

STANDING COMMITTEE ON RAILWAYS
(2004)

FOURTEENTH LOK SABHA

MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS
(RAILWAY BOARD)

[Action taken by the Government on the Recommendations/Observations contained in the 17th Report of the Standing Committee on Railways - 2004 (13th Lok Sabha) on 'Railway Recruitment Policy']

THIRD REPORT



LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI

December, 2004/Agrahayana, 1926 (Saka)

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Presented to Lok Sabha on 03.12.2004
Laid in Rajya Sabha on 03.12.2004



LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI

December, 2004/Agrahayana, 1926 (Saka)

CONTENTS

	PAGE
COMPOSITION OF THE COMMITTEE.....	(iv)
INTRODUCTION	(v)

PART - I

Chapter-I	- Report	1
Chapter-II	- Recommendations/Observations which have been accepted by the Government	7
Chapter-III	- Recommendations/Observations which the Committee do not desire to pursue in view of the Government's replies	10
Chapter-IV	Recommendations/Observations in respect of which replies of the Government have not been accepted by the Committee and which requires reiteration	14
Chapter-V	Recommendations/Observations in respect of which final replies of the Government are still awaited	15

APPENDIX**PART-II**

(I)	Minutes of the sitting of the Standing Committee on Railways held on	17
(II)	Analysis of Action Taken by Government on the Recommendations/Observations contained in the 17 th Report 2003 (13 th Lok Sabha) on 'Railway Recruitment Policy'.	19

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I N T R O D U C T I O N

I, the Chairman, Standing Committee on Railways (2004) having been authorised by the Committee to present the Report on their behalf, present this Third Report of the Standing Committee on Railways (2004), on Action Taken by the Government on the Recommendations/Observations contained in the 17th Report of the Standing Committee on Railways(2003) (13th Lok Sabha) on 'Railway Recruitment Policy'.

2. The 17th Report of the Committee was presented to Lok Sabha on 04.02.2004 and it contained eight recommendations/observations. The action taken replies of the Government on all the recommendations/observations contained in the Report were received on 26.05.2004

3. The Standing Committee on Railways (2004) considered the draft Action Taken Report and adopted the same at their sitting held on 23rd November, 2004. Minutes of the sittings held on 23rd November,2004 form Part-II of the Report.

4. An analysis of the Action Taken by the Government on the recommendations/ observations contained in the 17th Report of the Standing Committee on Railways (2004), 13th Lok Sabha is given in Appendix – II.

New Delhi;

1st December, 2004

10 Agrahayana , 1926 (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 and observations contained in the 17th Report of the Standing Committee on Railways (2004) on 'Railway Recruitment Policy'. The Report was presented in Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha on 04.02.2004.

2. Action Taken Notes have been received from the Government in respect of all the 8 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.1, 4, 5 and 8.
- (ii) Recommendations/Observations which the Committee do not desire to pursue in view of the Government's replies – Para Nos. 3, 6 and 7.
- (iii) Recommendations/Observations in respect of which replies of the Government have not been accepted by the Committee and which require reiteration – NIL.
- (iv) Recommendations/Observations in respect of which final replies are still awaited – Para No. 2.

3. The Committee desire that final reply in respect of the recommendation/observation for which only interim reply has been given by the Government should be furnished to them expeditiously.

4. The Committee will now deal with the Action Taken by Government on some of their recommendations/observations.

Provision of more RRBs

Recommendation (Para No.1)

5. The Committee had in paragraph 1 of the Report noted that there were 19 Railway Recruitment Boards (RRBs) all over the country to meet the need of recruitment of Group 'C' and Group 'D' posts for the Railways and their Production Units. These RRBs have been set up keeping into account the administrative convenience of the Railways to cater to the recruitment needs of certain Zonal Railways/Railway Divisions and the Railway Production Units based in a specific geographical area. The Committee had also noticed that these RRBs were not geographically State-based. As a result of this, the applicants from all over the country compete for the posts advertised for recruitment by any of the RRBs resulting in the multiplicity of contenders for a few posts thus causing a great inconvenience to the candidates from other States regarding travelling, accommodation etc. on the one hand and huge administrative, managerial and financial burden on the RRB of the area on the other.

The Committee were of the considered view that the RRBs should have been established on more rational and practical criteria after taking into account not only the administrative convenience of the Railways but also the convenience of the applicants. They, therefore, strongly recommended to review the jurisdiction of all the existing RRBs and reshuffle/relocate the same on more practical and rational basis. In this way not only the unmanageable burden of the RRBs will get reduced but hardships of travelling and accommodation etc. to the examinees from far flung States will also be addressed to. Moreover, if need be, more RRBs can be established to provide equal opportunity and level playing field to all sections of Indian society both urban and rural.

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

“Jurisdiction of RRBs has since been reviewed and changes, where required, are being effected to suit the administrative convenience and aspirations of the people of those areas”.

7. The Committee in their Report had expressed their view that the RRBs should have been established on more rational and practical criteria after taking into account not only the administrative convenience of the Railways but also the convenience of the applicants. They had, therefore, recommended to review the jurisdiction of all the existing RRBs and reshuffle/relocate the same on more practical and rational basis. They were of the opinion that in this way not only the unmanageable burden of the RRBs will get reduced but hardships of travelling and accommodation etc. to the examinees from far flung states will also be taken care of. The Ministry in their reply have stated that jurisdiction of RRBs has since been reviewed and changes, where required, are being effected to suit the administrative convenience and aspirations of the people of those areas. The Committee desire that the Railways should provide details of changes which have been brought about by the Railways in RRBs' jurisdiction. They would also like to know the manner in which such changes, would provide equal opportunity and level playing field to all sections of the society both urban and rural. They desire to be apprised of the status of implementation of the said changes within a period of three months.

Expediting the Selection Process

Recommendation (Para No. 4)

8. The Committee had been apprised by the Ministry that normally 9-18 months time is taken to hand over the panel of selected candidates to the indenting Railway Departments/Production Units. However, sometimes the time taken by the Railway Recruitment Boards in preparing final result extends upto 2 years. Though the Railways count this time from the date of indent of requirement, it was noticed that the time schedule for final selection had not been strictly adhered to. The Committee were of the opinion that this not only creates uncertainty in the minds of the unemployed youth but also results in keeping the vacancies pending in the indenting Railway Departments/Production units. They also cautioned the Ministry that during the period of this delay meritorious candidates, who had been selected, could join elsewhere thereby making the entire process of selection futile. The Committee had lamented that despite making use of computerisation in the selection process, the RRBs had not been able to reduce the time taken in preparing the final results. They had, therefore,

strongly recommended that the results of all examinations be necessarily declared within a period of 3 months from the date of conducting the examination.

9. The Ministry in their Action Taken replies stated:

“In view of the position given to the Committee, normally nine to eighteen months time is taken for finalization of panels of various posts depending on their selection procedure. Keeping in view the essential requirements with regard to issue of call letters, physical checking of all rejected applications, processing of application data by computer agencies, taking out applications of large number of candidates qualifying written examination, including verification of their particulars before declaration of the result and various types of incidents taking place during different stages of examination etc., it is not possible to adhere to the recommendation of the Committee. However, all necessary steps will be taken to reduce the time taken in finalization of the recruitment process.”

Recommendation (Para No. 5)

10. The Committee had taken a serious note of the fact that the number of vacancies in Group ‘D’ increased to 39759 in 2003 from 4293 in 1999 while the vacancies in Group ‘C’ also continued to hover around one lakh. The Committee were of the view that the main reason for such a large number of vacancies was on account of the fact that the examinations were not conducted regularly by the respective RRBs. Besides, time consuming process involved in the recruitment was another big factor which had contributed towards this. They, therefore, were of the considered opinion that the pace of recruitment be expedited in view of huge backlog of vacancies in aforesaid categories.

The Ministry in their Action Taken replies stated;

“Despite several factors contributing to delay in the process of recruitment, all out efforts will be made for accelerating the pace of recruitment, as recommended.”

11. The Committee had recommended in the above paras that the Ministry of Railways should reduce the time taken in the selection process in view of the huge backlog of vacancies in group 'C' & 'D' categories as normally 9-18 months time was taken to hand over the panel of selected candidates to the indenting Railway Departments/Production Units. The Ministry have in their action taken replies stated that despite several factors contributing to delay in the process of recruitment all out efforts will be made to accelerate the pace of recruitment. They have also stated that all necessary efforts will be taken to reduce the time taken in finalisation of the recruitment process. However, the Committee are not satisfied with the replies of the Government. They desire to be apprised of the specific steps taken/proposed to be taken to expedite the pace of recruitment so that the huge backlog of vacancies are filled up at the earliest.

Transparency in the Process of Recruitment by RRBs

Recommendation (Para No. 8)

12. The Committee had in paragraph 8 of the Report noted that the Railway Board have taken a number of steps to ensure transparency in the process of recruitment by RRBs. Appreciating the initiatives taken in this regard by the Railway Recruitment Control Board, the Committee opined that still a lot was required to be done at the grass root level viz. examination centres. Further in order to ensure that the malpractices in the examination centres also do not take place, the Committee opined that it was equally essential to enhance the surveillance, through the Vigilance Department of the Railways by conducting greater number of raids through the flying squads during the examinations. They also desired that the present system of ensuring transparency and impartiality be kept up”.

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

“The suggestion of the Committee to conduct more number of preventive checks during the examination conducted by Railway Recruitment Boards has been accepted and necessary instructions in this regard have been communicated to all the Zonal Railways”.

14. The Committee note that the Ministry of Railways have accepted the suggestion made by them to conduct more number of preventive checks during the examination conducted by RRBs and necessary instructions in this regard have been communicated to all the Zonal Railways. However, they desire to know the content of the instructions given to the Zonal Railways in this regard. The Committee are of the view that such measures, if implemented in the right spirit would go a long way in ensuring transparency in the process of recruitment by RRBs. They would also like to know the extent to which these instructions have been implemented.

CHAPTER – II**RECOMMENDATIONS/OBSERVATIONS WHICH HAVE BEEN ACCEPTED BY THE GOVERNMENT****Recommendation (Para No. 1)**

The Committee have noted that there are 19 Railway Recruitment Boards (RRBs) all over the country to meet the need of recruitment of Group 'C' and Group 'D' posts for the Railways and their Production Units. These RRBs have been set up keeping into account the administrative convenience of the Railways to cater to the recruitment needs of certain Zonal Railways/Railway Divisions and the Railway Production Units based in a specific geographical area. The Committee have also noticed that these RRBs are not geographically State-based. As a result of this, the applicants from all over the country compete for the posts advertised for recruitment by any of the RRBs. They observe that the present location of these RRBs has resulted in the multiplicity of contenders for a few posts ultimately causing a great inconvenience to the candidates from other States regarding travelling, accommodation etc. on the one hand and huge administrative, managerial and financial burden on the RRB of the area on the other.

The Committee are of the considered view that the RRBs should have been established on more rational and practical criteria after taking into account not only the administrative convenience of the Railways but also the convenience of the applicants. They, therefore, strongly recommend to the Ministry to review the jurisdiction of all the existing RRBs and reshuffle/relocate the same on more practical and rational basis. They are of the opinion that in this way not only the unmanageable burden of the RRBs will get reduced but hardships of travelling and accommodation etc. to the examinees from far flung States will also be addressed to. Moreover, the Committee are of the view that if need be, more RRBs can be established to provide equal opportunity and level playing field to all sections of Indian society both urban and rural.

REPLY OF THE GOVERNMENT

Jurisdiction of RRBs has since been reviewed and changes, where required, are being effected to suit the administrative convenience and aspirations of the people of those areas.

Recommendation (Para No. 4)

The Committee have been apprised by the Ministry that normally 9-18 months time is taken to hand over the panel of selected candidates to the indenting Railway Departments/Production Units. However, sometimes the time taken by the Railway Recruitment Boards in preparing final results extends upto 2 years. Though the Railways count this time from the date of indent of requirement, it has been usually noticed that the time schedule for final selection has not been strictly adhered to. The Committee are of the opinion that this not only creates uncertainty in the minds of the unemployed youth but also results in keeping the vacancies pending in the indenting Railway Departments/Production units. They also caution the Ministry that during the period of this delay meritorious candidates, who have been selected, may join elsewhere thereby making the entire process of selection futile. The Committee lament that despite making use of computerisation in the selection process, the RRBs have not been able to reduce the time taken in preparing the final results. They, therefore, strongly recommend that the results of all examinations be necessarily declared within a period of 3 months from the date of conducting the examination.

REPLY OF THE GOVERNMENT

In view of the position given to the Committee, normally nine to eighteen months time is taken for finalization of panels of various posts depending on their selection procedure. Keeping in view the essential requirements with regard to issue of call letters, physical checking of all rejected applications, processing of application data by computer agencies, taking out applications of large number of candidates qualifying written examination, including verification of their particulars before declaration of the result and various types of incidents taking place during different stages of examination

etc., it is not possible to adhere to the recommendation of the Committee. However, all necessary steps will be taken to reduce the time taken in finalization of the recruitment process.

Recommendation (Para No. 5)

The Committee have also taken a serious note that the number of vacancies in Group 'D' has increased to 39759 in 2003 from 4293 in 1999. The vacancies in Group 'C' also continued to hover around one lakh, which is also matter worth considering. The Committee are of the view that the main reason for such a large number of vacancies is on account of the fact that the examinations are not conducted regularly by the respective RRBs. Besides, time consuming process involved in the recruitment is another big factor which has contributed towards this. They, therefore, are of the considered opinion that the pace of recruitment be expedited in view of huge backlog of vacancies in aforesaid categories.

REPLY OF THE GOVERNMENT

Despite several factors contributing to delay in the process of recruitment, all out efforts will be made for accelerating the pace of recruitment, as recommended.

Recommendation (Para No. 8)

The Committee note that the Railway Board have taken a number of steps to ensure transparency in the process of recruitment by RRBs. They certainly appreciate the initiatives taken by the Railway Recruitment Control Board in this regard. However, the Committee think that still a lot is required to be done at the grass root level viz. examination centres. No doubt, Question Papers are opened in the presence of examiners and a certificate to this effect is obtained from them. Nevertheless, in order to ensure that the malpractices in the examination centres also do not take place, it is equally essential to enhance the surveillance, through the Vigilance Department of the Railways by conducting greater number of raids through the flying squads during the examinations. They also desire that the present system of ensuring transparency and impartiality be kept up.

REPLY OF THE GOVERNMENT

The suggestion of the Committee to conduct more number of preventive checks during the examination conducted by Railway Recruitment Boards has been accepted and necessary instructions in this regard have been communicated to all the Zonal Railways.

CHAPTER – III

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

Recommendation (Para No. 3)

The Committee have noted that the minimum academic qualification for Group 'D' & Group 'C' posts has been specified as 8th standard and 10th standard respectively. As in most of the States no board examination for 8th Standard is being held, it becomes very difficult to check the veracity and authenticity of the same. Moreover, prescribing lesser qualification for Group 'D' posts often results in getting a large number of applications. The Committee, therefore, are of the unanimous view that the minimum academic qualification for Group 'D' post be fixed as 10th standard which will not only ensure veracity of the certificate but also reduce the number of contenders and enhance the general awareness of Group 'D' staff. They also stress that in the advertisement for the examination itself the pay scales of Class 'D' post may be specified.

REPLY OF THE GOVERNMENT

Group "D" posts on the Indian Railways cover a large number of categories like Khalasis, Khalasi Helper, Safaiwalas, Gangmen, Malis, Lampmen, Peons, Porters, Watermen and so on. The work performed by these various categories is not identical. While the duties of some do require some technical knowledge, it is not so in the case of other categories which are involved in activities like material handling, cleaning sanitation etc. which are essentially unskilled in nature and are performed by unskilled personnel.

Further, the implications of introducing Class X as minimum educational qualifications for recruitment to all Group "D" posts with the minimum qualification as an unequivocal nexus has been established by 5th CPC between the recruitment qualification of matriculation and recruitment grade of Rs. 3050-4590. It may be difficult to enhance recruitment qualification to matriculation without attracting corresponding

demands for allotment of the commensurate pay scale. This is neither administratively desirable nor financially prudent.

Further, even with Class VIII as the qualification, there have been protests from the organized labour on the ground that many of the jobs in Group “D” on the Railways such as Safaiwalas do not require any qualification.

In view of the above, a conscious decision has been taken by the Board to prescribe Class VIII as the recruitment qualification for Group “D”.

Recommendation (Para No. 6)

During the course of examination of the subject in question, the Committee have come across the fact that there were 4700 requests pending for compassionate appointments as on 31.03.2003. They were also briefed by the Ministry that the compassionate appointments are provided as a matter of compassion and not as a matter of right. The Ministry further informed that on the basis of Welfare Inspector’s Report regarding the financial health of the family, the appointment on compassionate ground is decided. The Committee are not inclined to agree with the methodology that is being presently adopted by the Railways for appointments under the compassionate category. They are of

the view that such cases need to be treated on a different footing altogether. They therefore, desired that for such cases the eligibility criteria for Group ‘C’ posts should be based on minimum educational qualification and in the case of Group ‘D’ posts it should be based on medical fitness of the candidates besides the minimum required qualification. In case these requirements are fulfilled the other criteria such as testing, ascertaining the financial position etc. should be dispensed with.

REPLY OF THE GOVERNMENT

The scheme of appointment on compassionate ground to a dependent family member of a Railway employee who die in harness or who is retired on medical grounds is to relieve his family from financial destitution and help the family to tide over

the immediate financial distress. Offering compassionate appointment as a matter of course irrespective of the deceased or medical retired Government servant is not permissible.

Ministry of Railways, in this regard follows the guidelines laid down by the nodal department i.e. Department of Personnel & Training (DOP&T) which is as per the judgement of Hon'ble Supreme Court.

Recommendation (Para No. 7)

The Committee also note that the Railway Safety Review Committee (Khanna Committee) had recommended for enhancement of qualifying marks in the written examination to 50% for general candidates and 45% marks for reserved category candidates. However, the Railway Board raised the same to 40% for general candidates, 30% for SC & OBC and 25% for ST candidates w.e.f. 1.11.2003. The Committee are of the view that the paramount aspect of safety and security of the Railways have touched the lowest ebb nowadays. They, therefore, consider it expedient to urge upon the Ministry that the qualifying marks in the written examination at least for safety related posts be invariably enhanced to 50% in case of general candidates and 45% for all reserved candidates as per the recommendation of the Khanna Committee. They emphasize that such an important aspect of safety of passengers and Railways should not be compromised with.

REPLY OF THE GOVERNMENT

Railway Board had reviewed and revised minimum qualifying marks percentage to the existing level based on the recommendation of Khanna Committee. Revision of minimum qualifying marks was kept at the existing level in view of the shortfall in reserved categories, especially in Scheduled Tribes.

CHAPTER – IV

**RECOMMENDATIONS/OBSERVATIONS IN RESPECT OF WHICH REPLIES OF THE
GOVERNMENT HAVE NOT BEEN ACCEPTED BY THE COMMITTEE AND WHICH
REQUIRE REITERATION**

- NIL -

CHAPTER – V**RECOMMENDATIONS/OBSERVATIONS IN RESPECT OF WHICH FINAL REPLIES
OF THE GOVERNMENT IS STILL AWAITED****Recommendation (Para No. 2)**

The Committee find that the RRBs are holding examinations as per the indent of requirement of posts furnished by the Zonal/Divisional Railways and the Production Units of the Railways falling under their respective jurisdiction. Each RRB conducts these examinations independently on separate dates. Multiplication of application for a few posts has posed a challenge for each RRB to conduct the competitive exams in an efficient and effective way. The Committee have been apprised by the Ministry of the fact that the RRBs are bound by the Guidelines of the Department of Personnel & Training dated 18.05.1998 issued in pursuance of the Supreme Court's Verdict on 22.08.1996 (Excise Superintendent Vs K.B.K. Vishveshwra Rao). These guidelines permit every prospective candidate irrespective of his geographic location to apply to any RRB for any post, which ultimately leads to duplicity of applications. It has led to a chaotic situation where for even very few posts innumerable applicants from all over the country apply for the examination conducted by each RRB. Moreover, this has increased monetary, managerial and supervisory burden on the RRBs. Simultaneously examinees also suffer a lot in terms of non-availability of adequate rail reservation, road transport and accommodation facilities.

The Committee therefore, express their unhappiness over such huge amount of wasteful expenditure. They, therefore, are constrained to recommend that the Railway Recruitment Control Board (RRCB) in coordination with all RRBs must ensure a common advertisement of all posts of all categories, required to be filled up once or twice a year as per their administrative and managerial convenience, the written examination for common categories in all the RRBs be held simultaneously in a synchronised way. They are of the firm view that by resorting to such practice, the duplicity of applications will get drastically reduced to manageable level ultimately benefiting at large the local people of the area, examinees and excess monetary & managerial burden on Railways.

During the course of oral evidence, the representatives of the Ministry of Railways apprised the Committee that the Ministry would look into the matter concerning the recruitment of Group 'D' posts from local areas. They also opined that it would be much easier and practical if it is made local based. The Committee, keeping into account the legal aspect and the aspiration of the local people desire that the Ministry may seek legal opinion from the concerned Ministries/Departments in this regard so that their aspiration may be, if possible, accommodated.

REPLY OF THE GOVERNMENT

The matter regarding common advertisement of all posts of all categories is being examined keeping in view all aspects of the matter.

The matter regarding recruitment of Group "D" posts from local areas is under consideration of the Board.

New Delhi;

23rd November, 2004
2nd Agrahayana , 1926 (Saka)

BASUDEB ACHARIA

**Chairman,
Standing Committee on Railways**