanized cleaning, provision of washable aprons, provision of ‘Pay & Use’ toilets, special drives etc. Besides this, there is a long established system of conducting inspections by various officers at the railway stations to monitor cleanliness. These inspections range from the level of supervisors to senior officers. The purpose of inspections is not only to ensure regular cleanliness but also to identify weak areas and take remedial measures. Moreover, various railways also undertake drives from time to time particularly during rush seasons to have greater impact. Inter division cleanliness competition scheme has also been launched where the stations will be awarded points in selected aspects of cleanliness and the division obtaining maximum points will be awarded.

In Trains:-

18. Instructions have been issued by Railway Board to set up one Clean Train Station on Ratlam pattern in each Railway within the current financial year i.e. 2004-05. Further, as per integrated Railway Modernisation Plan 2005-2010, issued in November 2004, 50 more Clean Train Station shall be set up in the next 5 years to improve the general cleanliness of trains.

Indian Railways have also embarked upon the project of "Green Toilets" by providing environmental friendly toilet systems in 8000 coaches of Indian Railways in the next five years to ensure that no discharge is made openly to the track.

Also 5000 coaches shall be fitted with controlled discharge toilets to keep the track near the station clean.

In addition, detailed guidelines have been issued to Railways to upgrade the infrastructure for improper hygiene and cleanliness at terminals during maintenance of coaches."

19. The Committee had recommended that manual and physical cleaning of tracks at stations, platforms and trains may be carried out regularly till the innovative and mechanized cleaning method of Ratlam/Bhubaneswar type, coaches with control discharge type and modular type toilets are installed. The Committee had desired that a system of random checking by special inspection teams may be conceived at the Railway Board level, so that the cleanliness is ensured at stations premises as well as on trains.

The Committee note that certain steps have been taken by the Railways for ensuring cleanliness at stations and on trains as well. However, they are of the view that upkeep of cleanliness is a continuous process and requires regular monitoring with multiple checks conducted at different levels. Hence they desire that a system of random checking by special inspection teams may be conceived, work areas be identified

and corrective measures be taken to maintain and improve cleanliness levels both at stations and on trains.

VACANCIES IN THE CATEGORY OF SAFAIWALAS

(Para No. 139)

20. In the above paragraph the Committee had found that due to shortage of 'safaiwalas', the cleanliness on the stations premises and in trains were hampered considerably. The Committee therefore, recommended that vacancies in the category of 'safaiwalas' be filled up on priority basis so that the cleanliness may not suffer further.

21. In their action taken reply the Ministry of Railways have inter-alia stated that instructions have been issued to General Managers of all Zonal Railways for filling up of vacancies of 'Safaiwalas' immediately. In exigencies of work they are also empowered to engage substitutes against vacant posts of 'Safaiwalas'.

22. After considering the action taken reply, the Committee desire that the vacancies of 'Safaiwalas' filled up Zone-wise and also the substitute 'safaiwalas' engaged against the vacant post during the year 2005 so far be placed before them at the earliest.

WAITING ROOMS AT STATIONS

(Para No. 141)

23. In the above paragraph the Committee had noted that waiting rooms at stations lack basic facilities/amenities and if at all these amenities are available, they are inoperative. The Committee had recommended that the stations Managers may be made accountable for providing/ maintaining the amenities in the waiting rooms and any lapse on this account be taken up seriously.

24. In their action taken reply the Ministry have stated that Zonal Railways have been suitably advised about compliance of the recommendation of the Committee.

25. The Committee desire that the status of the compliance of the Railway Board advice/instruction by each Zonal Railways be communicated to them.



## CHAPTER II

### RECOMMENDATIONS/OBSERVATIONS THAT HAVE BEEN ACCEPTED BY THE GOVERNMENT

(Para No. 126)

The Committee had found that under the extant guidelines, Railways had categorized their entire 8018 stations into 6 categories (category 'A' to 'F') on the basis of the passenger earnings to provide the amenities on that particular station. The yardstick for providing the facilities was linked with the category of station. The Committee were informed during the evidence that the Railways transport 60 per cent of total Railway passengers every day on Suburban Railways, that is why Railways had taken into account the annual passenger earnings as a guiding factor while going for the 1999 circular that categorizes the stations. Though the passenger earnings of some stations might not be substantial or upto the requisite level to place a particular station in a higher category, the Committee were of the view that factors like geographical location, religious importance and commercial significance of the place might be considered while deciding the categorization. Similarly, there were other categories also like the places where educational institutes for specialized studies were located in remote areas and the suburban stations where the number of passengers were more but the earnings were less due to various concessions provided, such stations also require desired level of amenities because they were frequently used by a large number of passengers during peak hours/ periods. Hence, the Committee were of the view that the categorization of stations might not be done merely on the basis of the earnings but the relative importance of station such as number of tickets sold at that station also be duly considered while making such categorizations. The Committee would like to be apprised of the steps taken in this regard.

In their Action Taken Reply, the Ministry of Railways have stated:-

“Though categorization of stations into A to F category has been done on the basis of the annual passenger earnings of the station, the stations of tourist importance, important junction stations are kept in category B even if these stations do not fulfill earning criteria. The power has been given to the General Managers to put such stations in ‘B’ category. Moreover, the norms for quantum of various amenities to be provided at each category of stations has been linked to the number of passengers handled at that station. It will thus be appreciated that while categorizing the stations and providing various passenger amenities, the earnings, number of passengers handled and the importance of the station is adequately taken into consideration.

(Para No. 127)

The Committee had noted that more than 90 per cent of the stations are in ‘E’ & ‘F’ category. Those stations were used mostly by the rural people/people residing in remote areas. Moreover, the stoppage of train at those stations was also very less and for short time. Besides, usually the passengers did not board the train instead they only got down at those stations as the duration of stoppage was very less, with the result the passenger earnings from such stations is very less though number of passengers using those stations was much more. Taking into account that the Railways were the service providers, the Committee had opined that larger sections of passengers should get satisfactory amenities at all stations. Keeping that in view, the Committee had desired that at least basic facilities like water coolers, FOBs, platform shelters, waiting hall, announcement system in English, Hindi and regional languages about arrival/departure schedule of trains in both E and F category stations and some other facilities at ‘F’ category stations such as seating arrangements, lavatories, urinals, fans etc. might be provided at those stations on priority basis. They had also impressed upon the Ministry to chalk out an action plan for upgradation of those stations over a given period of time

depending on usage of those station by passengers, to a higher category and provide amenities accordingly.

In their Action Taken Reply, the Ministry of Railways have stated:-

“Norms have been laid down for provision of Minimum Essential Amenities (MEA) for various categories of stations, based on passenger traffic earnings at the station(s). ‘E’ category stations are the stations with earnings less than Rs. 1 cr. per annum and ‘F’ category stations are Halts. Basic amenities like drinking water, waiting hall, seating arrangements, shady trees, urinal and latrine, rail level platform and light wherever power supply exists, are being provided at ‘E’ and ‘F’ category of stations. Norms have also been laid down for “Recommended Amenities” which is a factor of passenger traffic at the station and railway has been endeavouring to provide the “Recommended Amenities” also at various stations in a phased manner as per the availability of funds. Necessary instructions to zonal railway in this regard already exist.”

#### MODEL STATIONS (Para No. 128)

The Committee had noted that in 1999 the Ministry of Railways had selected 61 stations as model stations in different Zones to provide higher level of passenger facilities. They had appreciated that as of now 317 stations had been selected in various Zones to be developed as model stations by March 2008, so that they might function as trend setters for other stations for the purpose of providing passenger amenities. In that regard Railways had prepared an action plan also. The Committee had been apprised that so far 61 stations had been provided with upgraded amenities. The criteria adopted for selection of those model stations depends on the importance and significance of the station rather than the category of the station. The Committee had, however, felt that there could be many more aspects also such as population growth, geographical location and educational significance in determining the criteria for selection of model stations. They had urged the Ministry to review and make the basis/criteria more elaborate, transparent with well defined parameters in regard to the selection of Model stations. They

had also desired that the development work of the remaining selected model stations be taken on priority basis by fixing Zone-wise targets for each year so that maximum number of those stations could be developed much before the targeted date of March, 2008. The Committee had also emphasised that in the case of those stations which would be categorized afresh as model station, the infrastructure/facilities should be developed within a period of two years.

The Committee had also noted that every year new stations were being included in the list of model stations. They had, therefore emphasized that the amenities on the stations selected earlier as model station should be provided in a time bound manner.

In their Action Taken Reply, the Ministry of Railways have stated:-

"The suggestion of the Committee regarding criteria to be adopted for selection of model stations will be kept in view while making deliberations on the subject. As regards completion of development work of the remaining selected model stations to be taken up on priority basis so that maximum number of these stations can be developed much before the target date of March, 2008, all efforts will be made to complete the works as expeditiously as possible."

#### DISPLAY OF STATION CATEGORY

(Para No. 129)

7. The Committee had found that on number of occasions the basic amenities such as drinking water taps, lights, fans etc. are not functional in trains and at stations. At the same time the passengers are unaware of the facilities/amenities which are actually sanctioned or available at that particular station and the authority with whom the complaint can be lodged for rectification. The Committee had, therefore, desired that category of stations should be displayed appropriately at stations through signboards indicating the sanctioned list of facilities/amenities and those which are available together with the name, designation, telephone number of the officer responsible and accountable for maintaining those amenities. They were

of the firm view that this practice will make the passengers aware of the various amenities which they are entitled to and help them to procure the same.

8. In their Action Taken Reply, the Ministry of Railways have stated:-

“Zonal railways have been advised that the list of amenities and facilities available at the stations be displayed at a prominent location in the station premises.”

TICKETING  
(Para No. 132)

During oral evidence, the Committee were informed that internet kiosk system for ticketing had been introduced in 2001-02 in more than 100 major cities. As on date those were functioning at 120 locations all over the country and it had become quite popular now. Nearly 3500 passengers were using that facility everyday. The ticket was delivered to the person by courier and if one happens to be in Delhi he could also collect from one of the nominated counters at Delhi. The Committee were further informed that this system was well hailed by the users and there was a popular demand for extension of internet time period from 0400 hours to 2300 hours in place of 0800 hours to 2200 hours. Taking the above facts into account, the Committee had desired that this network might be expanded further to other cities also so that more and more passengers could use that facility rather than waiting in queues for long hours. Keeping in view the popularity of the system they had also urged the Railways to extend the time period of the internet ticketing from 0400 hours till 2300 hours at the earliest.

In their Action Taken Reply, the Ministry of Railways have stated:-

“Reservation on Internet has since been extended to more than 125 cities and is being continuously extended to other parts of the country. Extension of working hours for Internet booking is also proposed.”

(Para No. 133)

The Committee were informed that a pilot project had been initiated in Delhi regarding booking tickets through SMS on Mobiles. They were also apprised that this facility is being extended to other States such as Andhra Pradesh after the success of the pilot project in Delhi. The Committee felt that people have easy access to mobiles in the present times. They were of the opinion that this would not only be the easiest method for the passengers to book the tickets but also would reduce the queues at the booking counters. They, therefore, emphasised that the facility for booking tickets through SMS on mobiles should be extended all over the country at the earliest.

In their Action Taken Reply, the Ministry of Railways have stated:-

“Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) developed and offered Web Service to access booking and inquiry services to all Mobile phone service providers. Till date two service providers have developed and implemented applications for accessing IRCTC's web services and these are M/s Reliance Infocom and M/s HUTCH. Other service providers have also expressed interest and are in the process of developing appropriate Applications. This facility has been extended to most of the states of the country.

(Para No. 134)

The Committee were informed that the facility of 'Tatkal Reservation' which was available on 110 Mail/Express trains in nominated classes only was being extended to all the trains by 14 November, 2004. The Committee had noted that of late the charges for tatkal reservation had been raised drastically to Rs.150/- and Rs.300/- for sleeper class and first class respectively. The Committee had desired to know the logic in drastic and abrupt raising of the charges for 'Tatkal Reservation.' They would also like to be apprised of the status of extension of the scheme to other trains.

In their Action Taken Reply, the Ministry of Railways have stated:-

"The Tatkal Reservation Scheme, which was first introduced in December, 1997 had a number of shortcomings like availability of this scheme in limited number of trains, stringent condition of issuing of ticket on the authority of Identity Card and carrying the same proof during journey accommodation going vacant and its misuse etc. To remove these shortcomings and to make this scheme more user friendly it was decided to revise this scheme completely. Accordingly, Tatkal Scheme was revised and issued in August 2004. One of the major change made in this scheme was that the condition of production of proof of identity by the passenger booth at the time of booking ticket and also during the journey has been removed. In order to prevent the misuse of this facility by unscrupulous elements, the tatkal charges had to be enhanced during peak rush period when there is a great demand for reservations. The scheme has already been extended in almost all the trains. A few trains left will be covered within this month itself i.e. January, 2005. It may be mentioned that there is a positive response from the users for the new Tatkal Scheme."

(Para No. 135)

The enquiry system consisting of Public Address System, Electronic Train Display Board, Auto Answering System, Interactive Voice Response System (IVRS), National Train Enquiry System (NTEs) and the Staff manning the enquiry counters play a vital role in enhancing the customer friendly image of Railways. However, the behaviour of front line staff at the enquiry booths were often found to be improper to the extent of being, rude and non-cooperative at times. Sometimes the information given by them was also found to be incorrect. During the examination of the subject, the Committee were informed that 9 per cent of the complaints received were regarding improper behaviour of the Railway staff and 7 per cent were regarding the enquiry. The Committee had opined that to improve the enquiry system by minimizing the human interface, though computerized enquiry system had been started by the Railways and non telephone based enquiry system was also being planned such as enquiry through website, SMS, Radio, TV etc., yet

the human factor could not be eliminated completely. The Committee had, therefore, stressed that the front line staff manning the enquiry booths must be imparted training for effecting improvement in their behavior/attitude before being deployed to man those counters so that they were available at the counters alert with updated information, well behaved, helpful and courteous in their approach while dealing with customers. The Committee had also emphasized that at 'A', 'B', 'C' category stations enquiry system should function round the clock and at the same time more telephone lines should be provided at the enquiry offices so that the public in general and passengers in particular may not face inconvenience.

In their Action Taken Reply, the Ministry of Railways have stated:-

"The complaints regarding enquiry both face to face and telephone, are mainly on account of non-dissemination of correct and updated information. Improper and non-cooperative behaviours of the frontline staff has also been a cause of concern. In order to reduce the human interface the Railways are setting up Integrated Train enquiry System (ITES) in all the telecom circles of the country with mega IVRS in each telecom circle equipped with large number of telephone lines catering to rail enquiry needs of the whole circle round the clock. Besides this, training is also imparted to the staff found deficient in working knowledge and courtesy. In addition, a new system of on-job-training to frontline staff is being developed for a number of important stations so as to train such staff in dealing appropriately with the passengers."

(Para No. 136)

The Committee had noted that the information aired through the enquiry booths/display boards, voice recording system regarding the arrival/departure time schedule of trains based on the details provided by control office or central enquiry and from operating staff on duty are found to be delayed, incorrect and incomprehensible as the process of transmission of information was very long and passes through many hands before being announced. The voice recording system particularly was so bad that it became difficult to know the exact timings of the



trains. They also found that there was lack of cooperation between the coaching/commercial control staff and the enquiry staff. Besides, the audibility of the announcements made on stations is very poor. The Committee had, therefore, strongly recommended that immediate rectification regarding transmission of information be made and co-operation between the coaching/commercial control staff and enquiry staff enhanced. They had emphasised that all out efforts be made to ensure that display through that system was clear comprehensive, accurate and timely. The Committee had desired that some system should be developed to provide updated information. The arrival and departure of the train should be electronically displayed at all the platforms. They had also stressed that the announcements should not be made hurriedly it should be at a proper pace, accurate and audible to commuters.

In their Action Taken Reply, the Ministry of Railways have stated:-

“In order to enhance coordination between Coaching/Commercial Control staff and enquiry staff and to eliminate the problem of improper transmission of information, a National Train Enquiry System has been developed to provide updated information to all the sub systems. It has been made available in all the control offices where updated position is fed into the computer system. Moreover, a separate project for computerization of train charting in divisional control offices is also in progress which will make the enquiry data almost on line eliminating the present shortcomings.

As there were deficiencies in the present telephone enquiry system (IVRSs) and complaints continued to be received, a new integrated train enquiry system (ITES) has been developed combining the manual and IVRS enquiry systems with 250/500 telephone lines. Two such systems have been installed at Patna & Bangalore recently as pilot projects. All types of enquiry facilities, manual as well as computerized are made available to passengers through the ITES. It is proposed to install such ITES in all the telecom circles in near future so as to cover the whole of Indian Railways.

As regards proper announcements at the railway stations, instructions exist with the Railways for proper upkeep and use of Public Address System, ensuring quality announcements, selection of proper persons, providing adequate training etc. which have been reiterated to the Railways. In addition, more and more computerized systems for announcements are being planned at important stations."

(Para No. 137)

The Committee had found that announcements were made in a very few superfast trains only. They had suggested that a brief announcement should be made in the train about the approaching station with its topography, historical background, cultural, tourist and pilgrimage significance to make the commuters aware about the place even if they were not getting down there and make their journey interesting.

In their Action Taken Reply, the Ministry of Railways have stated:-

"Announcements are not feasible in all trains due to operational and infrastructural constraints. Instructions have been reiterated for incorporating the element of historical, cultural, tourist and pilgrimage significance of important enroute stations while making announcements in those trains where announcements system exists."

(Para No. 138)

The Indian Railway system carries over 1.3 million passengers daily. The cleanliness was supposed to be checked strictly at different levels from the supervisors in charge at the stations to officers of different departments located at stations, divisions or headquarters. However, it was a common experience that the cleanliness in trains and at stations was not maintained properly. Given the mammoth size of the Railways, the Committee did appreciate that it was not physically possible for the Railway Board to verify and check each and every station and train. Nevertheless, the Committee desired that a system of random checking by special inspection teams might be conceived at the Railway Board level and

based on the feed back of reports of those teams, corrective measures might be taken to improve the cleanliness at stations as well as in trains. They had urged the Railways to extend further the innovative and mechanized cleaning method of Ratlam type to other stations as well at the earliest. They had emphasised that control discharge type and modular type toilets might be installed in new coaches and in coaches which were sent to the coaching depots for maintenance. The Committee had also recommended that manual & physical cleaning of tracks at stations, platforms and trains might be carried out regularly till the aforementioned systems were installed. They had also desired that cleanliness should be ensured by spraying of bleaching powder etc. so that no stench was their. Special attention should be given towards the cleanliness as well as maintenance of the toilets. Since this year had been declared as a cleanliness year by the Railways, the Committee had desired that the precincts of the Railway Stations including the tracks be kept thoroughly neat and clean as that would provide desirable environment to the tourists/passengers from all over the world.

In their Action Taken Reply, the Ministry of Railways have stated:-

"Cleanliness at Stations:-

Cleanliness is a continuous process and all out efforts are being made to ensure a satisfactory level of sanitation at stations. With a view to improve the standard of cleanliness in Railway premises and on trains, a number of initiatives have been taken which include introduction of mechanized cleaning, provision of washable aprons, provision of 'Pay & Use'toilets, special drives etc. Besides this, there is a long established system of conducting inspections by various officers at the railway stations to monitor cleanliness. These inspections range from the level of supervisors to senior officers. The purpose of inspections is not only to ensure regular cleanliness but also to identity weak areas and take remedial measures. Moreover, various railways also undertake drives from time to time particularly during rush seasons to have greater impact. Inter division cleanliness competition scheme has also been launched where the stations will be awarded points in

selected aspects of cleanliness and the division obtaining maximum points will be awarded.

#### In Trains:-

Instructions have been issued by Railway Board to set up one Clean Train Station on Ratlam pattern in each Railway within the current financial year i.e. 2004-05. Further, as per integrated Railway Modernisation Plan 2005-2010, issued in November 2004, 50 more Clean Train Station shall be set up in the next 5 years to improve the general cleanliness of trains.

Indian Railways have also embarked upon the project of "Green Toilets" by providing environmental friendly toilet systems in 8000 coaches of Indian Railways in the next five years to ensure that no discharge is made openly to the track.

Also 5000 coaches shall be fitted with controlled discharge toilets to keep the track near the station clean.

In addition, detailed guidelines have been issued to Railways to upgrade the infrastructure for improper hygiene and cleanliness at terminals during maintenance of coaches."

(Para No. 139)

The Committee were also informed that due to shortage of 'safaiwalas' the cleanliness on the station premises and in the trains is hampered considerably. They had, therefore, recommended that the vacancies in the category of 'safaiwalas' might be filled up on priority basis so that the cleanliness might not suffer on that account. They had emphasized that the decision of the Government for automatic creation of posts as soon as the new trains were declared should be implemented forthwith.

In their Action Taken Reply, the Ministry of Railways have stated:-

"Instructions have been issued to General Managers of all Zonal Railways for filling up of vacancies of 'Safaiwalas' immediately. In exigencies of work they are empowered to engage substitutes against vacant posts of 'Safaiwalas'. As regards creation of Posts, the General Managers are empowered to create non-gazetted posts with matching surrender, in consultation with their FA & CAOs."

(Para No. 140)

The Committee were further informed that the response to the 'Pay & Use' toilets at the station premises had been commendable. Considered the fact, the Committee had desired that the Railway should explore more possibilities of setting up of 'Sulabh Sauchalayas' in collaboration with the 'Sulabh International' or any other non-governmental organisation so as to maintain certain level of cleanliness in and around station premises. Apart from that they had stressed that in case of deliberate shirking of work by delinquent employees, punitive or deterrent action must be taken against them.

In their Action Taken Reply, the Ministry of Railways have stated:-

"There has been a concerted and sustained effort to bring about a perceptible improvement in cleanliness. One of the initiatives taken to improve cleanliness is by introduction of 'Pay & Use' scheme of toilets. At present, this facility has already been extended to at about 450 stations. The Ministry of Railways has issued policy guidelines regarding 'Pay & Use' toilets to encourage and facilitate proliferation of the scheme on the Zonal Railways wherever found feasible and justified.

It is informed that suitable disciplinary action is taken against the staff found lacking in performance of cleaning duties."

WAITING ROOM/RETIRING ROOM  
(Para No. 141)

As per the category of station, facilities/amenities were provided at stations. Those facilities include provision of waiting rooms at A, B&D categories of stations. Instructions were there to keep the waiting rooms open round the clock. However, the Committee were informed that sometimes just to avoid the misuse by the miscreants, those rooms were kept under lock and key by the Incharge/Station Manager. It was generally noticed that the waiting rooms at stations lacked basic facilities/amenities and if at all those amenities were available, they were inoperative. The Committee had, therefore, desired that the Station Managers might be made accountable for providing/maintaining the amenities in the waiting rooms and any lapse on that account should be taken up seriously.

In their Action Taken Reply, the Ministry of Railways have stated:-

“Zonal railways have been suitably advised about compliance of the recommendation of the Committee.”

INDIAN RAILWAY CATERING AND TOURISM CORPORATION (IRCTC)  
(Para No. 145)

IRCTC had been established in 2001 to take care of the catering activities of Indian Railways and it had taken over all catering activities of Indian Railway either franchised or departmental alongwith the staff which was deployed at the time of take over. IRCTC emphasised that all the staffers from private caterers besides the staff taken over from the department by IRCTC should be imparted professional training in sanitation and hygiene.

The Committee had noted that still a dual system of catering exists in the railways. The IRCTC was further engaging private contractors for fulfilling the catering demands of the Indian Railways. There were so many complaints received by the Railways against those private contractors regarding the quality and quantity of the foodstuff provided by those contractors. The Committee had further

observed that under the extant policy thousands of static and mobile catering workers, who were taken over by the IRCTC at the time of taking over of Railway catering activity, were likely to be rendered surplus on reversion to Railways. The Committee had, therefore, emphasized that the earlier system of dual catering should continue. They had also stressed that extant policy with regard to awarding of contracts by IRCTC to private operators should be reviewed at the earliest. The Committee had urged the Ministry to check regularly the quality of food served in the trains as well as at stations, besides the prices of the food items supplied by those contractors should be regulated and monitored regularly so that the food items were not overpriced. Special effort should be made to ensure that those were prepared in hygienic condition and the quality was not allowed to suffer at any cost. The Committee had also desired that vending machines for beverages should be installed at 'A' and 'B' stations.

In their Action Taken Reply, the Ministry of Railways have stated:-

"Indian Railway and Tourism Corporation Ltd. (IRCTC) has been formed to function as an extended arm of Indian Railways to upgrade, professionalise and manage the catering and hospitality services at stations, on trains and other locations. It also seeks to promote domestic and international tourism through development of budget hotels, special tour packages etc. The main objective of the government to form the IRCTC is to get these services functional through public private partnership and to reduce liabilities of the Railways.

Right from the inception of railways, catering services have been traditionally managed with dual system and majority of the services are managed by private licensees. After careful evaluation and comparison of privately managed and departmentally managed catering, the government took a conscious policy decision for freezing departmental catering activity. It has been government policy, from 1992 that 'In future no catering/vending units should be taken up for departmental management and all the new units both static and mobile should be managed by Licensees only'. Further 1992 policy states that although existing departmental units could be privatized keeping in view the various problems

involved, mostly the staff problem, the privatization has to be undertaken in phases. Catering policy of 2000 also stipulates that 'In future no catering/vending units should be taken up for departmental management and Licensees should manage the services'. Catering policy of 2004 also reiterates that 'In future no catering/vending units should be taken up for departmental management and Licensees should manage the services'.

IRCTC alongwith private catering will continue to manage departmental catering operation, upgrade and make them financially sound by any retrenchment of departmental staff and consequent to the de-departmentalization of catering units, the existing staff will be re-deployed suitably. Further, IRCTC have generated approximate 6682 number of employment opportunities by licensing out the catering units over Indian Railways. In addition, there are employment opportunities in Train side vending and sale of specific items at stations also.

Regarding improvement and quality of food, IRCTC has initiated necessary steps to bring out improvement in services, personal hygiene, upgradation of base kitchen and over all quality of services. Since June-2002, IRCTC has formulated a manual on 'Hygiene and Quality Standard' which is part of all bid documents and is under overall implementation by the private contractors. IRCTC has also arranged training programme for licensee and departmental staff. Handbook for catering staff for Personal and Service hygiene has been prepared for the guidance of field staff. 1327 number of departmental staff have been given training at reputed national and regional Training Institutes. In addition 125 number of cooks, including from Parliament House, have been trained.

Improvement of quality of food is a continuous process and IRCTC has initiated several long term measures such as design of one prototype of pantry car to improve food quality and hygiene. Some of the catering units managed under IRCTC have also been certified as ISO units. Further, IRCTC managed units are also subject to inspection of various authorities in railways and IRCTC also undertakes inspections on catering activities at station and on board trains. Detailed follow up action is initiated on shortcoming noticed.



As regards beverages, till date, IRCTC has awarded licences for 113 number of Automatic Vending Machines (AVMs) at class A & B stations. Since, this is an ongoing process, IRCTC will award more licences for AVMs at class A & B stations".

(Para No. 146)

The Committee had found that out of 680 Mail Express trains pantry car had been made available on 234 trains only. During the evidence it was submitted that all the 17 Sampark Kranti Express Trains would also be provided with pantry cars. They were also informed that as per the number of coaches manufactured every year provision of pantry cars were made accordingly. The Committee had desired that Ministry of Railways should make efforts to enhance manufacture of pantry coaches so that at least pantry cars might be made available in all long distance trains, where journey of more than 15 hours was involved. They had also emphasised that necessary steps might be taken at the earliest in order to provide hygienic food with quality assurance to the passengers of long distance trains rather than providing food from train side vending.

In their Action Taken Reply, the Ministry of Railways have stated:-

"Railways provide catering services to the passengers through static catering units as far as possible. Wherever it is not possible to provide satisfactory services through static catering units certain criteria are laid down for providing pantry cars in mail/express trains, other than Rajdhani Express trains where it is a part of train composition, subject to availability of pantry cars. These criteria are:-

- \* Pantry cars are attached in long distance Mail/Express trains covering a journey of more than 24 hours each way.
- \* At least 10 sleeper class coaches are in the trains formation.
- \* At least 200 meals comprising lunch or dinner for super-fast trains and 150 meals for mail/express trains are expected to be served.

- \* There are less number of stoppages where it is not possible to provide catering services through static units enroute, etc.

As regards, allotment of pantry cars, 26 nos. of pantry cars were produced and allotted during 2003-04 and 61 nos. of pantry cars planned for production during 2004-05 and 44 non. Of pantry cars have been projected for production for the year 2004-05. So far as Sampark Kranti Express trains are concerned, all the Sampark Kranti trains except Kathgodam Sampark Kranti have been allotted pantry cars and the trains are being introduced with pantry car since the date of their introduction.

Service of hygienic food with quality assurance to the passengers of long distance trains is ensured through regular inspections to monitor quality of food with a view to provide hygienic food through pantry cars as well as train side vending."

(Para No. 151)

The Committee were informed that in order to enhance the life of a coach rake, renovation was done at Bhopal after 10 or 12 years of use which was called as mid-life rehabilitation of coaches. That gives a lease of another 15 years' life for the coach. Roughly 350 coaches of Mail/Express Trains per year were sent to Bhopal for renovation, as that was the capacity. Railways had now proposed to increase it to 425. That renovation was carried out only in case of the coaches of long distance trains. The coaches of passenger trains were being taken care of locally by Intermediate Overhaul (IOH) and Periodical Overhaul (POH) which was done after every 18 months. The Committee had noted that the coaches of the long distance trains and the passenger trains got renovation/ overhauling but there was no set procedure/pattern for renovation/overhauling of coaches of local trains. The Committee had, therefore, desired that atleast IOH/POH of the coaches of the local/suburban trains might be carried out regularly.

In their Action Taken Reply, the Ministry of Railways have stated:-

“Coaches running in local/passenger trains are overhauled every 18 months whereas these running in Express trains are overhauled every 12 months.

For enhancing the reliability, availability and level of passenger amenities of a coach, mid life rehabilitation (MLR) of coaches is being done between 12-15 years of age. As against approximate requirement of 1600 midlife rehabilitation, the present capacity is only 450. further expansion to 1000 coach per year capacity is under examination.”

AUTOMATIC TELLER MACHINE  
(Para No. 152)

The Committee had noted that Automatic Teller Machines(ATMs) were installed at 40 important stations to facilitate the passengers to withdrew cash through their credit cards and perform other activities. They were informed that ATMs were installed and operated by reputed Banks which were selected through press advertisements. The Committee had urged the Ministry to take steps to tie up with various Nationalized/Private Banks to extend that facility of ATMs to the passengers at all the other important stations as well at the earliest.

In their Action Taken Reply, the Ministry of Railways have stated:-

“Installation of Automatic Teller Machines (ATMs) on zonal railways and its proliferation is a continuous process. In this direction, the following steps have been taken and the scheme liberalized:-

- (i) In the original scheme for installation of ATMs, there was a condition that only those Banks were allowed to install ATMs who had at least 3 ATMs operating in the city serving the station where it is proposed to install the machine. This condition has now been waived completely.

- (ii) Earlier ATMs were allowed to be installed only on 'A' class stations. Now this condition has been liberalized and zonal railways have been authorized to take decision to install ATMs at stations other than 'A' class stations also."

### CHAPTER III

#### RECOMMENDATIONS/OBSERVATIONS WHICH THE COMMITTEE DO NOT DESIRE TO PURSUE IN VIEW OF THE GOVERNMENT' REPLIES

##### UTILISATION OF FUNDS

(Para No. 130)

The Committee were constrained to note that for the last several years the funds allocated for passenger amenities were not being utilized fully by the Railways. They were informed by the Ministry of Railways that because of slow progress of work due to contractual problems, delay in finalisation of plans and estimates, difficulty in executing works under traffic conditions, regulation on plan expenditure imposed in the course of the year, the funds could not be utilized fully in some years. With regard to the finalisation of plan and estimates, the Committee were informed that the proposal for passenger amenities like other Plan Heads was scrutinized by different Committees such as Standing Passenger Amenities Committee of Zonal Railway, Standing Committee on Passenger Amenities in Railway Board, Additional Members Committee and at Board level. The Committee had felt that this was a very lengthy process which consumes a lot of time. The planning itself takes a substantial portion of time during the financial year thereby causing delay in completion of projected works resulting in cost and time over runs. The Committee had, therefore, desired that an action plan must be prepared by all Zonal Railways well in advance so that the fund was allotted in time and works completed within the same financial year.

In their Action Taken Reply, the Ministry of Railways have stated:-

"It is a fact that funds utilization against passenger amenities head has been below the targeted level in the last few years due to various factors. However, Railways were impressed upon during the last GMs meeting to expedite the progress of work and to ensure that funds to the extent allocated must be spent in full."

(Para No. 131)

The Committee were apprised that for full utilization of allotted fund, a decision had been taken by Railway Board that henceforth, each Zonal Railway would plan 15 percent to 20 percent more works than what was budgeted during the year and Zonal Railways would be responsible for financial management. By planning excess works the Zonal Railways would fully utilized the funds allotted for passenger amenities. The Committee had appreciated the decision of the Ministry of Railways according to which the responsibility of financial management now rest on the Zonal Railways, which would review the fund utilization status every month rather than every quarter of the year. They were hopeful that under this new methodology the Railways, would be able to spend all the funds allocated to them under the head 'Passenger Amenities' instead of surrendering unutilized funds at the end of the year. They had desired that the directions in this regard might be given to all Zonal Railways and scrupulously implemented so as to complete all the projected works as per the time schedule. The Committee would like to be apprised of the completion status of the projects as well as the utilization of the funds during the financial year.

In their Action Taken Reply, the Ministry of Railways have stated:-

"Board have already instructed all Zonal Railways to ensure full utilization of funds under Plan Head 'Passenger Amenities'. All efforts are being made to complete passenger amenities works in a time bound manner and utilize the funds fully. It is expected that utilization of funds shall be better this year than the average of the performance in previous years."

(Para No. 142)

The Committee had also found that there are no separate ladies retiring room at 'B' & 'D' categories of stations. They were of the view that during late nights and odd hours the women passengers could not relax in the presence of waiting male co-

passengers in the common waiting rooms. They had, therefore, desired that separate ladies retiring rooms be provided in 'B' & 'D' category stations also.

In their Action Taken Reply, the Ministry of Railways have stated:-

"The retiring rooms at railway stations can be availed of by any passenger including lady passengers. Moreover, retiring rooms are allotted full on payment of prescribed charges. At present there are no separate ladies retiring room anywhere on Indian Railways. As such, it is not considered desirable to provide separate rooms for lady passengers at B & D category stations. In case separate retiring room is earmarked for lady passengers, it is most likely to be under-utilized."

#### COMPLAINTS (Para No. 143)

The Committee had observed that there was no proper system of registration of complaints at Railway stations. They were informed that the complaint books were available with the Guards at stations, Superintendent if he was present in train, RPF personnels and in coaches. However, in practice those complaint books were not supplied to the complainants on demand by the railway staff nor the complaint books were available/to be seen in the coaches. Moreover, the procedure for disposal of those complaints was also not transparent. The Committee had, therefore, desired that a system of registering the complaints might be developed at each of the Zonal and Regional level so that every complaint was duly recorded. Further, they had stressed that adequate publicity be made about the availability of complaint books, the manner in which complaint could be lodged, on a display board at a prominent place in each and every coach. They desired that AGM and ADRM who had been appointed as the incharge of public grievance cell in the Zone and Region respectively should review the status of disposal of complaints every month. The Committee had also desired that the status/outcome/action taken on those complaints, may be communicated to the complainants in a time bound manner within three months.

In their Action Taken Reply, the Ministry of Railways have stated:-

"On Indian railways, there is a laid down system of registration of complaints by passengers. At all stations, a complaint cum suggestion book is maintained with the Station Manager/Station Superintendent. In trains, Guards of passenger and Mail/Express trains carry such complaint books. In addition, the Manager of the pantry car is also required to make the complaint book available to passengers on demand. The complaints/suggestions given by the traveling public are duly acknowledged at the time of registration. Each complaint/ suggestion is then investigated/examined properly and a replay is sent to the complainant. The AGMs at Zonal Railways and ADRMs at divisional level function as nodal agencies for public grievances who review the performance and position of public complaints regularly. Even at Railway Board's level, this aspect is emphasized during various meetings which zonal Railways attend in the Board."

#### TRANSFERS (Para No. 144)

The Committee had noted that though the policy of rotational transfer of staff on commercial seats was there but those were not strictly followed in practice. The person deployed on one seat was allowed to continue there for years together. That might develop personal vested interests leading to corruption. Many a times it had been found that the touts operate in connivance with the railway staff. The Committee were of the opinion that the surveillance maintained by the vigilance department needs to be further strengthened. They had emphasised that Railway should ensure that as per the instructions no person was allowed to hold a sensitive post for more than three years and the policy of rotational transfers may be strictly followed in letter and spirit.

In their Action Taken Reply, the Ministry of Railways have stated:-

"In terms of existing instructions, Railway employees holding sensitive posts and who frequently come into contract with public and/or contractors/suppliers are required to be transferred every four years. A comprehensive list of the sensitive



posts for the purpose of periodical transfer was drawn and circulated to the Railways vide letter dated 27.9.89. Instructions regarding periodical transfers have been reiterated to the Railways from time to time. In June 1996 while reiterating the instructions, the Railways were directed that in the first instance staff holding sensitive posts who have stayed continuously in the same post for five years or above, should immediately be transferred from the same. Pursuant to discussion in the meeting with the Standing Committee on the Railways these instructions have been further reiterated vide Board's letter dated 26.11.96.

Special instructions exist that Ticket Checking staff as also other staff in mass contact areas, detected to be indulging in malpractices should be sent on inter-divisional transfer as a matter of policy.

Member (Traffic), Railway Board vide his d. o. letter dated 19.8.04 addressed to General Managers, has issued instructions to shift the staff working on sensitive posts for long duration in the same place, particularly in parcel offices & goods sheds/sidings."

#### FOOT OVER BRIDGES

(Para No. 147)

The foot over bridges (FOB) were provided to connect the platforms with the area having main habitation of the city. The Committee had found that over the years as a result of increase in population, the cities had developed on the other side of the stations, but no extension of FOB connecting other side of the station had been constructed, which causes great inconvenience/ safety hazards to the passengers. They had felt that necessary guidelines in this regard should be issued to all the Zonal Railways that such stations should be identified where the city had developed on the other side while the FOBs had not been extended so far. The Committee had desired that extension of FOB be provided in those identified places on priority basis. They also had desired that the expenditure on FOB might be incurred as an integral part of rail infrastructure and not from 'Passenger Amenities Head'.

The Committee had also observed that at certain stations there were high level platforms and FOBs where it became difficult for the heart patients and handicapped to climb. Similarly, the booking counters were also situated at 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor of the building in some places. They had, therefore, recommended that ramp type FOBs should be provided atleast at the busy stations for the handicapped persons and passengers suffering from heart ailment, arthritis, asthmatic disease etc. Also booking counters for such passengers should be provided at ground floor.

In their Action Taken Reply, the Ministry of Railways have stated:-

"The foot over bridges are provided to connect various platforms with the entry/exist points keeping in view the safety of passengers. Normally, FOBs are provided upto the booking office in the circulating area at all the important stations.

As regards extension of FOBs to other side of station where the city develops on the other side, Railways review the demands on case-to-case basis and sanction the work of second entry, along with provision of booking offices on the other side also, wherever the traffic needs justify the same.

Initially when a FOB is constructed it is charged under Plan Head 'Traffic Facilities'. Only additional FOBs are provided under the Plan Head "Passenger Amenities".

As per the persons with disabilities (EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES, PROTECTION OF RIGHTS AND FULL PARTICIPATION) Act 1995, the slope of the ramp type FOB's should be 1 in 12 or flatter which requires lot of space on platforms. It is not possible for the railways to extend this facility at every station due to space constraints. However, Railways have already been directed to provide ramps wherever feasible subject to availability of funds."

(Para No. 148)

The Committee had also observed that in certain stations the booking windows were provided only at one side of those station after they had been extended or their category had been raised due to increase in population on the other side of the city. They were of the opinion that this causes inconvenience to commuters and might lead to mishappening, accidents or evasion in buying a ticket. They had stressed that Railway should identify such stations Zone-wise and open the booking windows on either side of the stations also. They had also emphasised that in such cities more number of booking offices be set up to facilitate passengers to buy Railway ticket as that would ultimately increase revenue of Railways.

In their Action Taken Reply, the Ministry of Railways have stated:-

“There is already a system of providing booking windows on the other side of the station also as and when there is sizeable increase in the traffic. Infact booking windows have also been opened at many stations on both sides of the stations. However, due to constraints of space and availability of additional staff and funds, it is not feasible to extend this facility at all stations.

As regards opening of additional booking window at various places, it may be stated that it is a regular exercise and additional windows are opened subject to traffic justification.”

#### RAISING OF LEVEL OF PLATFORMS

(Para No. 149)

The Committee had found that due to adoption of uni gauge system in Indian Railways i.e. gauge conversion from NG and MG to BG or due to change in classification of stations or material modification works such as new line works or doublings, at stations the platform level had become lower than even the level of tracks. They had found that this is hazardous for the passengers. They had been informed that instructions had been given that there should be no rail level platforms and at least middle level platforms should be constructed. The Committee

had recommended that the height of the platform should be raised at all the stations on priority basis. They had desired that the expenditure on those works should be incurred from the funds allotted for rail infrastructure rather than from 'Passenger Amenities' head.

In their Action Taken Reply, the Ministry of Railways have stated:-

"Instructions already exist to provide medium level platforms during all new gauge conversion works. These instructions have been extended to all the new works of construction of double lines and new lines, subject to availability of funds. Instruction have also been issued to restore the level of platforms chargeable against the estimates of works wherever the level goes down on account of change of sleepers or lifting of track due to any other reason."

#### COACH MAINTENANCE (Para No. 150)

Every passenger was a valued customer for Railways irrespective of the strata in society from which he came. In fact IIInd class passengers contribute a major portion of Railways income, hence the amenities provided to those passengers had a vital importance. The Committee were informed that there was a well equipped system in place to ensure proper upkeep of those passenger amenities on day to day basis and also complete overhaul on periodic basis. They were also apprised that day to day maintenance of rakes was carried out in washing lines at coaching depots which were equipped with facilities like pit pressurized air, electric charging facility, watering hydrants, lighting arrangements. Further the trains leave washing line only after a detailed check in fully fit condition, ready for service such as all missing fittings were replaced and damaged ones were repaired. However, the Committee had observed that the facilities in II Class/General compartment coaches were ill maintained. It had been noticed that in some of the trains there were no lights/fans or they were not in working condition. These deficiencies could be attributed to lack of maintenance/poor supervision. The Committee had, therefore, recommended that a system of surprise checks by the

SMs/higher officers might be introduced to oversee the maintenance work before the train was brought to the platform and at the stations. That team might also be authorized to fix the responsibility on the delinquent employees in case any lapse was found so that appropriate action could be taken against them.

In their Action Taken Reply, the Ministry of Railways have stated:-

“In order to make railways safer and more responsive to rail users, so that prescribed standards of amenities are made available to all passengers, inspections are carried out by HODs of Mechanical discipline as per the schedule prescribed vide Board's letter No. 98/AM(ME)/inspections dated 10.11.98 viz. minimum three inspections per month by all HODs. These are in addition to inspections conducted by other junior officers.

Each case where a deficiency in service is noticed. Corrective action is taken by Indian Railways. This includes investigation, system improvement, if any, making up the deficiency and fixing up responsibility etc.”

## CHAPTER IV

### RECOMMENDATIONS/OBSERVATIONS IN RESPECT OF WHICH REPLIES OF THE GOVERNMENT HAVE NOT BEEN ACCEPTED BY THE COMMITTEE

#### CATEGORISATION OF STATION (Para No. 125)

The Committee had noted that the guidelines governing passenger amenities issued in 1952 were reviewed by the Railways for the first time in the year 1995 and Ministry of Railways issued revised guidelines under which the facilities which were operationally required and were an essential feature of the infrastructure of station such as booking office, platforms, platform shelter, lighting etc. were excluded from the list of passenger amenities and termed as 'infrastructure facilities'. The facilities provided over and above that infrastructure facility were covered under the passenger amenity. As some deficiencies were found in the guidelines issued in 1995 such as scale/quantum of amenities to be provided, whether the additional facilities as per norms would be a continuous process with growth of passenger traffic etc., the Ministry of Railways had made a further revision of the guidelines in 1999 to overcome these deficiencies and issued revised guidelines classifying the facilities to be provided at stations into three categories viz. 'Minimum Essential Amenities', 'Recommended Amenities' and 'Desirable Amenities'. Since then the Railways were following those guidelines of 1999 till date while providing passenger amenities. However, the Committee were informed during evidence that further revision of those guidelines were made in 2003. The Committee were of the opinion that in view of the change in living standard of people at large and technology developments those guidelines should be updated and reviewed regularly so that any deficiency occurring in the guidelines with the fast changing time could be rectified immediately.

In their Action Taken Reply, the Ministry of Railways have stated:-

“With a view to overcome the deficiencies and also to meet the present day passengers expectations for visible, qualitative and effective improvements on amenities provided at the stations, Railways in 1999 reviewed the guidelines of 1995 followed by further revision in 2003.

Indian Railways has more than 8000 stations. It has always been the endeavours of the Railways to provide adequate amenities to the passengers at the stations. Certain amenities are provided at the time of construction of new stations based on anticipated traffic. Amenities are further augmented from time to time based on the needs and expectations of the traveling public and the availability of funds.

Regarding regular update and review of extant guidelines, it is to be mentioned that such review is being carried out periodically as warranted. The thrust is on providing amenities at various stations as per laid down norms. More frequent changes of norms may complicate the implementation and monitoring process.”

CHAPTER V

RECOMMENDATIONS/OBSERVATIONS IN RESPECT OF WHICH FINAL  
REPLIES OF THE GOVERNMENT ARE STILL AWAITED

NIL

NEW DELHI;  
November, 2005  
Agrahayana, 1927 Saka

BASUDEB ACHARIA  
Chairman,  
Standing Committee on Railways