

an>

Title: Need to lay a rail line between Karaikudi and Thoothukkudi via Ramanathapuram in Tamil Nadu.

SHRI A. ANWHAR RAAJHAA (RAMANATHAPURAM): Madam Speaker, the new economic policy has led to all-round development. Railways on its part has gone for gauge conversions and introduction of new trains and providing facilities for passengers. But still, backward areas of our country like Ramanathapuram are yet to get the benefits of development policy.

For instance, a railway line between Ramanathapuram and Thoothukkudi was about to be taken up by the British Railways in 1910 itself. A survey for this purpose was done not only in 1910 but also in 2010, after hundred long years. However, the proposal is yet to take shape in the form of a railway line linking Ramanathapuram with Thoothukkudi *via* Thiruppullani, Keelakkarai, Erwadi, Sikkal, Valinokkam, Oppilan Road, Kadaladi, Sayalgudi, Vembar, Soorangudi, Vaipar and Kulathoor.

As a short route, the proposed railway line will greatly help pilgrims from the northern parts of the country who want to go from Rameshwaram to Kanyakumari. This will save time, money and energy. Since Thoothukkudi port is being expanded, this new railway line will be of great help to move goods to many parts of the country. Also, this would help the fishermen of the East Coast area to send their catches throughout the country.

A new railway line between Karaikkudi and Ramanathapuram will also be a short route on the East Coast benefiting Devakkottai, Thiruvadana, R.S. Mangalam, Thondi, Uppoor and Devipattinam.

For the growth of Ramanathapuram in all aspects, our hon. Tamil Nadu Chief Minister 'Amma' has allocated Rs.6250 crore in the current year.