

13

**STANDING COMMITTEE
ON RAILWAYS
(1997-98)**

ELEVENTH LOK SABHA

**MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS
(RAILWAY BOARD)**

'RAILWAY ENGINEERS TERRITORIAL ARMY'

THIRTEENTH REPORT



**LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI**

October, 1997/Asvina, 1919 (Saka)

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(RAILWAY BOARD)

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02 DEC 1998

Presented to Lok Sabha on.....

Laid in Rajya Sabha on.....



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COMPOSITION OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON RAILWAYS
(1997-98)

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(iv)

SECRETARIAT

1. Shri S.N. Mishra — *Additional Secretary*
2. Shri R.C. Gupta — *Deputy Secretary*
3. Shri Surinder N. Dargan — *Under Secretary*

INTRODUCTION

1. the Chairman of Standing Committee on Railways (1997-98) having been authorised by the Committee to submit the Report on their behalf, present this Thirteenth Report of the Committee on 'Railway Engineers Territorial Army'.

2. Study Group-I of the Standing Committee on Railways (1996-97) was constituted for examining the subject on Railway Finance. It consisted of the following Members:—

1. Shri K.P. Singh Deo — *Convenor*
2. Dr. Prabin Chandra Sarma — *Alternate Convenor*
3. Shri Satya Deo Singh
4. Shri Anand Ratna Maurya
5. Shri V.M. Sudheeran
6. Shri Qamarul Islam
7. Smt. Malti Sharma
8. Shri Rahasbihari Barik

3. The Study Group-I examined the subject in detail and had informal discussion with the Railway officials on 27.12.96. After finalising their draft Report on the subject, the Study Group referred the same to the Committee (1996-97) for their consideration. As that Committee could not take up the subject due to paucity of time, the Standing Committee on Railways (1997-98) decided to consider the draft Report and to examine the subject further.

4. The Committee took evidence of the representatives of the Ministry of Railways and the Ministry of Defence at their sitting held on 8 September, 1997. The draft Report was considered and adopted by the Committee at their sitting held on 13 October, 1997.

5. The Committee wish to express their thanks to the representatives of the Ministry of Railways (Railway Board) and Ministry of Defence, who appeared before the Committee and shared their considered views on the matter which came up for discussion during evidence. They also wish to thank them for furnishing the material and information desired by the Committee.

NEW DELHI;
13 October, 1997

21 *Asvina*, 1919 (*Saka*)

BASUDEB ACHARIA
Chairman,
Standing Committee on Railways.

REPORT

CHAPTER—I

RAILWAY ENGINEERS TERRITORIAL ARMY

1. Origin

On attainment of independence in 1947, defence of the country assumed paramount importance. The need for a second line of defence was felt. Consequently in 1948 the Territorial Army Act was passed by the Parliament and a new force, namely the Territorial Army (TA) was set up. It was equipped with almost all the various arms and services of the Army, bringing it on par with the Regular Army so that it could function independently and could supplement and complement Army efforts.

2. Objectives

The Railway TA Units were raised with the following main objectives:—

- (i) To maintain rail communications in the forward areas during active hostilities; and
- (ii) To maintain essential rail communications in an emergency situation arising during peace time.

3. Organisation

The raising of Railway TA units commenced in 1949 and by 1950-51 five Railway Engineers Territorial Army Groups (Nos. 968, 969, 970, 971 and 972) were raised. These Groups functioned as Railway Territorial Army Groups and were subsequently re-organised as the Railway Engineers Regts. (Territorial Army). Considering their performance and utility five additional Railway Engineer Territorial Army Groups (Nos. 973, 1031, 1032, 1033 and 1034) were raised in 1951-52. Two Railway Bridge Construction Companies were raised in 1962 during the National Emergency. On seeing the effective part played by the Railway Engineers Territorial Army Units in the operations of the Railway system during the Railways strike in 1974, orders were issued in 1975 for raising five more groups namely Nos. 1101, 1102, 1103, 1104 and 1105.

4. However, in pursuance of Ministry of Defence Order dated 23.10.1975, one Regiment No. 973 of the Railway Engineers TA Group and 5 Bridge Repair Platoons were disbanded by 31.03.1986. Railway Engineers Regiments Nos. 1102 and 1104 raised in 1975 and No. 1033 raised during the National Emergency were also disbanded by 1992. Thus at present there are only 11 Railway Engineer Regiments besides 2 Bridge Construction Companies.

5. Railway Engineers Regiments are a Departmental Unit and are manned entirely by serving railwaymen, barring the permanent staff composed of Regular Army personnel. The total strength of the Railway Engineer Regiments is 16746 out of which 15921 are Railway TA personnel who are part time members and 825 are permanent staff who are whole-time members drawn from the TA/regular Army.

Expenditure on Railway Engineers Regiments (TA)

6. Till 1972 the expenditure on the Railway Engineers Regiments (TA) was borne by Defence Ministry. Since 1972 consequent to an arrangement between the Ministry of Defence and Railways; some TA units are being paid by Railways. Railways TA has presently the units being paid by the Ministry of Defence and six being paid by the Ministry of Railways. Payment in respect of 2 Bridge Construction Companies is also being made by the Ministry of Defence. The details of Railway Engineers Regiments (TA) alongwith their locations are as under:

	Paid by Railways (Railway Paid)	Paid by Defence (Defence paid)
1.	968 Rly. Engineers Regiment (TA) Ludhiana	969 Rly. Engineers Regt. (TA) Jamalpur
2.	971 Rly. Engineers Regiment (TA) Delhi	970 Rly. Engineers Regt. (TA) Jhansi
3.	1101 Rly. Engineers Regiment (TA) Chandigarh	972 Rly. Engineers Regt. (TA) Muzaffarpur
4.	1031 Rly. Engineers Regiment (TA) Kota	1032 Rly. Engineers Regt. (TA) Adra
5.	1103 Rly. Engineers Regiment (TA) Kota	1034 Rly. Engineers Regt. (TA) Bangalore
6.	1105 Rly. Engineers Regiment (TA) Hyderabad	1051 Bridge Construction Coy. (TA) Ludhiana
		1052 Bridge Constuction Coy. (TA) Adra

7. When asked about expenditure incurred on Railway Engineers Regiments (TA), the Ministry of Railways have stated that:—

“The expenditure is mainly operational to two major heads, viz., the expenditure on stores/equipments, etc. and the expenditure on the TA Army personnel, which includes the expenditure on the TA Armymen towards their salary throughout the year and the expenditure on the Railwaymen whose salary is charged only when they attend Annual Training Camps (ATCs) or when embodied in aid of civil authority/army and hence fluctuates widely depending upon the number of Railwaymen on the actual strength and how many out of them attend the Annual Training

Camps. Such expenditures are booked on the strength of credits and debits raised on each other by both the Ministries of Railways and Defence and other user Ministries not commenced with Railway and Defence requirements which may spill over to several years in certain cases, due to which the expenditure booked each year on account of Rly. Engineers. Regts. fluctuate widely. According to the Army Headquarters (ADGTA), following is the anticipated annual expenditure under different heads:—

	Man Power			
	Perma- nent Staff (full- time)	Railway- men (Part- time)	Mainte- nance of Equip- ment / Stores	Total (Rs. in crores)
	(Rs.)	(Rs.)	(Rs.)	(Rs.)
Rly. Paid Regiments	0.55	0.67	0.10	1.33
Defence Paid Regiments	0.70	1.00	0.18	1.87

8. Asked about the origin and concept of 'Defence Paid' and 'Railway Paid Units,' the Ministry of Railways, in their written note have stated:

"The background behind this financial arrangement between the Ministry of Railways and the Ministry of Defence is as follows. In December 1972, after the emergence of Bangladesh, the Defence Ministry advised that the need for Railway TA Groups had been re-assessed in the light of the changed scenario in the Eastern Sector, the operational requirements and also necessity of embodying the Railway TA Units for the maintenance of Essential Services and it was decided to disband five out of ten Rly. Engineers Groups (TA). The Ministry of Railways, however demanded that all these five Rly. Engineers (TA) Groups should be retained in view of the part played by them during emergent situations like those of strikes, agitations, natural calamities and in aid of civil authorities etc. The Ministry of Defence agreed to the proposal, subject however, to the Ministry of Railways agreeing to bear the entire cost of all the five groups which were proposed for disbandment. This is how the concept of Defence Paid and Railway Paid Groups was introduced by the Ministry of Defence in the year 1972."

9. When the Committee enquired about the reasons for the insistence of the Ministry of Defence for six Railway Paid and five Defence Paid units, JS (Defence) clarified as under:

“The charter of Railway Engineering Units are twofold. One to maintain rail communication in the forward areas during active hostilities in war or war like situations. The other is maintenance of essential rail communication in emergency during peace time. As far as the first charter is concerned, we made an assessment and we found that these five regiments with Bridge Construction companies are enough to meet the requirement. In war time these units have to operate in war zone when the forces are advancing including even in enemy territory. While the railway engineers are experts, but for operating in war they need military training.”

He further stated that:

“...We have got the system of maintenance of essential rail communication in an emergency such as in internal security situation. It is essentially the railways' responsibility and if the railways feel that the Territorial Army is helpful, there we can have them in addition to their units.”

10. As regards role of 'Railway Paid' and 'Defence Paid' Regiments, the Ministry of Defence, in a written note to the Committee, stated that both Railway and Defence Paid Regiments have common role. The Railway regiments, both Railway Paid or Defence Paid can therefore be deployed on any task during peace as well as war.

Embodiment of Railway Engineers Regiments

11. The Ministry of Defence, in a note to the Committee on the level of efficiency of TA Regiments during embodiment, stated:

“The Railway Engineer Regiments have been embodied at various occasions for maintaining essential services during peace and three wars which our country has fought against China and Pakistan in 1962, 1965 and 1971 respectively. Their overall performance during these embodiments has been creditable. Some of the important occasions when the TA Railway Regiments have been embodied in the past are as under:—

(a) Peace Time

- (i) Railway strike in 1951-52 & 1966. Some units were embodied to run trains.
- (ii) Railway strike 1974. All TA Regiments were embodied which went into action to maintain the economic activity of the country by keeping the wheels moving.
- (iii) Again in 1989 during the Bharat Bandh call, the railway Regiments were embodied to keep the wheels moving.

(b) War Time

- (i) All Railway Regiments were embodied. One Regiment (978 Railway Engineers Group) was employed on running trains between Kathiyar and Siliguri sections during 1962 operations. All other Regiments were held as reserve for an emergency during these operations but not employed.
- (ii) In 1971 war:—
- (aa) HQ 472 Railway Brigade was activated to control and coordinate five groups and one bridge construction coy in Eastern Sector. They restored communications extensively including construction of Callendar Hamilton Bridge at Narvane and Thikargacha, operated sections at Faridpur, Khulna, Bongaon and Rangaon and operated around 360 trains between Dec. 71 and Mar. 72.
- (ab) Four Railway Regiments were employed in restoring railway communications in the Western Sector.
- (ac) One group was employed in Rajasthan Sector to restore and link up rail line Munabao-Khokrapar-ChorNaya Chor.
- (iii) Brigadier VP Gole, Commander, 472 Railway Engr. Brigade was awarded AVSM for his distinguished services and railway persons won one VrC and few other awards.

In this regard the Ministry of Defence added that:—

“Major manpower deficiencies exist in two units namely 969 and 972 Rly. Engr. Regts. whose operational efficiency may be questionable. All other units are operationally fit. However, it is our opinion that although deficiency continues to persist in these Regiments, in event of emergency the railway employees will come forward to serve these Regiments as in the past ensuring the Operational efficiency of these units.”

12. The Committee enquired whether the Railways and Defence have any enabling provisions in various acts so that in the event of an undeclared war or undeclared emergency, the Regiments could be mobilised. The representatives of Ministry of Defence replied in affirmative.

Elaborating the point further, the Chairman Railway Board stated as under:—

“In the recent past, you will see the assortment which has nothing to do with the railways. On 19th January, 1983 and 10th February, 1983 because of the Assembly elections in Assam, 971 and 972 Regiments were embodied. In 1984, there was an indefinite port strike and we embodied 1031, 1032, 1034, 1102, 1105 and 970 Regiments...

At the time of assassination of the former Prime Minister, two Regiments were embodied. At the time of Bharat Bandh on 30.8.89, all the Regiments were embodied. Again at the time of cyclone relief measure, in Bangalore, 1034 Regiment was embodied.”

The Chairman, Railway Board further informed the Committee Group that since 1991 they did not have any occasion to embody the Territorial Army.

13. While replying to the Committee's query during evidence as to why not even a single Unit of Territorial Army is located set up in the North Eastern Region, the Chairman, Railway Board stated as under:—

“Historically, when they were set up, they were set up by the Army. Another reason is that Eastern Sector also has its own threat perception from outside, if not within the State, and, therefore, the need to have a unit even in that area merits consideration.”

He further added:

“The expenditure is not much. We are very close to Myanmar. We are very close to Bangladesh and we do not know what exactly can happen in that area. Definitely, it merits consideration but not because of the internal situation but more because of the external threat. Secondly, Railways should not be without any Territorial Army Unit.”

14. When asked about the activities of Railway Engineers Regiments.

“Each Regiment consists of a small nucleus called permanent staff and the rest are from Railways. The permanent staff are drawn from the Army/TA and function throughout the year and look after the administration, annual training of Railwaymen, embodiment, maintenance/preventive maintenance, arms ammunition, equipments, stores and holdings Railway TA men continue to discharge their duties on the Railways, except when broken by spells of embodiment for TA duties in emergent situations, the period of which may vary depending upon the longevity of the situation. Besides the embodiment, Railwaymen are to attend one month training camp every year to keep themselves physically fit. There will, therefore, be no activity during non-emergency periods except holding the Annual Training Camps in groups for imparting training for 30 days to each group.”

15. The Committee were also informed by Railways that four Committees have been constituted to look into the necessity of particular trades of the Regiments since some of the trades have become obsolete.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
972/NER	30	64	1617	10	15	1048	67	77	35
1034/SR	30	64	1617	25	40	1275	17	38	21
1105/SCR	23	46	1081	13	23	854	43	63	21
1032 & 1052 Br.	34	69	1841	24	24	1542	29	65	16
Cons. Coy./ SER									
1031/WR									
1103/WR	46	92	2162	19	59	2162	59	36	0
Total	296	606	15019	184	258	12629	38	57	16

From the table it may be seen that there is large scale deficiency of personnel in RE (TA). The deficiency is the greatest than the rank of JCO (57%). In the rank of CO the deficiency is 38% while in OR the deficiency is 16%.

18. The Ministry have in a written note on the deficiency of personnel in Railway Engineers, (TA), stated:

“Based on the extant instructions regarding absorption of TA personnel on disbandment of a TA Regts. commissioned officers, JCOs and ORs were adjusted in other Regiments. While disbanding three Regiments. (1033, 1102 and 1104) in the year 1992. Even after absorbing 30 COs, 90 JCOs and 720 ORs from among those released from the three disbanded Regiments in the existing Regts., large scale deficiency, particularly in the ranks of Commissioned Officers and JCOs continue to afflict the Rly. Engineers. Regiments. (TA), though the deficiency in the rank of ORs is within reasonable limit.

The problem is more acute on the Railways where more than one Regiment is raised for a particular Railway. At present Northern Rly. is having 3 Regiments (+ one Br. Cons Coy) and Western Railway 2 Regiments. These two Railways find it difficult to make good the deficiency as they have to enroll volunteers to more than one Regiment.”

19. Asked about the steps taken to make up the deficiency, the Ministry stated:

“Railways are conducting recruitment drives from time to time to recruit more officers and men in the Rly. Engineers, Regiments, (TA). Instructions have been issued to the Railway Training Institutions to catch the officers young for enrolment in the Rly. Regiments. And yet the extent of response from Railwaymen especially for officers and JCO's rank is very discouraging.”

20. As regards deficiencies in operational categories like ASMs, Drivers etc. the Ministry stated that:

“ASMs, Drivers etc. enjoy the rank of both JCO and ORs, the latter category of rank is enjoyed mostly by those who are in the lower grades of such categories. The deficiency in the rank of ORs is marginal which is a phenomenon common to all cadres, whereas the deficiency in the rank of JCOs is high. The posts in the JCOs rank are filled up by means of direct recruitment as also by promotion from the rank of OR. The issue of large scale deficiency in the rank of JCOs was deliberated in the Commanding Officers Conference held on 27/28.5.96 and it has been decided that 50% of the vacancies of JCOs could be filled up by means of direct commissioning and 50% by promotion from Hav. to Nb. Sub., after standardising the instructions for commission/promotion to the rank of Nb. Sub., besides waiving the requirement of ACRs for promotions to the rank of JCO. Further it has been decided to launch a drive to induct more JCOs”.

21. Enquired about the incentives given to Railway men for joining TA, the Ministry stated that:

“Several cash incentives as detailed below are extended to the Railwaymen who volunteer to join as also on completion of certain prescribed year of service in TA:

On enrolment:

Group D	— Rs. 600/-
Group C	— Rs. 1200/-
Group B/Jr. Scale	— Rs. 1600/-
Sr. Scale	— Rs. 2000/-
JA Gr. & above	— Rs. 3000/-

For extension of service

Group D	— Rs. 300/-	} Each time on completion of 7, 10 & 15 years.
Group C	— Rs. 600/-	
Group B/Jr.	— Rs. 800/-	} Each time on completion of 12, 15 & 18 years.
Sr. Scale	— Rs. 1000/-	
JA Gr. & above	— Rs. 1500/-	

During ATC.

TA men draw pay and allowances from Railway which is in addition to the Army pay they get from Ministry of Defence.

During embodiment in aid of Civil Authorities etc.

Daily allowance at the rate of 200% in case of Commissioned Officers and 175% in case of other Ranks without restriction on the Number of days and place of deployment.

Recipients of TA Decoration/Medal of Meritorious service

Commissioned Officers after 20 years	Rs. 5000/-
Other Ranks on completion of 12 years of service	Rs. 3000/-

22. The Committee enquired about the problems faced by the TA personnel, the Ministry in their note stated,

“Several cash incentives offered to Railwaymen to join TA service has not evoked the desired effect. The problems faced by the personnel of the Rly. Engrs. Regts. stem mainly from the fact that, in the name of maintaining the ethos of the Army, the same set of rules and regulations which are applicable to Armymen, are being rigidly applied to Railwaymen in the matter of promotions and commissioning, despite the fact that the service in TA is part of career planning for the Armymen, whereas it is an additional responsibility/obligation voluntarily being shouldered by the Railwaymen while serving the Railways. The indifference to TA service owes its origin to the mental humiliation the Railwaymen suffer for want of Army rank commensurate with their civil status at the time of discharging duties in TA where command and control is rank-oriented. Insistence on clearing the DPE and commissioning in the lowest rank of 2 Lt. irrespective of their civil status are the contributory factors. Another factor relates to the current policy on giving discharge from TA which has forced the Railwaymen to think that liability to serve TA is life-long, which a vast majority is not prepared to face, as is being reflected in a good number of candidates among the very limited number of volunteers issued with orders of commissioning, backing out to join TA and a large number of officers pursuing their request for discharge from TA service. The Ministry of Railways have taken up with the ADGTA the question of (i) commissioning the Railway officers in the rank of Capt. in the same manner as is being done in the case of Medical Officers in the Rly. Regts., as against the lowest rank of 2 Lt. for other categories, at present and, (ii) doing away with the DPE for the Railway TA personnel. Though the ADGTA were at one point of time inclined to agree with Railway Board in doing away with the DPE for Railway Officers, have also recently issued orders delinking DPE only for giving acting promotion and not substantive promotion. Delinking DPE only for acting promotion will not help the Railway officers picking up rank commensurate with their civil status. De-linking DPE with substantive rank can help the Railway Officers as such promotions are given without limiting it to the ranks authorised by the Functional Establishment (FE) which will pave the way for the Railway officers getting rank commensurate with their civil status. Moreover, the officer concerned can use only his substantive rank after discharge irrespective of the higher acting rank held at the time of discharge. Hence the recent order has served only in a very limited way. As regards initial commissioning in the rank of Capt., ADGTA are not favourably inclined. Besides, initial commissioning in the rank of Capt. and reducing the liability period to a reasonable level of say

7-10 years delinking DPE for substantive promotion will attract more Railwaymen to join TA service.

The posts in the JCO's rank are filled up by means of direct recruitment as also by promotion from the rank of OR. It has been decided in the Commanding Officers Conference held on 27/28.05.96 that 50% of the vacancies would be filled up by means of direct commissioning for which a drive should be launched to induct more JCOs. As regards the remaining 50% by means of promotion from ORs, which was causing delay on account of certain documentation problems, it has been decided to standardise the instructions for commission/promotion to the rank of Nb. Sub. besides waiving the requirement of ACRs for promotion."

23. However, the Ministry of Defence have stated in this regard that:

"The lack of volunteers and consequent state of deficiencies can be attributed to the following reasons:—

- (a) The incentives given by the railways fall short of the aspirations of the volunteers and therefore fail to attract them to join TA.
- (b) The biggest grouse the railway employees have against joining TA is that the ranks granted in TA are not commensurate to their civil status. This is the major cause in deficiencies in Officers and JCOs state. The rank structure is laid down in the Functional Establishment of Rly. TA Regts. This structure is based on the ethos of the two services. Neither can the individuals serving in Rly. TA be granted ranks higher to those authorised in establishments, nor exceed the authorised structure. TA being voluntary, individuals join TA for the sheer desire to don uniform and serve the nation; a number of high placed personalities in civil life such as Shri K. P. Singh Deo, MP (former Minister of State), Dr. Sanjay Singh, MP, Maj. Sudhir Sawant (TA), MP hold much junior ranks comparing to their civil status.
- (c) Lack of protection to their service (particularly in case of Officers) since they are often transferred frequently because of their involvement in service of TA which keeps them away during annual training camps.
- (d) Although the railways have made certain categories of their employees belonging to operating and engineering compulsorily to serve in TA, categories such as IRTS are not obliged to serve. A case taken up to make the IRTS officers liable to serve in Rly. TA units presently rests with Rly. Board.
- (e) Railways do not provide any special promotional benefit to their employees who serve in TA.
- (f) The Army does not provide the volunteers serving railway TA units any particular benefits such as Canteen Store Department

(CSD) facilities in disembodied state, membership of Army Clubs etc.

Measures need to be taken to make service in Rly TA attractive for railway employees. Better service benefits should accrue to these volunteers and they need to be afforded protection to their service. Service Ranks of the Railway also need to be modified to make all category of employees obliged to serve in TA."

24. The Committee were informed by the Member (Staff) in regard to Departmental Promotion Examination:—

"The departmental examination for promotion is basically for the Commissioned Officers and the requirement is that before a person is promoted from Lieutenant to Captain he should pass this examination. This should be done within seven years of the commissioning into service. But in the Territorial Army, even after 13 years if he does not pass the examination, he continues.

As a matter of fact, the problem is that an official remains in touch with a particular organisation only for a month. Normally, the examination for promotion from Lieutenant to Captain is held once a year. The requirement of the job is also very much different. Of course, some items are common. What we are proposing is that, at the time when they join, some training can be given. If necessary that can be dispensed with. Based on the performance some assessment can be done and their performance can be assessed annually."

25. Giving detailed data about Departmental Promotion Examination, the Ministry stated:

"As per the extent instructions, Commissioned Officers have to clear the Departmental Promotion Examination (DPE) within a period of 7 years of commissioning without losing their seniority. The officer will be discharged on completion of 15 years of commissioning if he has not cleared the DPE despite show cause notice after 13 years of commissioning for not having cleared the DPE. However, this mandatory provision is not enforced lest the Railway Regiments lose a large number of officers on this account.

The DPE is conducted in the month of July every year for which the Commissioned Officers have to plan well in advance by sending in their applications, make necessary preparation for the examination and finally appear for the examination which they are

not in a position to do as they are holding key positions in the Zonal Railways. The DPE is conducted by the Ministry of Defence and following is the information for the years 1989 to 1995:

Years	Total No. of Officers		
	Appeared	Passed	Failed
1989	03	Nil	03
1990	15	11	04
1991	13	02	11
1992	04	01	03
1993	03	Nil	03
1994	09	05	04
1995	08	03	05

26. In this regard the Ministry of Defence have stated that:

Railway TA Officers are required to pass DPE for grant of substantive promotion from Lt. to Capt. In case these Officers fail to pass this exam. within the prescribed limit of 15 years they are to be removed from service.

It has been observed that a large number of these officers are unable to take this examination due to their departmental commitment. A number of officers who are not keen to continue to serve in TA Rlys., tend to take this as a way to get out. In the past, to ensure that the strength of the force is not depleted, extension of service of these officers who had not passed this exam. had to be resorted to."

Following measures are being taken to overcome this problem:—

- (a) The syllabus for the exam. and the trend of question papers is being examined at this Dte.
- (b) Review Committee on TA had extensively deliberated on this issue and recommended that the exam. be held under the aegis of TA Date and schedule it during training camps.

Annual Training Camps

27. Asked about the deficiencies in the Annual Training Camps during the last 5 years and action taken against staff for not attending such camps, the Ministry of Railways have stated that:

“Based on the information readily available, following is the position for the years 94-95 and 95-96 showing the percentage of attendance based on the actual strength in the various ranks:

Rank	% of attendance during	
	94-95	95-96
COs	62	51
JCOs	51	51
Other Ranks	58	48

The service in Rly. Engrs. Regts. (TA) being voluntary, no stringent action was taken against the personnel who did not attend the ATCs. However, instructions have been streamlined thereby nomination of officers and other ranks for the Annual Training Camps and also ensuring their attendance to be made in close co-ordination with the Heads of the Departments concerned in the case of commissioned officers and ADRMs in the case of JCOs and ORs.

28. The Ministry of Defence have stated that:

“It is mandatory for railway TA personnel to attend 30 days annual training camp. This attendance also makes the officers eligible to earn ACRs which are essentially to assess their suitability of subsequent promotions. The attendance in the annual training has generally been satisfactory.

The reasons which may be attributed to the lack in attendance in training are as under:

- (a) Individual not being relieved and warned in time by the concerned Railway DRM/SDGMs offices.
- (b) Since these officers generally come from operating staff and their posts can not be kept vacant even for short periods. Officers are often transferred to other appointments on return from training commitments. This acts as a disincentive to attend training.
- (c) The Date has no powers to take disciplinary action against errant individuals who do not attend training since the TA Act becomes applicable to them after they report to the unit.

Procedures have been evolved to warn the individuals with respect to the schedule of the training camps. Number of

training camps has been increased to give individuals more opportunities to attend training camps. COs and Second-in-Command are now permitted to split their training cycles into two to three spells to coordinate and oversee the training. And, the Adm. Officers keep continuous interaction with the DRMs/SDGMs."

29. The Ministry of Defence also mentioned the problem of accommodation facilities being faced by TA personnel when they come to attend ATC. In their note to the Committee the Ministry of Defence have stated that:—

"In general, the existing accommodation facilities with both defence and railway paid units are inadequate. It is important that these units have adequate living accommodation and basic ancillaries for the strength of Officers, JCOs and OR who may come to attend an ATC. The problem may be attributed to the following causes:—

- (a) Certain railway paid units are located on def land and def paid units located on railway land. Construction of additional accommodation and maintenance of existing accommodation therefore becomes a problem. Their status is given below:

DEF LAND

1. 968 Rly Engr. Regt. (TA)	—	Rly Paid
2. 970 Rly Engr. Regt. (TA)	—	Def. Paid
3. 971 Rly Engr. Regt. (TA)	—	Rly Paid
4. 972 Rly Engr. Regt. (TA)	—	Def. Paid
5. 1034 Rly Engr. Regt. (TA)	—	Def. Paid
6. 1031 Rly Engr. Regt. (TA)	—	Rly Paid

RLY LAND

1. 969 Rly Engr. Regt. (TA)	—	Def. Paid
2. 1032 Rly Engr. Regt. (TA)	—	Def. Paid
3. 1101 Rly Engr. Regt. (TA)	—	Rly Paid
4. 1103 Rly Engr. Regt. (TA)	—	Rly Paid
5. 1105 Rly Engr. Regt. (TA)	—	Rly Paid

- (b) The TA units are placed at a very low priority for accommodation.

Coordination between Ministry of Defence and Railway Board

30. Asked about the coordination between Ministry of Defence and Railway Board, the Ministry of Defence in a note to the Committee have stated that:

"There is no direct interaction between Ministry of Defence and the Railway Board. All interaction between the two

Ministries take place through the Dte. This Dte. maintains regular and continuous interaction with the Railway Board and all policy decisions are taken in mutual consultation. Regular feature of this interaction is the annual conference of the Commanding Officers of Railways TA held at Delhi in the TA Dte. and Railway Board.”

31. When the Committee enquired if the Ministry of Railways (Railway Board) can run the TA independent of the Ministry of Defence, the CRB stated that we have to examine it. However, he added:

“I do not think that we should run it independently because we have very close liaison with the Ministry of Defence.”

32. The Committee were informed that a High Level Committee was constituted in 1995 under the Chairmanship of Shri K.P. Singh Deo, to review the Territorial Army. In response to a query regarding the recommendations made by this Committee and the Action Taken by the Government thereon, the Joint Secretary, Ministry of Defence submitted as under:

“The Report of the Committee is under consideration. Since it involves a large number of changes including the latest changes and since consultation process is on, we are examining the report at the moment.”

CHAPTER-II

RECOMMENDATIONS/OBSERVATIONS

1. The Committee find that the Territorial Army Act was passed by the Parliament in 1948 and a new force, namely the Territorial Army (TA) was set up under Territorial Army Act to reinforce a second line of defence in the country. The raising of Railway TA units commenced in 1949 and by 1950-51 five Railway Engineers Territorial Army Groups were raised. The main objectives of Railway Engineers Regiments (TA) Group are to maintain (i) rail communication in forward areas during active hostilities and (ii) essential rail communication in an emergency situation arising during peace time.

From the information supplied to them, the Committee note that after considering the performance and utility of 5 Railway Engineers Territorial Army Groups raised in 1950-51, 5 more groups were raised in 1951-52 and in 1961-62. Two Bridge Construction Companies were also raised in 1962 during the national emergency. However, in December, 1972 after the emergence of Bangladesh, the Ministry of Defence reassessed the need for Railway Engineers Territorial Army Groups in the light of changed scenario in the eastern sector, the operational requirements and also the necessity of embodying the Railway Engineers Regiments (TA) Groups for the maintenance of essential services. The Ministry of Defence then decided to disband 5 out of the 10 Railway Engineers Regiments (TA) Groups. However as demanded by the Ministry of Railways to retain all these groups in view of the part played by them during emergent situation, natural calamities and in aid of civil authorities, the Ministry of Defence agreed to the proposal subject to the condition that the Ministry of Railways will have to bear the entire cost of all the 5 Groups which were proposed for disbandment.

As the Railway Engineers Regiments (TA) Groups played effective part during the Railways' 1974 strike, orders were issued in 1975 for raising 5 more groups. The Committee are concerned to note that in pursuance of the Ministry of Defence order dated 23 October, 1975, 1 Regiment of the Railway Engineers Regiments (TA) Groups and 5 Bridge Repair Platoons were disbanded by 31 March, 1986. Two Railway Engineers Regiments raised in 1975 and 1 raised during national emergency were also disbanded by 1992. As these Railway Engineers Regiments (TA) Groups and Bridge

Repair Platoons were disbanded without any rationale/study conducted inspite of the effective roles played by them, the Committee have come to a conclusion that these Groups were disbanded in a whimsical manner. This is a glaring example of adhocism prevailing in the Ministries of Railways and Defence. The Committee therefore, desire that Government should make periodical evaluation of operational/railway requirements of these Railway Engineers Regiments (TA) Groups every five years.

2. The Committee find that there are at present 11 Railway Engineers Regiments (TA) Groups out of which 6 are paid by the Ministry of Railways and the remaining 5 are paid by the Ministry of Defence. Payment in respect of 2 Bridge construction companies is also being made by the Ministry of Defence. As no satisfactory details of the expenditure incurred on these Railway Engineers Regiments (TA) Groups could be furnished to the Study Group, the Committee desire that the expenditure incurred on each of these Regiments duly vetted by Audit should be furnished to them without any further delay. Since Railway Engineers Regiments (TA) Groups were raised under an Act of Parliament, the Committee desire that their Annual Reports should also be placed on the table of the House.

3. The Committee have been informed by the Ministry of Defence that both the Railway paid and Defence paid Railway Engineers Regiments (TA) Groups have a common role and both Railway paid or Defence paid Regiments can be deployed on any task during peace as well as war. However, the Committee have found that a number of assets belonging both to the Ministries of Railway and Defence are on the railway land and none of these Ministries are interested in creating any facilities for these Groups. The Committee therefore, desire that both the Ministries of Railway and Defence should coordinate and create facilities for these Groups as the assets created are to be used by the Railway Engineers Regiments (TA) Groups irrespective of the fact whether the units are Defence paid or Railway paid.

4. The Committee note that the role of Territorial Army is to provide a second line of defence for the country and its composition and functions are at par with regular Army. Keeping in view the difficulties faced by the Railway Engineers Regiments due to dual control, the Committee are of the firm view that the concept of Railways paid and Defence paid Regiments should be continued but the Territorial Army should be placed under a single line of Control namely the Ministry of Defence.

5. The Committee have found that whereas a number of incentives are given to the persons who join Railway Engineers Regiments (TA) Groups from Railways, no such consideration is shown to the army personnel including TA personnel who are in the permanent staff. As it affects their morale, the Committee recommend that the regular army personnel including TA personnel who are in the permanent staff of the Railway Engineers Regiments (TA) should be given all those facilities which are provided to the Railway personnel, during embodiment.

6. The Committee find that neither the Railway authorities nor the Defence authorities have addressed themselves seriously to the problems being faced by the Railway Engineers Regiments (TA). Consequently, these units are in a neglected state with low morale. The Committee have been informed that a Sr. Deputy Railway Manager of the rank of Joint Secretary has been detailed to deal with the problems and complaints of the personnel of the Railway Engineers Regiments (TA). This arrangement has however not yielded the desired results as the various problems faced by the Railway Engineers Regiments (TA) still continue.

The Committee therefore, desire the Ministry of Railways to institutionalise this arrangement by designating the competent authority having financial, administrative and monitoring authority at various levels for resolving the problems of Service personnel, service matters including policy matters which affect the morale of the Service personnel in consultation with the appropriate levels of the Services Organisation.

7. The Committee are happy to find that Railway Engineers Regts. (TA) have done commendable job during their embodiments in both war time and peace situation. They have been decorated with medals for the outstanding performances during war. The Committee have been informed that these TA Groups were embodied in (a) Assembly elections in Assam in 1983; (b) indefinite post strike in 1984 & 1985 at the time of assassination of former Prime Minister in 1984 and at the time of cyclone relief measure. They would however like to know whether Railway Engineers Regiments (TA) were also deployed in 1987 and if so whether they were paid as per Rules for their embodiment at that time.

8. However since 1991 there has been no occasion to embody the Railway Engineer Territorial Army Regiments. The Committee note that there are enabling provision in various Acts of Railways and Defence to embody the Railways Engineers even in an event of an undeclared war or undeclared emergency. The Committee therefore desire that the Defence authorities should consider the embodiment of Railway Engineers Regiments (TA) personnel in varied situations under these enabling provisions in the various Acts for serving the nation.

9. The Committee find that there is large scale deficiency of personnel in Railway Engineers Regiments (TA) specially at Junior Commissioned Officers (JCO) level (57%) and at Commissioned Officers (CO) level (38%). So far as the deficiency at CO level is concerned, one of the main reason why the Railway Officers are not volunteering for the TA services is that they do not get the rank commensurate to their civil status and they are commissioned in the lowest rank of Second Lt. irrespective of their civil status. The Committee note that the rank structure is laid down in the functional Establishment of Railway Regiments (TA) and is based on the ethos of two services. The Committee therefore feel that ethos of Army should be the same for all and uniformity should be maintained. It will not be proper to have different sets of rules for various services of

similar functions. The Committee however desire that the criteria adopted in the initial commissioning of graduate doctors and engineers in the rank of Captain should also be extended to Railways for similarly qualified persons. Action should also be taken to fill up vacancies of Commissioned Officers as early as possible, by initiating corrective and appropriate steps.

10. The Committee find that the Commissioned Officers of Railway Engineer (TA) have to clear Departmental Promotion Examination (DPE) within a period of 7 years of commissioning without losing their seniority for grant of substantive promotion from Lieutenant to Captain. The Committee are concerned to note that about 80 per cent of the officers do not bother to appear in or to pass the Departmental Promotion Examination. The Committee take a very serious view in the matter and desire that action should be taken against the officers who do not appear in this examination.

11. The Committee also desire the Ministry of Defence to impart suitable coaching/guidance to Railway personnel and by designing the syllabus suitably for Railway Engineers by the Additional Director General (TA) in consultation with Railway Board so as to improve the pass percentage of DPE of Railway Engineering Regiments (TA). The Railway personnel should be encouraged to pass Departmental Promotion Examination by giving advance increments in case they pass it in a single attempt.

12. From the information furnished by the Ministry of Railways and the evidence tendered before the Study Group, they find that more than 50% of the Officers do not turn up in training camps. In spite of that this is a matter of concern that the Ministry of Railways have not taken disciplinary action even in a single case. The Committee feel that ATCs are very crucial as the Regiments should be fit and prepared and not found wanting in case of their embodiment. The Committee therefore desire to know the deficiencies in the training camps so that the effective steps could be taken by both the Ministry of Defence and Railways for increasing the attendance in ATCs.

13. The Committee note that the Operating Company and Maintenance Company of Railway Engineers Regiments (TA) has to look after the maintenance and operation of a range of 160 kms. of track. These organisations have not been modified/modernised/replaced since 1958. The Committee were informed that 4 Committees were appointed for upgradation of the equipment and updating the categories of the personnel who are to be inducted into the Railway Engineers Regiments (TA). The Committee desire to know (i) the composition of the Committees, (ii) the term of reference of these Committees, (iii) recommendations made and (iv) the action taken for implementing these recommendations.

14. The Committee also find that the modern equipments like computers, photocopiers, electronic typewriters, VCRs, TVs etc. which are very essential for giving the training to the personnel of the Railway Engineers

Regiments (TA) have not been provided. The Committee desire that action should be taken immediately to provide the equipment mentioned above so that the personnel of these Regiments may have training in State of Art equipment so as to maintain uniformity with other segments of the organisation. The Committee also desire to have the details for all the ongoing externally aided projects indicating inter-alia the details, the total amount sanctioned, amount utilised/and the reasons for not utilising the amount in full etc.

15. The Committee are dismayed to find that Railways do not give any special promotional benefits to their employees both Officers and other personnel who serve in Territorial Army. As volunteering for serving in the TA is an additional responsibility, suitable mention should be made in the Annual Confidential Reports of such volunteers and benefit of it be given at the time of their promotion.

The Committee also find that the Army does not provide the volunteers serving Railway (TA) Units any particular benefits such as Canteen Store Department (CSD) facility in disembodied State, membership of Army club etc. The Committee desire that the above facilities should be provided to Railway Engineers (TA) personnel when in disembodied State.

16. The Committee are of the view that there are many problems of Railway Engineer (TA) personnel which can be resolved with better coordination between Ministry of Defence and the Railway Board. They therefore desire that the coordination between Ministry of Defence and Railway Board should be improved so that the problems faced by Railway Engineers Regiments (TA) personnel should be examined in detail and effective steps taken to resolve them.

17. During the course of evidence of the representatives of the Ministry of Railways, the Committee came to know that no Unit of Territorial Army has been set up in the North Eastern States which are having borders with Mynmar, Bangladesh and China. The Ministry of Railways were candid in their admission to support the proposal of creating a base unit in one of these States. The Committee were informed that there is neither the dearth of funds nor shortage of land for establishment of Territorial Army base in that area. Keeping in view the external threat perceptions from across the border areas/internal insurgency etc. and to keep the railway running in these areas, the Committee recommend that a Territorial Army Unit be established permanently at a strategical location in any part of the North Eastern region.

18. In 1995, a High Level Committee under the Chairmanship of the then Hon'ble Minister Shri K.P. Singh Deo was set up to review the Territorial Army. This Committee submitted its Report to the Government on 6th August, 1996. The Committee are dismayed to find that no action has been taken by the Government on the recommendations made by that High Level Committee so far. During the evidence, the representative of the Ministry of Defence informed the Committee that Government has been

examining this Report and the consultation process is still on. The Committee express their unhappiness over the lackadaisical manner in which the recommendations of this Committee are being dealt with by the Government. The Committee, therefore, strongly recommend that the Government must come out with some concrete action to be taken on the recommendations made by the High Level Committee. The Committee would like to be apprised of the action taken in this regard within three months.

NEW DELHI;
13 October, 1997

21 Asvina, 1919 (Saka)

BASUDEB ACHARIA,
Chairman,
Standing Committee on Railways.

PART-II

MINUTES OF FOURTH SITTING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON RAILWAYS (1997-98)

The Committee sat on Monday, the 08 September, 1997 from 1500 hrs. to 1740 hrs. in Committee Room 'B', Parliament House Annexe, New Delhi.

PRESENT

Shri Basudeb Acharia—*Chairman*

MEMBERS

Lok Sabha

2. Shri Jagdambi Prasad Yadav
3. Shri Anand Ratna Maurya
4. Dr. Ramvilas Vedanti
5. Shri Nandi Yellaiah
6. Shri K.P. Singh Deo
7. Shri Chun Chun Prasad Yadav
8. Shri K. Parasuraman
9. Shri Kondapalli Pydithalli Naidu
10. Shri Narayan Gajanan Athawalay
11. Shri Ram Bahadur Singh
12. Dr. Prabin Chandra Sarma
13. Shri S. Bangarappa

Rajya Sabha

14. Shri Wasim Ahmad
15. Shri W. Angou Singh
16. Smt. Malti Sharma
17. Shri Rahasbihari Barik
18. Smt. Chandra Kala Pandey
19. Shri S. Niraikulathan
20. Shri K.M. Saifullah
21. Maulana Habibur Rahman Nomani

SECRETARIAT

- | | | |
|--------------------------|---|--------------------------|
| 1. Shri R.C. Gupta | — | <i>Deputy Secretary</i> |
| 2. Shri Suresh N. Dargan | — | <i>Under Secretary</i> |
| 3. Shri O.P. Shokeen | — | <i>Committee Officer</i> |

WITNESSES

Ministry of Defence

- | | |
|--------------------------|--|
| 1. Shri A.K. Jain | Joint Secretary (G)/Ministry of Defence. |
| 2. Maj. General CS Panag | Additional DG (TA)/Army Hqrs. |

Ministry of Railways

- | | |
|--------------------------|--|
| 1. Shri M. Ravindra | Chairman, Railway Board & Ex-Officio Principal Secy. to the Government of India. |
| 2. Shri P.V. Vasudevan | Financial Commissioner (Railways) & Ex-Officio Secy. to the Government of India. |
| 3. Shri. G. Ramakrishnan | Additional Member (Staff) |

2. The Chairman welcomed the representatives of Ministry of Defence. The Committee thereafter took the evidence on the subject—"Railway Engineers Territorial Army".

3. The Joint Secretary (G), Defence and Additional DG(TA) Army Hqrs. replied to the queries of the Committee on the objectives necessitating the formation of Railway Engineers Territorial Army and problems faced by it and other related questions/issues.

4. After the representatives of the Ministry of Defence retreated, the Chairman took evidence of the representatives of the Ministry of Railways on the subject cited in para 2 above. The Chairman and other members of the Railway Board replied *inter-alia* to all the queries from the Committee on the main objective of TA Service, monitoring of staff at Railway, New Regiment for North region, solution to Narcotics problems faced by the Government and other related questions.

5. A verbatim record of the proceedings has been kept.

The Committee then adjourned.

**MINUTES OF THE SEVENTH SITTING OF THE STANDING
COMMITTEE ON RAILWAYS (1997-98)**

The Committee sat on Monday, the 13 October, 1997 from 1100 hrs. to 1200 hrs. in Committee Room 'C', Parliament House Annexe, New Delhi.

PRESENT

Shri Basudeb Acharia—Chairman

MEMBERS

Lok Sabha

2. Shri Dharendra Agarwal
3. Dr. Sahebrao S. Bagul
4. Dr. Ramvilas Vedanti
5. Shri Priya Ranjan Das Munsi
6. Shri Ashok Gehlot
7. Shri Qamarul Islam
8. Shri Chun-Chun Prasad Yadav
9. Shri Ram Singh Shakya
10. Shri Kondapalli Pydithalli Naidu
11. Shri Narayan Gajanan Athawalay
12. Shri Dinsha J. Patel
13. Dr. Prabin Chandra Sarma
14. Shri S. Bangarappa

Rajya Sabha

15. Maulana Habibur Rahman Nomani
16. Shri W. Angou Singh
17. Shri Shivajirao Giridhar Patil
18. Shri Rahasbihari Barik
19. Smt. Chandra Kala Pandey
20. Shri S. Niraikulathan
21. Shri K.M. Saifullah
22. Shri Wasim Ahmad

SECRETARIAT

- | | | |
|----------------------------|---|--------------------------|
| 1. Shri R.C. Gupta | — | <i>Deputy Secretary</i> |
| 2. Shri Surinder N. Dargan | — | <i>Under Secretary</i> |
| 3. Shri O.P. Shokeen | — | <i>Committee Officer</i> |

The Committee took up for consideration the draft Thirteenth Report of the Committee on 'Railway Engineers Territorial Army' relating to the Ministry of Railways.

2. The Report was adopted with certain modifications/amendments as shown in the *Annexure*.

3. The Committee authorised the Chairman to finalise the Report after making consequential changes, if any, arising out of factual verification by the Ministry of Railways or otherwise and to present the same to both the Houses of Parliament.

4. The Committee also decided to undertake a Study Tour to the North-Eastern States during the last week of October, 1997 to see the progress of the approved Railway Projects for the North-Eastern States.

The Committee then adjourned.

ANNEXURE

Amendments / Modifications made by Standing Committee on Railways in the Draft Report on Ministry of Railways 'Railway Engineers Territorial Army'

Recomm- endations No.	Page No.	Para No.	Line		
2.	25	—	10	<i>Add</i>	after 'regiments' 'duly vetted by audit'
2.	25	—	last line	<i>Add</i>	after 'should' 'also'
6.	27	—	10	<i>For Read</i>	'have' 'has'
6.	27	—	12	<i>Delete</i>	'The Committee therefore are of the frm view that the present arrangements have not been working satisfactorily.'
6.	28	—	1	<i>For Read</i>	'They' 'The Committee'
6.	28	—	2	<i>For Read</i>	'the competent, financial, administrative and monitoring authority' 'a competent authority having financial, administrative and monitoring powers'
12.	31	—	7	<i>For Read</i>	'ATCs' 'Annual Training Camps (ATCs)'