

Standing Committee Report Summary

Passenger Amenities including Modernisation of Railway Stations

- The Standing Committee on Railways (Chair: Mr. Radha Mohan Singh) submitted its report on ‘Passenger Amenities including Modernisation of Railway Stations’ in March 2021. Key observations and recommendations of the Committee include:
 - **Classification of stations for passenger amenities:** Railways classifies railway stations into various categories for prioritising provisioning of passenger amenities. This classification is revised every five years. In 2017-18, Railways classified stations based on: (i) outward passengers handled at the station and (ii) annual yield of passenger earnings. The Committee recommended that Railways should also consider the following parameters for deciding the relative importance of stations: (i) historical and cultural importance, (ii) geographical location, and (iii) proximity to industrial hubs, ports, agricultural production centres, educational and professional institutions. It noted that this recommendation was also made by the Committee in 2013, however, it has not been incorporated by Railways.
 - **Underutilisation of funds for passenger amenities:** The Committee observed that the funds earmarked for passenger amenities were underutilised by: (i) 16.3% in 2014-15, (ii) 38.2% in 2015-16, (iii) 4.3% in 2018-19, and (iv) 44.4% in 2019-20. The Committee recommended that the Railways should prepare a realistic budget so that financial and physical targets are optimally achieved. The Committee also observed that Railways has not been able to utilise MPLAD funds, and funds provided by Indian Oil Corporation Limited as an initiative under its corporate social responsibility activities. These funds are provided for the installation of amenities at railway stations. MPLAD is a central government scheme under which Members of Parliament may recommend development programmes in respective constituencies.
 - **Monitoring mechanism for the maintenance of assets:** The Committee observed that a robust monitoring mechanism for ensuring maintenance and upkeep of assets created for passenger facilities is absent. This has led to a regular breakdown of such assets and caused inconveniences to passengers. The Committee recommended that corrective measures should be taken in this regard.
 - **Redevelopment of stations:** The Committee noted that redevelopment of railway stations as World-Class Stations has been proposed under the public-private partnership (PPP) mode. In the first phase launched in 2017, bids for the redevelopment of 23 railway stations were invited. However, the bids for only two stations were received. The Committee recommended that Railways should take corrective measures in this regard. The Committee noted that no railway station has been redeveloped under PPP mode so far. It also observed that Railways has not indicated any time frame for the redevelopment of stations into World-Class Stations. Under the Adarsh (Model) Station Scheme launched in 2009, 1,253 stations were to be redeveloped as Adarsh Stations. The Committee observed that despite the considerable passage of time, 53 stations are yet to be redeveloped.
 - **Railway Protection Force:** The Committee noted that Railway Protection Force (RPF) has no power to register and investigate passenger-related offences in the passenger area. The Committee recommended that RPF Act, 1989 should be suitably amended to empower RPF.
 - **Cleaning of stations and coaches:** Railways has been outsourcing most of the clearing activities under the mechanised cleaning system to professional agencies. The Committee observed that the outsourcing has happened for only 940 stations out of 8,738 stations. Railways has introduced the onboard housekeeping service for the cleaning of coach toilets, doorways, and passenger compartments during the run of the trains. Only 1,100 out of 13,169 passenger trains have been covered so far. The Committee recommended that more stations and trains should be covered under these initiatives.
 - **Limited availability of automatic ticket vending machines:** The Committee observed that so far, 4,077 automatic ticket vending machines (ATVMs) have been installed across the country. It observed that this number is abysmally low, and more stations should have ATVMs. It also observed that only 82% of the installed ATVMs are in working condition.
 - **Child Help Desks:** Railways has set up round-the-clock child help desks at 126 railway stations. The Committee observed this number is significantly small considering the total number of stations in the country (8,738). It recommended that more stations, particularly in child trafficking prone areas, should have child help desks.

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