

MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS

Progress of Amrit Bharat Station Scheme

[Action taken by the Government on the recommendations contained in the 35th Report (Seventeenth Lok Sabha) of the Committee on Estimates]

COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES (2024-25)

FOURTH REPORT

(EIGHTEENTH LOK SABHA)



**LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI**

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(Presented to Lok Sabha on 18.12.2024)



LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI

..... December 2024/..... Agrahayana 1946 (Saka)

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COMPOSITION OF THE COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES (2024-25)

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3. Shri M. Mallesh Babu
4. Shri Kalyan Banjerjee
5. Shri Pradan Baruah
6. Shri Charanjit Singh Channi
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8. Shri Devusinh Chauhan
9. Ms. Iqra Choudhary
10. Smt. Sangeeta Kumari Singh Deo
11. Shri Sudheer Gupta
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Secretariat

- | | | |
|----|---------------------------|-----------------|
| 1. | Shri Y. M. Kandpal | Joint Secretary |
| 2. | Shri Lalkithang | Director |
| 3. | Dr. (Smt.) Sheetal Kapoor | Under Secretary |

INTRODUCTION

I, the Chairperson of the Committee on Estimates (2024-25) having been authorized by the Committee to present the Report on their behalf, do present this Fourth Report on action taken by the Government on the recommendations contained in the 35th Report of the Committee (2023-24) on the subject 'Progress of Amrit Bharat Station Scheme'.

2. The 35th Report of the Committee on Estimates (2023-24) was presented to Lok Sabha on 6th February, 2024. The Government furnished their replies indicating action taken on the recommendations contained in the 35th Report on 5th August, 2024. The draft report was considered and approved on 16th December, 2024 by the Committee.

3. An analysis of action taken by the Government on the recommendations contained in the 35th Report of the Committee on Estimates is given in Appendix-II.

NEW DELHI;

16 December, 2024
Agrahayana 25, 1946(Saka)

DR. SANJAY JAISWAL
CHAIRPERSON
COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES

CHAPTER - I
REPORT

This Report of the Committee deals with the action taken by the Government on the Observations/Recommendations of the Committee contained in the Thirty-Fifth Report (Seventeenth Lok Sabha) on the subject "Progress of Amrit Bharat Station Scheme" pertaining to the Ministry of Railways.

2. The Thirty-Fifth Report was presented to Lok Sabha on 06.02.2024. It contained 12 Observations/Recommendations. Action Taken Replies of the Government in respect to all the Observations/Recommendations have been received from the Ministry of Railways.

3. Replies to the Observations/Recommendations contained in the Report have broadly been categorized as under:-

(i) Observations/Recommendations which have been accepted by the Government:
Recommendation Para No 2,5,6,7,8,9,10,11 and 12

Total: 09
(Chapter-II)

(ii) Observations/Recommendations which the Committee do not desire to pursue in view of Government's reply:
Recommendation NIL

Total: 00
(Chapter-III)

(iii) Observations/Recommendations in respect of which Government's replies have not been accepted by the Committee:
Recommendation Para No 1, 3 and 4

Total:03
(Chapter-IV)

(iv) Observations/Recommendations in respect of which final reply of Government is still awaited:
Recommendation NIL

Total: 00
(Chapter-V)

4. **The Committee desire that Action Taken Notes in respect of the Observations/Recommendations contained in Chapter-I may be furnished to them within six months of the presentation of the Report to the House.**

5. The Committee will now deal with the Observations/Recommendations which require reiteration or merit further comments.

Observations/Recommendations (Para No. 1)

Need For Dedicated Budget

6. The Committee in their Thirty Fifth Report, recommended as under: -

“The allocation for development and maintenance of stations including for ABSS are generally funded under plan Head-53 “consumer amenities”. The Committee note that Ministry of Railways do not have an earmarked budget allocation for ABSS specifically but utilizes one for the Plan Head-53. The Committee further observe that the expenditure, under Customer Amenities, as per data furnished by Ministry of Railways, is at a very low pace in almost all Zones which indicates slow progress of upgradation work. The Committee are of the view that while embarking on the journey of modernization and upgradation of the station, Ministry of Railways should have created a sub-head under Plan Head-53 so as not only to make demarcation clear but also to map the pace of utilization/surplus-in a given year. In view of this, the Committee urge the Ministry to create a Sub-head for ABSS along with allocation to each zone earmarked explicitly in a bit to ensure balanced development/up-gradation of railway stations across the country. As the scheme of ABSS is in its first phase itself, the Committee strongly feel that Ministry can allocate the funds for the scheme exclusively with strict timelines for physical progress of work, which would enable the Ministry to evaluate allocation vis-à-vis its utilization zone-wise.”

7. The Ministry of Railways have in their Action Taken Reply, submitted as under:

“In regard to the Committee’s observation regarding slow progress of upgradation work under the Amrit Bharat Station Scheme, it is important to note that there have been significant developments since the preparation of the observation/recommendations of the committee. Initially, there were 1309 railway

stations identified for development under this scheme. However, the current number of identified stations has increased to 1324. Out of 1324 stations, tenders have been awarded for 1178 stations and works are in progress. The remaining 146 stations are in different stages of master planning and tendering. The initial period for stations is generally taken for preliminary works like master planning, design/drawings and enabling works to commence. Hence the physical progress is sometimes not very prominently visible in some cases at initial stages. The scheme is steadily gaining momentum and progressing towards its targeted goals.

As regard to create a Sub-Head for Amrit Bharat Station Scheme, it is submitted that expenditure under PH-53-Customer Amenities over last 3 years and Budget outlay for 2024-25 (Budgetary Sources) is indicated below:-

(₹ in crores)

Actual 2020-21	2582.92
Actual 2021-22	1995.75
Actual 2022-23	2159.40
Actual 2023-24 (Prov.)	8121.73
BE 2024-25	15510.75

Ministry of Railways has conventionally followed the Plan Head wise budget allocation process to ensure wholesome development of various customer amenities which has worked satisfactorily so far. Railway follows standard nomenclature for the Heads and subheads for different activities.

Thus, creating a separate sub-head to capture the expenditure booked for Amrit Bharat Station Scheme works for identical activities is not required.

Further, Development/redevelopment/upgradation of Railway Stations is complex in nature involving safety of passengers & trains and requires various statutory clearances such as fire clearance, heritage, tree cutting, air-port clearance etc. The progress also gets affected due to brown field related challenges such as shifting of utilities, (involving water/sewage lines, optical fibre cables, gas pipe lines, power/signal cables etc.,) infringements, operation of trains without hindering passenger movement, speed restrictions due to works carried out in close proximity of high voltage power lines

etc. and these factors affect the completion time. Therefore, no time frame can be indicated at this stage.”

8. The Committee in their original report have observed that allocations and maintenance of stations including for Amrit Bharat Station Scheme (ABSS) are funded under Plan Head - 53 "Customer Amenities", and that there is no earmarked budgetary allocation for ABSS. The Committee had also observed that as per the data provided by the Ministry, the expenditure incurred under 'Customer Amenities' is at a very low pace in most Railway Zones indicating slow progress of upgradation work. The Committee had, therefore, urged the Ministry of Railways to create a dedicated 'sub-head' under Plan Head 53(Customer Amenities) and allocate funds exclusively for ABSS with strict timelines to ensure clear demarcation of funds, effective tracking of expenditure and balanced upgradation of stations nationwide. The Ministry of Railways, in their action taken reply have submitted that the current system of budget allocation under Plan Head 53 - Customer Amenities has been satisfactory so far, and that creating a separate sub-head for ABSS is not necessary. They have also highlighted the challenges associated with station redevelopment which have impacted the pace of physical progress and emphasized that no fixed timeline could be provided at this stage. The Committee do not accept the reply provided by the Ministry and reiterate their earlier recommendation to establish a separate sub-head for ABSS under Plan Head-53 to enhance transparency and allow for more effective tracking of funds and progress. The Committee, while acknowledging the challenges faced by the Ministry with regard to slow progress of upgradation works, reiterate the need for clearer and more realistic timelines for each phase of the project to ensure accountability. The Committee find the claim of the Ministry that 'no time frame can be indicated at this stage' as concerning, especially given the substantial budgetary allocation for “Consumer Amenities” in the last four years (Rs.15510.7 crore for Financial Year 2024-25). The Committee desire that the Ministry take the recommendation and observation of the Committee with the seriousness it deserves as it would help them in achieving the goals of station

modernization and also address concerns over slow progress of fund utilization. The Committee would await the action taken by the Ministry in this regard.

Observations/Recommendations(Para No. 2)

Robust selection of Stations

9. The Committee, in their Thirty Fifth Report, recommended as under :-

“The up-gradation under ABSS has been planned for a total of 1309 Railway Stations wherein foundation laying has been done for a total 508 Railway Stations. In response to the query of the Committee regarding criteria for selection of stations, Ministry of Railways has submitted that selection of stations is done based on proposals received from Zonal Railways, stations located in major cities and towns. .Proposals / suggestions for improvement of railway stations are periodically received from general public, local bodies, State Governments, public representatives etc., and action are taken subject to feasibility. However, no compendium of the same is maintained by them. Further, Ministry of Railways in one of their internal communications had instructed Zonal Railways to identify/select stations based on “suggestion of a committee comprising Sr DEN/Co, Sr DCM and Sr DFM with the approval of DRM, and as per the instructions given by Railway Board from time to time”. Taking cognizance of the dynamics of selection of stations under ABSS, the Committee hold that any Committee looking into selection of stations but merely comprising of railways officials can’t serve the purpose. They feel that a robust selection criteria along with a multi-faceted Committee comprising of different stakeholders from the same zone should be made to deliberate and decide the stations to be upgraded under ABSS. The Committee feel that the Ministry can evolve and implement a robust selection process by involving different stakeholders with effect from the next phase of the scheme.”

10. The Ministry of Railways have in their Action Taken Reply, submitted as under:

“Ministry of Railways has a robust selection process for inclusion of stations under Amrit Bharat Station scheme. The process involves deliberations at the Divisional level, Zonal Headquarter level and finally at the level of the Railway Board in the Ministry of Railways. The process involves appropriate consultations with the

stakeholders and the various inputs received from general public, local bodies, State Governments and public representatives are suitably incorporated in the planning as per feasibility, requirements etc.”

11. The Committee in their Report observed that the selection of railway stations for upgradation under Amrit Bharat Station Scheme (ABSS) lacked a comprehensive and inclusive approach. Noting that the selection was primarily driven by proposals from Railways comprising of railway officials, with little involvement of external stakeholders, the Committee had recommended that a more robust, selection process should be established involving a multi-faceted committee that includes stakeholders from the local zone. The Ministry of Railways, in their Action Taken Reply have asserted that a ‘robust selection process’ is already in place and the process including deliberations at multiple level-divisional, zonal, headquarters and primarily at the Railway Board. The Ministry also submitted that consultations with stakeholders, including the general public, local bodies, state government and public representatives, and inputs received from them are incorporated into the planning process. The Committee acknowledges the Ministry’s submission that a selection process for stations under the scheme, involving deliberations at multiple levels within the Railway hierarchy and other stakeholders is in place. However, the Committee are of the view that the response given by the Ministry still places significant weight on internal Railway deliberations. Accordingly, the Committee reiterate their earlier recommendation that a more inclusive and transparent approach be adapted for station selection and encourage more active consultation with stakeholders. The Committee strongly urge the Ministry to implement this approach for the next phase of the Amrit Bharat Station Scheme to make the selection process more comprehensive and participatory. The Committee also desire to be apprised about the details on how inputs from external stakeholders are collected, evaluated and incorporated into the decision-making process, including zone-wise list of those stations identified/selected by Ministry on the basis of inputs/suggestions received from local bodies, general public and public representatives.

Observations/Recommendations(Para No 3)

Need for inter-se priority

12. Noting the lack of well laid down criteria for selection of Stations for upgradation, under the Amrit Bharat Station Scheme (ABSS), the Committee in this Thirty Fifth Report have recommended as under:-

“During the examination of the subject, the Ministry has informed that under ABSS, the stations are identified and communicated to them by the zonal Railways for up-gradation. Also, there is no priority fixed as to the segregation of Stations under different phases. The Committee further note that in some States, there are more stations to be upgraded in first phase than other smaller states. The Committee are of the strong view that Ministry should urge the zonal Railways to identify the Stations to be upgraded under ABSS on the basis of laid down criteria for inclusion in each phase. The Committee feel that, since zonal Railways are better equipped with the knowledge of developmental needs of each Station and its potential expansion into a city centre in long run, it is the onus of zonal Railways to categorize Stations for up-gradation on the basis of priority/sequencing assigned.”

13. The Ministry of Railways have in their Action Taken Reply, submitted as under:

“Upgradation/development/redevelopment of stations on Indian Railways is a continuous and on-going process and works in this regard are undertaken as per requirement, subject to inter-se priority and availability of funds. However, priority for upgradation/development/redevelopment of stations is accorded to higher category of station over lower category of station while sanctioning and executing the work. The spatial distribution of stations across States is reasonably uniform and the Scheme covers all States and Union Territories with Rail connectivity.”

14. Expressing concern over the lack of clear priority system for the selection of stations under the Amrit Bharat Station Scheme (ABSS) and the fact that the selection process is not based on any fixed criteria, the Committee had recommended that the Ministry of Railways urge zonal Railways to identify and

categorize stations for upgradation based on clear set of criteria, ensuring that stations are appropriately prioritized and sequenced for development. The Committee emphasized that zonal Railways, due to their local knowledge and understanding of regional needs, should be responsible for this process. The Committee had also raised their concerns about the uneven distribution of stations selected for the first phase of upgradation across states. The Ministry of Railways in their action taken reply have submitted that, station upgradation is an ongoing process subject to inter-se priority and fund availability with priority given to higher-category stations. The Committee do not accept the reply of the Ministry as it does not provide clear criteria or systematic approach for categorizing and sequencing stations for upgradation, nor it addresses the Committee's concerns about the distribution of stations across states or the involvement of zonal railways in setting criteria for selection. The reply of Ministry is general and lack clarity on how its priority system is being applied in practice. It is also not clear how the Ministry ensure equitable treatment of states of different sizes and developmental needs. The Committee, therefore, reiterate their earlier recommendation and desire that they may be apprised about the concrete action taken in this regard. The Committee would also like to be apprised about details of higher category and lower category station on the basis of which priority for upgradation of stations is accorded.

Observations/Recommendations(Para No. 4)

Benchmarking up-gradation

15. In their recommendation contained in the Thirty Fifth Report, the Committee had recommended as under:-

“During the deliberations, the Ministry has informed the Committee that they are yet to issue a “standardization document” for the up-gradation for stations identified under ABSS. The Committee are of the view that as more than 7000 stations are spread across the country, benchmark should be set up for toilets, platforms, ticket counters etc. and installation of fittings therein. The Committee, therefore, strongly hold that ABSS being a pan India scheme, the up-gradation should align stations in a

uniform way and, therefore, urge the Ministry to issue comprehensive guidelines in the matters of standardization of fittings, CCTVs, WiFi, Station access, sound systems, furniture etc. to ensure uniformity across the stations.”

16. In their Action Taken Reply, the Ministry of Railways have submitted as under:

“Standardisation and benchmarking is a continuous and on-going process on Indian Railways. Ministry of Railways has issued model documents for Engineering Construction and Procurement contracts, General Conditions of Contract, Project Management Supervision, Technical and General consultants, guidelines for standard signages etc. Further, Ministry of Railways also has a specialized organisation viz, Research Design and Standards Organisation (RDSO) for issue of standards and specifications from time to time. Recently RDSO has issued designs for foot over bridges, OHE arrangements etc. Schedule of rates and corresponding specifications have also been issued to Zonal Railways.”

17. Noting that the Ministry of Railways was yet to issue a ‘standardization document’ for the upgradation of stations identified under Amrit Bharat Station Scheme (ABSS), the Committee in their Thirty Fifth Report had recommended that the Ministry should issue a comprehensive set of guidelines to ensure uniformity across the country. Given the vast number of stations involved, the Committee emphasized the need for standaradized benchmarks for essential station facilities such as toilets, platforms, ticket counters, CCTVs, Wifi, Station access, sound systems and furniture. The Committee felt that, as Amrit Bharat Station Scheme is a pan-India initiative, it was crucial for the Ministry to align the upgrades in a consistent and standaradized manner across all stations. The Ministry, in their Action Taken Reply, have submitted that standardization is an ongoing process within Indian Railways, and various model documents and guidelines have already been issued covering engineering construction, procurement contracts, project management and other areas. The Ministry also pointed out the role of the Research Design and Standards Organisation (RDSO) in issuing standards and specifications, Overhead Equipments (OHE) arrangement etc. While the

Committee acknowledges the ongoing standardization processes and the involvement of RDSO in issuing guidelines and specification, the Committee do not accept the reply furnished by the Ministry as it does not explicitly address the need for a comprehensive station-specific standardization document for Amrit Bharat Station Scheme. The recommendation of the Committee was for unified and comprehensive set of guidelines that would apply across all stations covered in the Amrit Bharat Station Scheme, covering a wide range of station facilities in a uniform manner. The Committee, therefore, reiterate their earlier recommendation and desire to be apprised about specific actions taken on the issue raised by the Committee. The Committee also desire to be apprised about how the existing RDSO standards will be applied to the stations under ABSS, ensuring that all relevant aspects are covered in this upgradation process and that the stations meet the required standards.

Observations/Recommendations(Para No. 6)

Special Clause for “Certain Stations”

18. In their Thirty Fifth Report, the Committee had recommended as under:-

“The Committee note that Ministry of Railways have not identified/classified the Railway Stations based on their eccentric locations and all stations are clubbed together for carrying out up-gradation. However, there are Stations, in every State, which stand out either for their location or geographical proximity to international borders or tourist places or archaeological sites etc. The Committee feel that certain stations like Bettiah, Jainagar, Attari etc. (the Gateways of Nepal & Pakistan) and PeeliBanga close to “Kali Banga”, one of the civilizations of Mohenjo-Daro) are railway stations accessed by a large number of passengers including tourists and hence, require greater attention for up-gradation in comparison to other stations of these States for coverage under ABSS. The Committee, therefore, urge the Ministry to issue guideline to all Zonal Railways to identify Stations based on their strategic locations, archeological importance, tourist visit, proximity to the borders, etc so that such stations get covered in the next Phase of ABSS. The Committee would like to be apprised of the steps taken in this regard.”

19. In their Action Taken Reply, the Ministry of Railways have submitted as under:

“Upgradation/modernization of stations on Indian Railways is a continuous and on-going process and works in this regard are undertaken as per requirement, inter-se priority, availability of funds etc. and local and strategic relevance is an important part of this process. Further, historical, tourist, geographical and strategic importance etc. are considered in the master planning, design, layouts etc. The footfalls in the stations are considered for the design of layout and deciding the scale of the amenities.”

20. The Committee, in their Thirty Fifth Report, had recommended that the Ministry of Railways issue specific guidelines to all zonal Railways to prioritize stations for upgradation based on their strategic locations, historical or archaeological significance, tourist importance and proximity to international borders. The Committee identified stations like Bettiah, Jainagar, Attari and Peeli Banga, which serve as gateways to neighbouring countries or are located near important tourist or archaeological sites and emphasized that such stations require greater attention in the upgradation process under the Amrit Bharat Station Scheme (ABSS). The Committee had urged the Ministry to ensure that these strategically important stations are given priority in the next phase of ABSS and requested an update on the steps taken in this regard. The Ministry of Railways, in their action taken reply, have submitted that the upgradation of stations is an ongoing process, taking into account local and strategic relevance. The Ministry also submitted that factors such as historical, geographical and strategic importance are considered in the planning, design and layout of stations. While the Ministry has acknowledged the importance of these factors in the planning process, the Committee are not satisfied with the response of the Ministry as it did not specifically address the Committee’s concern about issuing explicit guidelines for prioritizing stations with unique strategic, historical or tourist significance. The Ministry did not outline clear steps or measures for prioritizing stations like Bettiah, Jainagar, Attari and Peeli Banga for upgradation under ABSS in future phases. The Committee reiterate their recommendation and once again urge the Ministry to develop guidelines and issue the same to all zonal Railways to ensure that those stations identified by the Committee and

others stations, which have national and international significance, are given priority in the next phase of ABSS. The Committee desire that the Ministry should provide an update on the steps taken and the progress made in this regard, ensuring that strategically important stations are adequately covered in the scheme's development process.

Observations/Recommendations(Para No. 7)

Provision for Maintenance

21. The Committee in their Thirty Fifth Report, had recommended as under:-

“The Committee note that the scheme of ABSS has provisions for development of stations on a continuous basis with long-term approach but the maintenance contract for “up-gradations” so carried out under the scheme is not being done. The Committee observe that as ABSS is a comprehensive scheme designed for years, hence maintenance should form an integral part of the scheme. The Committee recommend that the Ministry should revise the Guidelines as required and include maintenance as an integral part of the up-gradation contract for a minimum period of five years.”

22. In their Action Taken Reply, the Ministry of Railways submitted as under:

“Ministry of Railways is exploring various options of improving maintenance of stations including specialized agencies for different tasks, general operation and maintenance etc. Ministry of Railways has various provisions for defect liability period in its contracts. However, inclusion of maintenance as integral part of construction projects for a long period might have a repercussion of too conservative bidding and the best value for money may not be achieved. However, the suggestion of the Committee is noted for further exploration.”

23. The recommendation made by the Committee in their Thirty-Fifth Report had envisaged that the maintenance of upgraded stations under the Amrit Bharat Station Scheme (ABSS) should be made an integral part of the up-gradation contracts for a minimum period of five years. In their reply, the Ministry of Railways acknowledged the recommendation of the Committee and indicated that they are exploring various options and specialized agencies. The Ministry also

raised concerns that including long-term maintenance in contracts might lead to conservative bidding, potentially impacting value for money. The Committee are not convinced with the response of the Ministry, as the primary issue raised by the Committee remains unaddressed. The Ministry also mentions the existence of a defect liability period but does not explain how it could ensure comprehensive maintenance post-construction, which the Committee highlighted. The Committee reiterate their original recommendation and urge the Ministry to revise the guidelines to incorporate “maintenance” as a mandatory component of the up-gradation contract for a minimum period of five years, ensuring that the long term performance and quality of stations upgraded under ABSS do not get compromised. The Committee would like to be apprised of the action taken in this regard.

Chapter – II

OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS WHICH HAVE BEEN ACCEPTED BY THE GOVERNMENT

Observations/Recommendations(Para No. 2)

Robust selection of Stations

The up-gradation under ABSS has been planned for a total of 1309 Railway Stations wherein foundation laying has been done for a total 508 Railway Stations. In response to the query of the Committee regarding criteria for selection of stations, Ministry of Railways has submitted that selection of stations is done based on proposals received from Zonal Railways, stations located in major cities and towns. .Proposals / suggestions for improvement of railway stations are periodically received from general public, local bodies, State Governments, public representatives etc., and action are taken subject to feasibility. However, no compendium of the same is maintained by them. Further, Ministry of Railways in one of their internal communications had instructed Zonal Railways to identify/select stations based on “suggestion of a committee comprising Sr DEN/Co, Sr DCM and Sr DFM with the approval of DRM, and as per the instructions given by Railway Board from time to time”. Taking cognizance of the dynamics of selection of stations under ABSS, the Committee hold that any Committee looking into selection of stations but merely comprising of railways officials can't serve the purpose. They feel that a robust selection criteria along with a multi-faceted Committee comprising of different stakeholders from the same zone should be made to deliberate and decide the stations to be upgraded under ABSS. The Committee feel that the Ministry can evolve and implement a robust selection process by involving different stakeholders with effect from the next phase of the scheme.

Reply of the Government

Ministry of Railways has a robust selection process for inclusion of stations under Amrit Bharat Station scheme. The process involves deliberations at the Divisional level, Zonal Headquarter level and finally at the level of the Railway Board in the Ministry of Railways. The process involves appropriate consultations with the stakeholders and the

various inputs received from general public, local bodies, State Governments and public representatives are suitably incorporated in the planning as per feasibility, requirements etc.

Comments of the Committee
(Please see Para 11 of Chapter-I of the Report)

Observations/Recommendations(Para No. 5)

Need to rope in architectures

India is a country of varied cultures where cultures/values dominate every region in its own unique way. The Committee are of the view that as up-gradations under ABSS are to stay for years to come, the scheme needs a visionary approach in design based on technically sound parameters of architecture so that with these designs at the stations will reverberate the set of cultures of the region. When the Ministry utilizes the services of specialists or a pool of architects, they can provide the design based on the culture of the region, which may be ensured in the structure of the railway stations. The Committee are also of the view that standardization of design and placement of foot-over bridges, escalators, lift and staircase accordingly, will enable Zonal Railways to have uniformity in its implementation. The Committee, therefore, urge the Ministry to come up with certain standardized models of designs which can be mapped to stations on the basis of size and footfalls.

Reply of the Government

Ministry of railway has issued detailed instructions for planning and executing development of stations under Amrit Bharat Station Scheme. The facilities at stations are based on category of stations keeping into consideration the size and footfall. There are guidelines available for hiring Technical consultants to assist with Master Planning and the development of tender schemes. Divisions have been granted permission to handle specific tasks internally if they possess the necessary expertise. This is being done by taking inputs from the Architects hired for the purpose both at planning, design/drawing and implementation stage. They are mandated to adopt local themes and conditions. However, standard model of design is not possible to adopt as each station is different which requires a customized approach. Therefore, Divisions have the

authority to adapt the execution plan to suit their local requirements. The aim is to suitably incorporate the local requirements into the design for each station.

Observations/Recommendations(Para No. 6)

Special Clause for “Certain Stations”

The Committee note that Ministry of Railways have not identified/classified the Railway Stations based on their eccentric locations and all stations are clubbed together for carrying out up-gradation. However, there are Stations, in every State, which stand out either for their location or geographical proximity to international borders or tourist places or archaeological sites etc. The Committee feel that certain stations like Bettiah, Jainagar, Attari etc. (the Gateways of Nepal & Pakistan) and Peeli Banga close to “Kali Banga”, one of the civilizations of Mohenjo-Daro) are railway stations accessed by a large number of passengers including tourists and hence, require greater attention for up-gradation in comparison to other stations of these States for coverage under ABSS. The Committee, therefore, urge the Ministry to issue guideline to all Zonal Railways to identify Stations based on their strategic locations, archeological importance, tourist visit, proximity to the borders, etc so that such stations get covered in the next Phase of ABSS. The Committee would like to be apprised of the steps taken in this regard

Reply of the Government

Upgradation/modernization of stations on Indian Railways is a continuous and on-going process and works in this regard are undertaken as per requirement, inter-se priority, availability of funds etc. and local and strategic relevance is an important part of this process.

Further, historical, tourist, geographical and strategic importance etc. are considered in the master planning, design, layouts etc. The footfalls in the stations are considered for the design of layout and deciding the scale of the amenities.

Comments of the Committee (Please see Para 20 of Chapter-I of the Report)

Observations/Recommendations(Para No. 7)

Provision for Maintenance

The Committee note that the scheme of ABSS has provisions for development of stations on a continuous basis with long-term approach but the maintenance contract for “up-gradations” so carried out under the scheme is not being done. The Committee observe that as ABSS is a comprehensive scheme designed for years, hence maintenance should form an integral part of the scheme. The Committee recommend that the Ministry should revise the Guidelines as required and include maintenance as an integral part of the up-gradation contract for a minimum period of five years.

Reply of the Government

Ministry of Railways is exploring various options of improving maintenance of stations including specialised agencies for different tasks, general operation and maintenance etc. Ministry of Railways has various provisions for defect liability period in its contracts. However, inclusion of maintenance as integral part of construction projects for a long period might have a repercussion of too conservative bidding and the best value for money may not be achieved. However, the suggestion of the Committee is noted for further exploration.

Comments of the Committee

(Please see Para 23 of Chapter-I of the Report)

Observations/Recommendations(Para No. 8)

Periodic Review/ Midterm Analysis/Vetting

The Committee observe certain architectural anomalies in the “model of upgraded stations” as proposed under the ABSS. The Committee find that any “up-gradation model” proposed is not being sent for scrutiny/feasibility study by an independent expert/body who may analyze the proposals on different parameters and suggest improvement/change, if any, before going underway. Taking note of the fact that ABSS is a up-gradation scheme with a horizon of 40 to 60 years, encapsulating multi model integration with improvisation of passenger amenities, the Committee urge the Ministry to include provision of midterm analysis/periodic review/vetting, so that

chances of anomaly can be ruled out altogether of proposed up-gradation either at concept or execution stage. If required, the guidelines may be revised to this effect.

Reply of the Government

Indian Railways has an inbuilt mechanism to check the quality of works, which is being performed at various levels by concerned Railway officials as per guidelines laid down in the Indian Railways Engineering Code, Indian Railways Works Manual and Specification etc. and the works meeting the laid down standards only are accepted.

Regular assessments of the progress of work at each station are being carried out at Division/HQ and Ministry levels. Bottlenecks, if present, are being addressed during these meetings with amicable solutions approved by the Board.

Observations/Recommendations(Para No. 9)

Stakeholders View

Ministry of Railways has submitted that guidelines of ABSS do have provision for involving local bodies while taking up up-gradation work, however, there is no provision for involving local MPs. The Committee note that people's representatives are the first stakeholders in the process of improving passenger amenities and hence their views should be incorporated while finalizing up-gradation/modernization plan for any public service. The Committee urge the Ministry that an expert group for every zone should be constituted wherein elected representatives, technical experts, representatives of local bodies and other stakeholders should be involved. The Committee, therefore, urge the Ministry to revise ABSS's guidelines to that extent as it would go a long way in sorting out issues related to requirement of land for access road, parking lots, local support etc. in upgradation of stations and peripheral work.

Reply of the Government

Ministry of Railways has a robust selection process for inclusion of stations under Amrit Bharat Station scheme. The selection is based on requirement of a particular station, priority, availability of funds etc and after obtaining valuable inputs from different stakeholders of that region.

Local bodies are consulted for access roads, local support etc. wherever required.

Observations/Recommendations(Para No. 10)

Need for Automation

The Scheme of ABSS aims at rebuilding/ improvement/ augmentation of railway station to provide an iconic design and structure with modern state-of-the-art facilities with a 40-60 year horizon. Though the Ministry of Railways has informed that there would not be any change in existing system of platform tickets even after the roll out of ABSS, the Committee feel that the Ministry should consider the change in system of platform tickets from physical to online wherever implementable as online platform tickets with an inbuilt automation to swipe/scan QR code for easy access would be economical and time saving at one hand. On the other, there would be no unauthorized/unpaid entry to the stations/platforms besides better safety. The Committee, therefore, urge the Ministry to make sincere efforts in imbibing technology with different aspects/up-gradations under ABSS, wherever implementable.

Reply of the Government

The facility to book platform tickets online through UTS on mobile app is already available.

Observations/Recommendations(Para No. 11)

Awareness on “One Station One Product”

The Ministry of Railways has submitted that allotment of ‘Kiosks’ under ‘One Station One Product’ is being done to applicants for a specific period on rotational basis and the applications are directly submitted at the stations. The Committee note that due to this specific period application, several other artisans willing to participate might not be aware of the theme of “Kiosks” & “One Station one Product” and hence would not be able to apply. The Committee, therefore, desire that Ministry of Railways should make sincere efforts to popularize “One Station One Product” drive to the masses, especially in the rural areas so that even far located artisans can get a chance to showcase their product reflecting their uniqueness in arts/crafts. For this, a dedicated

hyperlink on its website may be given where any organization/individual can apply for allotment of kiosks and get the benefit thereof. The Committee would like to be apprised of the steps in this regard.

Reply of the Government

“One Station One Product” (OSOP) scheme aims to provide enhanced opportunities to local artisans, potters, weavers, craftsmen etc, through provision of sales outlets at Railway Stations across the country.

To fulfill the objective of the scheme, individual artisans, weavers, craftsmen, etc associated with registered micro enterprises on the Udyam portal of Ministry of MSME and NGOs, PM Vishwakarma scheme, Social Organizations, State Govt. bodies, etc have been allowed to participate in this scheme. In addition to this, individual artisans, weavers, craftsmen enrolled/registered with central agencies such as TRIFED (Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India Limited), NHDC (National Handloom Development Corporation), KVIC (Khadi and Village Industries Commission), registered Self Help Groups with PMEGP (Prime Minister’s Employment Generation Programme) etc. have also been considered under this scheme.

All efforts are being made to ensure that the benefits of this scheme reach the target groups i.e., those at the bottom of the pyramid. To achieve this objective, various public outreach measures including advertising in newspapers, social media, public announcements, press notifications, interactions with artisans, outreach programmes at Panchayat, Block and District levels, etc. have been adopted by the Railway Authorities for maximum proliferation of OSOP scheme at the ground level.

Observations/Recommendations(Para No. 12)

Allied facilities such as Medical/Para-Medical facility

The Committee are of the considered view that as the Ministry has embarked on the journey of upgrading the passenger amenities on the railway’s physical infrastructure, it becomes imperative that other allied facilities also get upgraded for a passenger who uses railway as a mode of transport. The Committee urge the Ministry to identify all such related facilities and issue guidelines to all railway zones to ensure

that all such facilities including medical/para-medical, are made available to the passengers on every platform/train.

Reply of the Government

The need and extent of providing medical facilities at railway stations and in trains was examined by Hon'ble Supreme Court. In compliance of the orders, a committee of experts was constituted at All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), New Delhi. As recommended by Committee of experts, instructions have been issued to provide a Medical Box containing life saving medicines, equipment, oxygen cylinder etc. at all Railway stations and passenger carrying trains. Front line staff i.e Train Ticket Examiner, Train Guards/Superintendents, Station Master etc. are trained in rendering First Aid. Regular refresher courses are conducted for such staff. List of near-by hospitals and doctors along with their contact numbers is available at all Railway Stations. Ambulance services of Railways, State Government/Private Hospitals and ambulance service providers are utilized to transport the injured/sick passengers to the hospitals/doctor's clinics.

CHAPTER III

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

NIL

CHAPTER IV

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

Observations/Recommendations(Para No. 1)

Need For Dedicated Budget

The allocation for development and maintenance of stations including for ABSS are generally funded under plan Head-53 "consumer amenities". The Committee note that Ministry of Railways do not have an earmarked budget allocation for ABSS specifically but utilizes one for the Plan Head-53. The Committee further observe that the expenditure, under Customer Amenities, as per data furnished by Ministry of Railways, is at a very low pace in almost all Zones which indicates slow progress of upgradation work. The Committee are of the view that while embarking on the journey of modernization and upgradation of the station, Ministry of Railways should have created a sub-head under Plan Head-53 so as not only to make demarcation clear but also to map the pace of utilization/surplus-in a given year. In view of this, the Committee urge the Ministry to create a Sub-head for ABSS along with allocation to each zone earmarked explicitly in a bit to ensure balanced development/up-gradation of railway stations across the country. As the scheme of ABSS is in its first phase itself, the Committee strongly feel that Ministry can allocate the funds for the scheme exclusively with strict timelines for physical progress of work, which would enable the Ministry to evaluate allocation vis-à-vis its utilization zone-wise.

Reply of the Government

In regard to the Committee's observation regarding slow progress of upgradation work under the Amrit Bharat Station Scheme, it is important to note that there have been significant developments since the preparation of the observation/recommendations of the committee. Initially, there were 1309 railway stations identified for development under this scheme. However, the current number of identified stations has increased to 1324. Out of 1324 stations, tenders have been awarded for 1178 stations and works are in progress. The remaining 146 stations are in

different stages of master planning and tendering. The initial period for stations is generally taken for preliminary works like master planning, design/drawings and enabling works to commence. Hence the physical progress is sometimes not very prominently visible in some cases at initial stages. The scheme is steadily gaining momentum and progressing towards its targeted goals.

As regard to create a Sub-Head for Amrit Bharat Station Scheme, it is submitted that expenditure under PH-53-Customer Amenities over last 3 years and Budget outlay for 2024-25 (Budgetary Sources) is indicated below:-

(₹ in crores)	
Actual 2020-21	2582.92
Actual 2021-22	1995.75
Actual 2022-23	2159.40
Actual 2023-24 (Prov.)	8121.73
BE 2024-25	15510.75

Ministry of Railways has conventionally followed the Plan Head wise budget allocation process to ensure wholesome development of various customer amenities which has worked satisfactorily so far. Railway follows standard nomenclature for the Heads and subheads for different activities.

Thus, creating a separate sub-head to capture the expenditure booked for Amrit Bharat Station Scheme works for identical activities is not required.

Further, Development/redevelopment/upgradation of Railway Stations is complex in nature involving safety of passengers & trains and requires various statutory clearances such as fire clearance, heritage, tree cutting, air-port clearance etc. The progress also gets affected due to brown field related challenges such as shifting of utilities, (involving water/sewage lines, optical fibre cables, gas pipe lines, power/signal cables etc.,) infringements, operation of trains without hindering passenger movement, speed restrictions due to works carried out in close proximity of high voltage power lines etc. and these factors affect the completion time. Therefore, no time frame can be indicated at this stage.

Comments of the Committee
(Please see Para 08 of Chapter-I of the Report)

Observations/Recommendations(Para No 3)

Need for inter-se priority

During the examination of the subject, the Ministry has informed that under ABSS, the stations are identified and communicated to them by the zonal Railways for up-gradation. Also, there is no priority fixed as to the segregation of Stations under different phases. The Committee further note that in some States, there are more stations to be upgraded in first phase than other smaller states. The Committee are of the strong view that Ministry should urge the zonal Railways to identify the Stations to be upgraded under ABSS on the basis of laid down criteria for inclusion in each phase. The Committee feel that, since zonal Railways are better equipped with the knowledge of developmental needs of each Station and its potential expansion into a city centre in long run, it is the onus of zonal Railways to categorize Stations for up-gradation on the basis of priority/sequencing assigned.

Reply of the Government

Upgradation/development/redevelopment of stations on Indian Railways is a continuous and on-going process and works in this regard are undertaken as per requirement, subject to inter-se priority and availability of funds. However, priority for upgradation/development/redevelopment of stations is accorded to higher category of station over lower category of station while sanctioning and executing the work. The spatial distribution of stations across States is reasonably uniform and the Scheme covers all States and Union Territories with Rail connectivity.

Comments of the Committee (Please see Para 14 of Chapter-I of the Report)

Observations/Recommendations(Para No. 4)

Benchmarking up-gradation

During the deliberations, the Ministry has informed the Committee that they are yet to issue a “standardization document” for the up-gradation for stations identified under ABSS. The Committee are of the view that as more than 7000 stations are

spread across the country, benchmark should be set up for toilets, platforms, ticket counters etc. and installation of fittings therein. The Committee, therefore, strongly hold that ABSS being a pan India scheme, the up-gradation should align stations in a uniform way and, therefore, urge the Ministry to issue comprehensive guidelines in the matters of standardization of fittings, CCTVs, WiFi, Station access, sound systems, furniture etc. to ensure uniformity across the stations.

Reply of the Government

Standardisation and benchmarking is a continuous and on-going process on Indian Railways. Ministry of Railways has issued model documents for Engineering Construction and Procurement contracts, General Conditions of Contract, Project Management Supervision, Technical and General consultants, guidelines for standard signages etc. Further, Ministry of Railways also has a specialised organisation viz, Research Design and Standards Organisation (RDSO) for issue of standards and specifications from time to time. Recently RDSO has issued designs for foot over bridges, OHE arrangements etc. Schedule of rates and corresponding specifications have also been issued to Zonal Railways.

Comments of the Committee (Please see Para 17 of Chapter-I of the Report)

CHAPTER V

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

NIL

**NEW DELHI;
16 December, 2024
Agrahayana 25, 1946 (Saka)**

**DR. SANJAY JAISWAL,
CHAIRPERSON,
COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES**

MINUTES OF THE NINTH SITTING OF THE COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES (2024-2025)

The Committee sat on Monday, the 16th December, 2024 from 1600 hrs. to 1630 hrs. in Room No. '52-B', First Floor, Samvidhan Sadan, New Delhi.

PRESENT

Dr. Sanjay Jaiswal - Chairperson

Members

2. Shri Brijmohan Agrawal
3. Shri M. Mallesh Babu
4. Shri Pradan Baruah
5. Shri Kalyan Banerjee
6. Shri P. P. Chaudhary
7. Smt. Sangeeta Kumari Singh Deo
8. Shri Deepender Singh Hooda
9. Shri Manish Jaiswal
10. Thiru Dayanidhi Maran
11. Shri P. C. Mohan
12. Shri B.K. Parthasarathi
13. Shri Rajiv Pratap Rudy
14. Dr. Rajkumar Sangwan
15. Shri Arvind Ganpat Sawant
16. Kumari Selja
17. Dr. Indra Hang Subba
18. Shri Manoj Tiwari
19. Shri Ve Vaithilingam

SECRETARIAT

1. Shri Y. M. Kandpal - Joint Secretary
2. Shri Lalkithang - Director

2. At the outset, the Chairperson welcomed the Members to the sitting of the Committee. The Committee then took up for consideration and adoption of the following draft Reports:

- (i) XXX XXX XXX
- (ii) XXX XXX XXX
- (iii) XXX XXX XXX
- (iv) Draft Report on Action Taken by the Government on the Observations/Recommendations contained in the 35th Report (17th Lok Sabha) of the Committee on the subject "Progress of Amrit Bharat Station Scheme"; and
- (v) XXX XXX XXX

3. Thereafter, the Committee adopted the Draft Reports without any modifications. The Committee, then, authorised the Chairperson to finalize the draft Reports and present the same to Lok Sabha.

The Committee, then, adjourned.

APPENDIX II

**Analysis of action taken by the Government on the
Observations/Recommendations of the Committee contained in the Thirty-Fifth
Report (Seventeenth Lok Sabha)**

(i)	Total number of recommendations/observations	12
(ii)	Recommendations/Observations which have been accepted by the Government: (Sl. NO. 2,5,6,7,8,9,10,11 and 12)	09
	Percentage of total recommendations	75%
(iii)	Observations/Recommendations which the Committee do not desire to pursue in view of Government's reply: (NIL)	00
	Percentage of total recommendations	00%
(iv)	Observations/Recommendations in respect of which Government's replies have not been accepted by the Committee: (Sl. No. 1,3 and 4)	03
	Percentage of total recommendations	25%
(v)	Observations/Recommendations in respect of which final reply of Government is still awaited: (NIL)	00
	Percentage of total recommendations	00%