

Regarding request to start a daily train services from Kurnool to Visakhapatnam via Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh

DR. SANJEEV KUMAR SINGARI (KURNOOL): Thank you, hon. Chairperson, for giving me this opportunity to speak on Railway issues of Kurnool Parliamentary Constituency.

Kurnool Parliamentary Constituency, which I represent, deserves additional Railway facilities in view of its overall backwardness. Andhra Pradesh has three regions with diverse culture and dialect. Rayalaseema region is one of them and Kurnool is the gateway of Rayalaseema.

Kurnool, the erstwhile capital of Andhra State, is a backward District in all respects. The demographic indicators stand testimony to this fact. Kurnool was capital of Andhra State from 1953 to 1956, and the capital was shifted from Kurnool to Hyderabad when States were re-organized on linguistic basis. There is a strong feeling in Kurnool region that a serious historical mistake was done when the capital was surrendered in favour of Hyderabad. The region was neglected for seven decades by the successive Governments. This injustice should be relieved.

Kurnool region is very backward as per the report of Sivaramakrishnan Committee, an Expert Committee that was constituted under Section 6 of the AP Reorganisation Act, 2014. Kurnool region has challenges of high dependency ratio of 55 per cent, low literacy rate of 65 per cent, low urbanisation of 29 per cent, and has a young growing workforce.

These problems need to be addressed with a humane touch, and every investment in public utility cannot be seen from a commercial angle. Following the principles of natural justice, all regions of India should be developed equally. All of us should agree that injustice was meted out to Andhra Pradesh with unfair State bifurcation. We need a helping hand from the Union Government.

Economic growth, employment, income generation and equitable distribution of growth are essential for all regions of Andhra Pradesh. It is distressing to note that domicile migration or distress migration from this area is in lakhs every year. Nearly three lakh people migrate to different areas from Kurnool Parliamentary Constituency. The area has problems of water supply. Though Tungabhadra River

traverses 95 kms in Kurnool District, only 60 per cent of the cultivable land receives water supply. People hardly cultivate one crop per year. People travel hundreds of kilometres in search of jobs. People are asking for a better connectivity with cities like Vijayawada and Visakhapatnam, which are the two cities of Andhra Pradesh.

National Highway connecting Kurnool and Vijayawada, which traverses through reserve forest needs upgradation. The road journey is tedious. There is no express train connecting Kurnool with Vijayawada and Visakhapatnam. At least, a good connectivity is needed for this region. We are not asking for a new railway track. We are just asking for a train service on the existing railway tracks.

As a representative of 22 lakh people of Kurnool region, I have been requesting the Railway authorities for some facilities, like train halts at Maddikera, Kosigi and Adoni, direct train service from Kurnool to Mumbai to help thousands of North Indian families doing businesses in Kurnool, and speeding up the construction of Railway rehabilitation coach workshop. I made fifteen representations to the Railway Ministry in the past four years but the response has not been encouraging. I take this opportunity to request the hon. Minister of Railways to start a daily train service from Kurnool to Visakhapatnam via Vijayawada. A tri-weekly train 07237 was running on ad-hoc basis but that too was withdrawn recently for reasons which are better known to the officials. Passenger services cannot be viewed from a commercial angle. The occupancy of the service was good enough, and would have improved further had it been a daily service. I request the Minister of Railways to restart the train service on a daily basis. And I hope this facility can bring solace to the injured hearts of people who feel that many historical blunders were committed against the region. There should be equitable development of all the regions of the country.