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**STANDING COMMITTEE ON RAILWAYS
(2004)**

FOURTEENTH LOK SABHA

**MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS
(RAILWAY BOARD)**

PASSENGER AMENITIES

FOURTH REPORT



**LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI**

December, 2004/Agrahnaya, 1926 (Saka)

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*Presented to Lok Sabha on 10.12.2004
Laid in Rajya Sabha on 10.12.2004*



**LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI**

CONTENTS

	PAGE
COMPOSITION OF THE COMMITTEE.....	(iii)
INTRODUCTION	(v)
PART - I	
Report.....	1
Recommendations/Observations.....	41

STANDING COMMITTEE ON RAILWAY (2004)

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LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT

- | | | | |
|----|---------------------------|---|-------------------------|
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| 4. | Smt Abha Singh Yaduvanshi | - | Under Secretary |
| 5. | Smt Archana Srivastava | - | Sr. Executive Assistant |
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INTRODUCTION

I, the Chairman of the Standing Committee on Railways (2004), having been authorised by the Committee to present the Report on their behalf, present this Fourth Report of the Standing Committee on Railways (2004) on 'Passenger Amenities'.

2. The Committee took evidence of the representatives of the Ministry of Railways on 2nd and 17th September, 2004.

3. The Committee considered and adopted the Report at their sitting held on 7th December, 2004. Minutes of the sittings held on 2nd September, 17th September and 7th December, 2004 form Part-II of the Report.

4. The Committee wish to express their thanks to the officers of the Ministry of Railways (Railway Board) for appearing before the Committee and furnishing the information which the Committee desired in connection with the examination of the subject 'Passenger Amenities' and sharing with them the issues concerning the subject which came up for discussion during evidence.

NEW DELHI;
December, 2004
Agrahanaya, 1926 Saka

BASUDEB ACHARIA
Chairman,
Standing Committee on Railways

REPORT

CHAPTER - I

A. Introductory

Indian Railway, one of the largest railway systems in the world under a single management, plays a key role in meeting the transport needs of the country. Being the principal carrier of goods and passengers from one part of the country to another, Indian Railways not only performing social function but also promoting a national integration. It is ideally suited for movement of bulk commodities and for long distance travel. Railways manage to run 14,761 trains daily including about 8,927 passenger trains. They carry more than a million tonnes of freight traffic and about 1.3 million passengers daily covering 8018 number of stations.

Categorisation of Passenger Amenities

2. Railways has a Citizens Charter in place which pledges to provide bonafide passengers to access to the minimum facilities on board as well as off board. Ever since 1952, when the Railways had issued for the first time a guidelines with regard to providing of passenger amenities, two categories of amenities were provided to the passengers namely 'Basic Amenities' and 'Additional Amenities'. Basic Amenities were those which were inescapable and which were necessarily required by passengers at any station, big or small, at the time of its becoming operational and these amenities were Booking arrangements, Waiting Hall, Rail level platform, Benches, Drinking water, Latrines, Lighting and Shady trees.

3. Over and above these basic/minimum amenities, other amenities called as 'additional facilities' were being provided at various stations as per requirement of individual station. These additional amenities were Pucca platforms surface for whole or part length, Platforms covers for adequate length, Raising of platforms from rail level to low level/high level, Coolers where piped water is available, Provision of retiring rooms as required, Upper class waiting rooms, Bathrooms, Enquiry offices and Refreshment rooms.

4. In pursuance to the recommendations of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Railways, passenger amenities provided at the stations were reviewed by the Railways in the year 1995. As a result of this review, passenger amenities were redefined and excluded the facilities which were operationally required and were an essential feature of the infrastructure of the station. These facilities were classified as 'Infrastructural facilities' and were as follows:-

- (i) Booking facility
- (ii) Platform
- (iii) Drinking Water

- (iv) Waiting Hall
- (v) Seating Arrangement
- (vi) Platform Shelter
- (vii) Lighting
- (viii) Fans
- (ix) Urinals
- (x) Latrines
- (xi) Foot Over Bridge (First)
- (xii) Time Table Display
- (xiii) Clock

The amenities and facilities provided over and above such infrastructural facilities were covered under 'Passenger Amenities'. These included pucca platforms surface, water coolers, retiring rooms, upper class waiting rooms, bathrooms, enquiry offices, refreshment rooms and any other amenity based on actual requirement.

5. Although in the guidelines issued in 1995, while no amenity was specifically left out, however, it did not address the needs of passengers in an objective manner as there were three deficiencies viz:

- (i) Scale/quantum of amenities to be provided was not addressed.
- (ii) Halt stations were not dealt with separately. Category 'E' included all stations not covered in category 'A' to 'D'.
- (iii) It was not specified that additional facilities, as per norms, will be a continuous process with growth of passenger traffic.

6. During the oral evidence, while replying to a query of the Committee about the specific amenities which were not addressed to objectively by the 1995 guidelines, the Chairman, Railway Board stated as under:-

“The lacuna in the 1995 guidelines was that it was not related to the number of passengers using a particular type of station. For example, category B and category C stations was shown with the same standard of facilities, regardless of number of passengers using a station.”

7. To overcome these deficiencies and also to meet the present day passengers expectation for visible, qualitative and effective improvements on each and every item of public utility provided at the stations, Railways in 1999 reviewed the guidelines of 1995 and issued a revised guidelines in September, 1999 followed by further revision in 2003 by which the facilities at stations have been re-classified into three categories namely 'Minimum Essential Amenities', 'Recommended Amenities'

and ‘Desirable Amenities’. Since then Railways have been following this guidelines while providing the amenities at stations and in trains.

- (i) **MINIMUM ESSENTIAL AMENITIES** – When station is constructed, certain minimum amenities should be provided at each category of station. These amenities are termed as ‘Minimum Essential Amenities’ and are listed in Annexure ‘I’.
- (ii) **RECOMMENDED AMENITIES** – After the essential amenities are provided at the stations, further augmentation as per the norms will be known as ‘Recommended Amenities.’ These norms are recommendatory, Railway shall, however, make efforts to provide these amenities as per the norms given in Annexure ‘II’
- (iii) **DESIRABLE AMENITIES** – Desirable amenities are considered desirable to improve customer satisfaction and interface process at the station. The quantum of these amenities would depend upon the category of station. A comprehensive list of the desirable amenities is given in Annexure ‘III’.

According to the Ministry of Railways the provision of desirable amenities need not to wait for complete provision of the recommended amenities and should be provided based on the need and relative importance of the station.

Categorisation of Stations

8. The Indian Railways at present are having 8018 stations under various Zones. Under the new guidelines of 1999 these stations have been categorized into following 6 categories (Categories A to F) based on the passenger earnings of the station, for the purpose of providing passenger amenities.

S.No.	Category	Criteria
1.	A	Non-suburban stations with an annual passenger earnings of Rs. 6 crore and above.
2.	B	1. Non suburban stations with an annual passenger earnings between Rs.3 crore to Rs.6 crore. 2. Stations of tourist importance, or an important junction station (to be decided by G.M).
3.	C	All suburban stations
4.	D	Non-suburban stations with passenger earnings between Rs.1 and Rs.3 crore.
5.	E	Non-suburban stations with passenger earnings less than Rs.1 crore.
6.	F	Halts

The yardsticks/extent to which the amenities were to be provided was linked to the category of station. The categorization of stations was to be reviewed after every five years. The number of stations in various categories are as below:-

Category	No. of Stations
A	228
B	195
C	501
D	328
E	5264
F	1502
Total	8018

9. On being asked why halt stations have been categorized separately as category F station when there is no difference between treatment of E & F categories of stations, the Chairman, Railway Board responded:-

“If we see the Circular, its basis is the annual passenger earnings because most of the halt stations are hardly having 10-12 passengers per day.”

10. Further he added:-

“There was a lot of demand as to why the halt station have remained neglected in the guidelines of 1995. It was felt that we should specify certain minimum level of amenities for the halt stations also, and for this reason we went in for F category station also, i.e. halt stations.”

11. When it was pointed out that 92 to 93% of the stations falls in the categories E & F, the majority of passengers using these stations are deprived of the basic minimum essential amenities although they too are valued customers of Railways just as others who use category A,B or C stations and thereby categorizing long distance passengers and short distance passengers, the Chairman, Railway Board stated during the oral evidence:-

“Out of 8,018 stations, we have 5,264 E category stations and 1,502 F category stations. Perhaps E&F category stations are 90 per cent of the total stations, but the total number of passengers using these two categories of stations is not 90 per cent. Actually, maximum number of passengers are coming from the A category, B

category and C category stations. C category stations itself includes all suburban stations, and 60 per cent of the total daily passengers are only coming from C category stations. We are transporting 60 per cent of the total passengers of the Railways every day on suburban stations. It is the reason for us to take into account the annual passenger earnings as the guiding factor for categorisation of stations while going for the revision of 1999 Circular..... Whether it is for the short distance passengers or the long distance passengers, we do not have any categorization”.

12. Further he assured the Committee that:-

“Even in the Railway Budget we have said that the Minimum Essential Amenities as prescribed in the circular will be provided by the end of this financial year i.e. by 31st March, 2005. If we have already provided the Minimum Essential Amenities, then we should try and go for the Recommended Level of Amenities. The Desirable Amenities which has 23 items like waiting rooms with bathing facilities, retiring rooms, IVRS, NTES, Public Address System etc. will not be provided in series. Depending on the importance of the stations we decide on the stations that would have these Desirable Amenities, and we do go in for that. We also make provisions for the same in our Budget.”

13. When asked whether the amenities being provided are commensurate with the number of passengers, the Chairman, Railway Board stated:

“All the more the passengers belonging to the cross-section should be satisfied with such amenities. More number of passengers should be satisfied. We have got as many as 90% ‘E’ and ‘F’ category station but the passengers on these stations will be less than 10%. We want to satisfy the passengers, this is the basic thing. Larger section of passengers should get satisfied.”

14. He further added:

“We laid down the norms for quantum of Minimum Essential Amenities for various categories of stations, an algebraic yardstick for each category of stations that was related to average number of passengers during the peak hour etc. We also envisaged in the Circular that every five years – when the number of passengers goes up, classification should be revised and perhaps E category station may come into D category station, or D category station may come into B category station – the scale of facilities for each category should change automatically.’

Customer Satisfaction Year

15. The year 2003-04 was declared by the Railways as 'Customer Satisfaction Year'. The Committee desired to know the special attempts made by Railways to improve the conditions in the Railways during the year. The Chairman, Railway Board enumerated the steps taken during the customer satisfaction year as under:-

- Introduction of new trains, expansion of trains, frequency raise in the trains.
- Concessions to Railway users.
- Expansion of PRS programme-97% of passenger reservation is fully covered by computers.
- Introduction of Un-reserved Ticketing System(UTS).
- Extension of refund period from 12 hrs. to 5 days from the time of departure of trains.
- Tatkal scheme was envisaged.
- 'E' Ticketing and reservation through Cell.
- Introduction of frequent traveller scheme.
- NTES was expanded and is now working at 145 stations and nearly 56 control points are covered under this.
- Introduced 'Enquiry' on website on the Internet.
- Training of frontline staff-as may as 46000 people were trained.
- SLR modifications were make.
- Deployed Mahila squads in 2 or 3 trains of the type of Surakshini and Tejaswini.
- Crash worthiness of coaches was look into.
- Took out two Prayag Raj rakes.
- Use of tight lock couplers.
- Mechanised cleaning of coaches at 31 stations.
- Modular type of toilets envisaged which is very success full in Jan Shatabadi trains.
- Use Pay and Use toilets at the stations.

16. On being further enquired by the Committee whether the views of passengers and customers were taken about the impact of customer Satisfaction Year on them and how they have been benefited by the declaration of satisfaction year. In reply the Chairman, Railway Board stated:-

“Limited way, Zonal Railways have been seeking the views of the passengers, but not in general in view of the customer satisfaction year. The feed back should have been taken from the customers, we will keep it in mind in future.”

17. The Committee found that amenities are provided mainly on the basis of passenger earnings. Stations also have been categorized based on the earnings. At halt stations hardly one of two trains stop there. Then how can this halt station can have more earnings. Passengers may even come from 'E' or 'F' category of station and they should be treated as passengers and basic minimum amenities should be provided to them also. On being enquired why Railways have not taken this approach while providing the amenities, the Chairman, Railway Board stated:-

“The scale of the Recommended Level of Amenities are related to the average number of passengers during the peak hours. If the number of passengers is more during the peak hours, then the scale of amenities at that given Category of station will be more.

Secondly, as regards the halt stations, if the trains that are presently running are well patronized, then first we try to increase the quota on those trains. If there is further demand, and we also feel that more trains should have their stoppages there, then we have been adding more trains. It is a continuous exercise undertaken by the Railways.”

18. Railways have been taking number of steps from time to time to provide better amenities and to attract more passenger traffic. A number of steps taken by the Railways in this regard are as under:-

(i) Model Stations

The year 1999-2000 was declared as 'Passenger Year' by the then Railway Minister. Further it was also declared that all efforts would be made to make at least one station of each Division as Model Station where higher level of passenger facilities would be provided. Consequent upon this, Railway Board initially in the year 1999 selected 61 stations in different Zones where the higher level of passengers facilities were to be provided. The area of upgradation and also implementation plan for these stations were circulated to the Zonal Railways. The Ministry of Railways have informed that as on 01.03.2004 there are 317 stations under different Zones which have been selected as model stations. A list of these model stations and upgraded amenities to be provided at these stations are given in Annexure-IV & V. Railways have prepared an action plan on model station and endeavour is to provide upgraded amenities at all the selected model stations by March, 2008. So far, 61 stations have been provided with these upgraded amenities.

19. With regard to the query of the Committee about the criteria adopted for selection of model stations, the Chairman, Railway Board stated during the evidence as under:-

“We go by the importance of the stations regardless whether it is A or B or C Category station. It may be even D Category station. But if it is important, may be tourist or religious point of view or any other reasons, we take it up, although it is not having that much of passenger earnings per year as required. So that is the criteria.”

(ii) Passenger Reservation System

To improve the ticket dispensation, 96% of reserved booking have been computerised. As on 15.08.2004, computersied reservation facilities have been provided at 1086 locations.

(iii) Unreserved Ticketing System

Railways have introduced the concept of unreserved ticketing system (UTS) in Delhi area in August, 2002. The UTS enables the passenger to buy unreserved segment tickets from any cluster location 3 days in advance. Encouraged by the response to the pilot project of the Unreserved Ticketing System in Delhi, the concept is now being extended to all Zonal Railways.

(iv) Internet Ticketing System

Railways have introduced the concept of Internet Ticketing System (ITS) in more than 100 major cities of the country. This system enable the passengers to log on to the Internet and book his ticket in the convenience of his own home/office.

(v) Training to frontline staff

Indian Railways have initiated training for its frontline staff like Assistant Station Master, on board staff viz. catering & Train Examiners, TTEs, RPF etc. and those manning enquiry, Reservation, Booking, Parcel Office, Telephone Enquiry, ‘May I Help You’ counters for improving their interpersonal skills and to equip them for dealing with the rail customers in a better manner. The programme aims at inculcating value system among them which help to increase performance level of employees by sensitizing them to the needs of the customers, thereby solving their problems more effectively and in a positive manner.

20. The status of availability of important Passenger Amenities in Indian Railways have been discussed in subsequent chapters.

CHAPTER – II

FUNDING OF PASSENGER AMENITIES

21. Passenger amenities are part of the Development Fund and through Development Fund works like passenger amenities, staff amenities, traffic facility works, operational efficiency works etc. are funded. The appropriation to the Development Fund is made through internal generation component. As such the Head 'Passenger Amenity' is not supported by budgetary support i.e. capital outlay. However, certain things like UTS which though comes under computerization plan-head, is a passenger amenities, but is not charged to the Head passenger amenity. It is partly financed by the budgetary support.

22. As a percentage of the internal generation component, passenger amenities is given its due share. It was only 2.2 per cent in the year 1995-96 and in the last year the share was 7.5 percent an increase of almost three times as percentage of the internal generation component.

23. The Ministry of Railways has proposed for the X Five Year Plan a tentative allocation of Rs. 650 crore for passenger amenities as against a total plan size of Rs.49100 crore (without Special Railway Safety Fund). Though amenity-wise financial targets are not prepared by the Railways, the requirements at different places depends on the traffic pattern and accordingly the selection of works is done considering total requirement of works on All-India basis vis-à-vis funds available during the year.

Fund allocation to Zonal Railways

24. Funds for the passenger amenities are allocated to the Zonal Railways by Railway Board at the Budget formulation stage.

25. When asked about the procedure being adopted in allocating the amount Railway-wise, the Ministry of Railway informed that funds are allotted Railway-wise out of the total funds that become available for passenger amenities based on the requirement projected by the Railways in the works programme for work-in-progress and new-works as also relative priority of such works on an over all basis.

26. About the ceiling fixed internally by the Railway Board for final allotment of funds to the Zonal Railways under the plan head 'Passenger Amenities' and 'Other Railway users amenities', the Ministry informed that funds are allocated to various plan heads depending on the total fund available under each source, the relative priorities and the capacity of the Railways to progress with various

works. Railway Board holds an annual exercise of conducting works programme meetings in which various ongoing works on the Railways are scrutinized and new works/projects, which the Railways propose for inclusion in the next year's budget, are deliberated upon, with reference to the total availability of funds and the throwforward of the ongoing works in hand. Based on the outcome of these meetings, the prioritisation of the ongoing works and the desirability of including new works for the next year are decided. At the time of Budget preparation, funds are allotted keeping this in mind. During the course of the year, if the need arises, the plan expenditure is regulated so as to remain within the overall resource availability.

27. While deliberating upon the allocation of Funds to Zonal Railways, the Chairman, Railway Board informed:-

“we have got the Standing Committee for Passenger Amenities at the Railway Board and the Standing Committee for the Passenger Amenities which is headed by the Additional General Manager and supported by the Principal HOD from electrical, mechanical, civil, engineering, commercial and operating departments. The Railways have interactions with the Zonal railway user Consultative Committees and with the Parliamentary Committees. Similarly, the Divisions also send the proposal to Zones by interacting with the Divisional Railways user Consultative Committees and the public representatives. We have various tiers of inspections by the Zonal General Manager downward. So, the passenger amenities are also one of those plan heads which are scrutinised by the Standing Passengers Amenities Committee of the Zonal Railway. Then they send the proposal to the Railway Board. In the Railway Board, the Standing Committee for the Passenger Amenities scrutinises that. In addition, we have got the additional members' Committee. Additional members scrutinise these proposals and their justification vis-à-vis, which work should be sanctioned. Then, we at the full Board meeting discuss the various programmes in which we clear various works under various plan heads and there is a separate meeting also as to how much funds should be allocated..... so far as the allocation of funds is concerned, the concerned Board Members, in consultation with the FC allocates the funds plan-head wise to all the Railways.”

28. On the query of the Committee about the time taken in approving the projects the Chairman Railway Board responded:

“As far as works above Rs.5 crore and below Rs.5 crore are concerned, we have got the different time calendar. We have never found any delay in such cases because the calendar is laid down. After getting the proposal from the Railways. We discuss it in a time bound manner in the Railway Board excepting in some out of turn proposal.”

29. On being asked how do Railways ensure that the amount allocated under the Head ‘Passenger Amenities’ is being actually spent only on the items included in this Head, the Ministry of Railways replied that this is ensured by not allowing any re-appropriation from the Plan head “Passenger Amenities” to other Plan heads without prior approval of Railway Board and such an approval is normally not given.

30. Regarding the re-appropriation of funds from one category to another category, the Ministry of Railways informed that the Railway Board has the powers to re-appropriate from one plan head to another within the same source. Depending on the overall availability of funds, progress of expenditure in each Railway and the requirement of funds for progressing some identified important works, the funds can be redistributed in the budgetary review stages in the course of the year.

Utilisation vis-à-vis allocation of Funds of Passenger Amenities

31. The details of funds allotted and actual expenditure on works of “Passenger Amenities” during last 10 years is tabulated below:-

Budget Allotment, Revised Estimates and Actual Expenditure on Passenger Amenities

(Figures in crore of Rs.)

Period	Budget Allotment	Revised Estimates	Annual Actual Expenditure
1993-94	60	63.49	67.84
1994-95	60	67.26	73.63
1995-96	90	90.68	87.98
1996-97	120	103.59	87.96
1997-98	80	80.47	89.35
1998-99	100	89.99	90.61
1999-00	130	132.16	115.25
2000-01	190*	143.56	136.50
2001-02	190*	169.01	168.87
2002-03	200	200.1	175.11
2003-04	205	215	180.89(Prov.)

* excludes Rs.10.00 crore as allotment under BOLT

32. As regards the non utilisation of funds allocated, the Chairman, Railway Board during the oral evidence stated:-

“We have not been able to utilise the funds fully. If we take the figures right from 1994-95, the amount spent has been progressively increasing but we have not been able to spend fully the budget allocations by the end of the year. The basic reason for this is we do plan for the whatever amount is allocated in the budget. However, if a mishap occurs during

the year, the plan gets stalled..... Very recently we have taken a decision that we will plan for 15 to 20 per cent more works than what is budgeted and still we will keep the responsibility on our Zonal Railways for the financial management so that they should review every month. At times they are not able to give platform line for construction of washable apron or for extension of the platform or construction of some foot over bridge. Because of this we are planning that 15% to 20% more each Railway will plan for the Passenger Amenities. They are not able to grant blocks for that. By this, we would be able to spend each penny of it. Nonetheless, right from 1994-95, our expenditure has been progressively increasing in this case. I am very sure that there should not be any occasion to surrender any fund any more.”

33. The Ministry further in a written reply have informed that the funds could not be fully utilized in some years for various reasons, such as slow progress of works due to contractual problems, delay in finalisation of plans and estimates, difficulty in executing work under traffic conditions and, sometimes due to regulation on Plan expenditure imposed in the course of the year on account of lesser generation of internal resources.

CHAPTER – III
RESERVATION SYSTEM

Reservation Procedure

34. Reservation of accommodation in the Indian Railways is done upto 90 days in advance through the computersied reservation facility which have been provided at 1086 locations all over the country.

35. The Ministry of Railways informed the Committee that a pilot project had been initiated in Delhi regarding booking through SMS on mobiles. They further informed that this facility is being extended to other States as well such as Andhra Pradesh.

Internet Ticketing System (ITS)

36. Railways have introduced the Internet Ticketing System (ITS) in 2001-2002 in more than 100 major cities. This system enables the passenger to log on to the internet and book his ticket in the convenience of his own home/office. The tickets are paid for through the credit card system and home delivered by courier in any of the covered cities resulting in de-congestion of the existing reservation counters. In New Delhi tickets can also be collected from one of the nominated counters.

37. The Chairman, Railway Board during the oral evidence submitted:

“This system that we started two and half years ago has become quite popular. We started with hardly 11 passengers. Now, we are having 3,500 passengers everyday on this. These are available in cities like Hyderabad, Mumbai, Chennai, Delhi etc. at 120 locations precisely as on date. Whosoever has done the reservation on the internet, then the ticket of that location is sent by the courier.

There is a popular demand that we should extend the time period of the internet. First it was 0800 hours to 2000 hours. Then it was made 2200 hours. Now, the proposal is to have it from 0400 hours to 2300 hours. This proposal is under the active consideration of the Ministry. Its popularity is growing from year to year.”

Unreserved Ticketing System (UTS)

38. In order to facilitate issue of unreserved tickets, Railways have introduced a project of computerised unreserved ticketing system (UTS) in Delhi area in August, 2002 enabling the passengers to buy unreserved segment tickets from any cluster location 3 days in advance. UTS also provides improved accountal of unreserved segment. Passenger need not necessarily buy the tickets

from the station where the journey is to commence. This project aims to give flexibility to the passengers for buying tickets on a convenient date and time which will reduce the queue lengths at the train originating stations where normally there is heavy rush for the unreserved tickets before train departure. The system is planned to be extended to all the zones in a phased manner.

39. During the oral evidence, the Chairman, Railway Board stated:

“We have already provided this service at 74 stations and we are adding 200 more stations under this UTS Scheme during 2004-05. Our scheme is that in the next five to six year UTS should cover the entire stations.”

40. In UTS central server is used unlike SPTM which was having a stand alone server. As all the transaction that are being done at the UTS point get registered in the central server also, the manipulation in the data can not be done by the booking clerks. Therefore, no frauds can be done with this improved system.

Self Printing Ticket Machines (SPTM)

41. At present there are about 1621 Self Printing Ticket Machines (SPTM) installed at 353 stations of Indian Railways. The use of Self-Printing Ticketing Machines (SPTMs) has been extended for speedy issue of unreserved tickets and have proved very useful in reducing the queue lengths at major stations with higher passenger traffic. This has also resulted in better satisfaction to the travelling public due to speedier dispensation of tickets. SPTM have been provided for better productivity with universalisation of counters, user friendly and enhanced accountal system and to avoid hassle of indenting, printing, supply, issue and accountal as required for the conventional card tickets.

42. When asked whether any fraudulent practices have been found after installation of SPTM and the remedial measures taken in this regard, the Ministry of Railways in their written replies stated that some cases of fraud were detected. The modus-operandi in the fraud involved printing of a high value ticket on the ticket stationery and accountal for a low value ticket by manipulating the printing process. The measures taken in this regard is that Railways have introduced the Computerised Unreserved Ticketing System (UTS) which enables central server arrangement. Moreover additional security features have been built in the UTS. Procurement of normal SPTMs has been suspended.

43. On being asked what will happened to the existing SPTM, the Chairman, Railway Board stated that existing SPTM are continuing but will be replaced with UTS gradually.

Tatkal Scheme

44. Regarding the arrangements provided for instant reservation to travellers requiring high-tech treatment in the high-tech health care Centres/Hospitals in metropolitan cities, the Ministry of Railways intimated that the passengers who have to travel at short notice due to any exigency can avail reservation under Tatkal Scheme.

45. During the oral evidence, the Chairman, Railway Board apprised the Committee:

‘Tatkal’ scheme was envisaged last year, but it is getting a final shape this year. The Tatkal scheme was confined to 110 Mail/Express trains all over Indian Railways and in only nominated classes so far. We are trying to reach it to 100 per cent trains. All the trains will be fully covered by the 14th November this year. The software is ready and we will be implementing it.’

46. Some of the main modifications in the revised Tatkal Scheme (August 2004) are as follows:-

- (i) Provision of I/Card has been deleted on an experimental basis for six months after which this will be reviewed. Zonal Railways are to send the feedback in this regard three months after implementation of this scheme.
- (ii) Tatkal charges have been revised as under:-

Classes	Existing	Proposed	
		Non-Peak (15 July to 15 Sept.)	Peak
2AC	200	200	300
3AC	150	75	300
Air Conditioned Chair Car	50	75	150
SL	50	75	150

Zonal Railways are to take necessary action for working out Tatkal quota in each train in Sleeper, 3AC, 2AC and Chair Car classes for the trains originating on their railway and take necessary action for defining them as Tatkal quota.

The revised scheme will be implemented in all the PRS trains w.e.f. 14th November, 2004 i.e. the booking of Tatkal accommodation in all the PRS trains in 4 defined classes as above will commence from 14/11/2004 for journey commencing on 15/11/2004 at the originating point & so on.

'E' Ticketing and Reservation through Cell

47. The Chairman Railway Board apprised the Committee during the course of evidence that 'e-ticketing' and reservation through cell are other things that have been conceived. These are being implemented in Delhi on a pilot basis very soon. Railways are also introducing 'frequent traveller scheme' and are giving a final shape to it this year."

Booking Counters

48. In response to the Committees' observation that at many stations booking windows are provided only at one side of the station causing inconvenience to the passengers. At times leading to mishappenings and accidents apart from evading buying ticket in the process leading to revenue loss/leakage for the Railway, the Ministry stated that generally bookings windows are provided only at one side of the station from where most of the passengers and users come to the Railway Station. Additional booking windows are also provided on the other side of those stations where there is increase in the population and a large number of passengers come to the station on that side.

Monitoring of Reservation Counters

49. The functioning of the reservation counters is monitored on regular basis and all efforts are taken to ensure proper dispensation of reserved tickets. However, during peak rush periods, like summer rush, pooja rush etc. when the demand goes high, additional steps are taken to facilitate the passengers in getting the reserved tickets easily. Some of the steps taken during by the Railways the rush periods are as under:-

- (i) Additional reservation counters are opened, wherever feasible, to clear extra rush.
- (ii) Staff is posted at the reservation counters during special drives who countersign the requisition forms.
- (iii) Flying Squads of Commercial Officers and the ticket checking staff are formed to organise special surprise checks to curb the activities of unsocial elements. Joint check are also organised with vigilance and police personnel.

Touts and Ticketless Travel

50. Touting occurs due to gap between demand and supply of tickets. Touts operation in reservation sites as well as on Railway stations are rampant. Asked about the measures taken or proposed to be taken to check the touts involved in selling the Railway tickets, the Ministry in a written reply stated that constant efforts are made by the Railways to match the demand and supply and for this purpose more trains have been planned and additional coaches have been attached. During summer-2004, 1769 summer specials were run on 49 routs. Regular and surprise checks are conducted by Commercial and Vigilance Departments in and around reservation offices. Special drives are also launched at important stations associating local railway police. During peak rush periods, staff are posted outside the reservation counters to countersign the requisition forms before these are submitted to reservation clerk. Senior railway officers have also been instructed to ensure that all reservation counters are properly manned. Action is taken against the touts as per the Railway Act where they are fined and in some cases jailed also. During the years 2002-03 and 2003-04, the number of checks conducted against touts and the number of touts prosecuted is as under:-

	2002-03	2003-04
No. of checks conducted	43422	46898
No. of touts prosecuted	4535	2450

51. On being asked about the connivance of touts with the Railway officials at the Reservation office, the Ministry replied that it is very difficult to establish cognizable connivance in this regard. However, regular preventive and surprise checks are conducted by commercial and vigilance Departments of Railways and RPF.

52. With regard to the Committees query about transfer of staff from the sensitive posts, the Chairman, Railway Board apprised the Committee:-

“It has been our instructions that a person should not hold a sensitive post for more than four years and his transfer should take place on rotational basis.”

53. There is a vigilance organisation at the Zonal level and also at Board level to check corruption in the mass contact area which broadly includes ticket booking and reservation and also ticket checking in trains. On detection of the involvement of staff, penalties commensurate with the irregularities detected are imposed under the relevant provisions of the Railway Act. Railway wise

checks conducted in mass contact area including reservation and the action taken against the staff found at fault during the year 2003 is as under:-

Railways	No. of Checks done	No. of staff taken up
Central	2361	417
Eastern	1711	401
Northern	1966	834
North Eastern	1283	346
Northeast Frontier	1543	133
Southern	2832	394
South Central	745	384
South Eastern	465	304
Western	1921	618
East Central	397	124
North Western	287	77
Railway Board	1999	1159
Total	17510	5119

54. While deliberating upon the number of TTEs being deployed to inspect one train and the number of TTEs inspecting each coach, the Ministry stated that the total number of Ticket Checking Staff deployed on a train depends upon the composition of the train as there are laid down norms for manning the reserved coaches as under:

Shatabdi Express trains:

In the first leg of journey, one Conductor for three Upper Class Coaches.

One TTE for each Sleeper/3AC/Chair Car coach in non-vestibuled trains.

One TTE for two Sleeper/3AC/Chair Car coaches in vestibuled trains.

For subsequent legs of journey, One Conductor for five coaches, one Travelling Ticket Examiner for three Sleeper/3AC/Chair Car Coaches.

55. In Rajdhani/A.K. Rajdhani/Shatabdi Express Trains, one Train Superintendent and two to three Ticket Checking Staff man these trains for the entire run of the train.

No. of Tickets issued vis-à-vis Availability of Ticket

56 In the case of general compartments sanctions more number of tickets are issued than the availability of seats, which leads to occupation of space available in front of the doors/toilets/passage which causes a lot of inconvenience to other passengers the Ministry of Railways informed that as per Section 50(1) of the Railway Act, “*Any person desirous of traveling on Railway shall, upon payment of the fare, be supplied with a ticket.....*”. In compliance with this section, unreserved tickets are issued to all those passengers who ask for the same. These tickets are valid for a particular date and are not train specific. In order to alleviate the problems of unreserved passengers, the number of unreserved coaches have been increased in the new trains. Moreover, fully unreserved trains have also been introduced for general second class passengers. In addition, regular checks are also being carried out against unreserved passengers occupying the reserved coaches.

57. On being enquired about the measure/steps taken by the Railways to prevent non-reserved passengers from forcibly occupying the seats of long distance second class sleeper coach passengers thereby causing inconvenience to the genuine Railway passengers during the day time, the Ministry of Railways informed that there have been some instances of unauthorised travel mostly by short-distance/local passengers. In order to prevent this type of irregular travel, regular checks are conducted by Commercial and Vigilance Departments associating both Railway Protection Force and Government Railway Police Force. The number of persons apprehended and amount realised from them for irregular or ticketless travel for last two years is as under:-

	2002-03	2003-04
No. of checks conducted (in lakhs)	12.07	12.17
No. of persons apprehended (in lakhs)	148.05	154.61
Amount of fare and penalty realized (Rs. in crore)	192.07	205.54

58. Another step taken to further discourage unauthorised travelling in the reserved coaches for ticketless/irregular travel has been enhancement of minimum penalty from Rs.50/- to Rs.250/- with effect from 01.07.2004.

CHAPTER – IV

TRAIN ENQUIRY AND PASSENGERS INFORMATION SYSTEM

59. Public Address System, Electronic Train Display Board, Auto answering system, Interactive Voice Response System (IVRS), National Train Enquiry System (NTES) are being used by Railways to provide information to the passengers about train running. The staff manning the enquiry counters get details about train running from control office or Central Enquiry and about platform information from operating staff on duty before making any announcement. These announcements which are based on estimation of late running of trains are generally correct except when train make-up or lose time on run due to various factors. The announcements made at the station are regularly monitored by Station Manager as well as by railway officers and supervisors.

60. The Committee were informed during the course of evidence that out of the total number of complaints received, 9 per cent complaints were about the improper behaviour of staff and 7 per cent were regarding enquiry that comes at fourth and fifth place respectively. When asked about the steps taken by Railways to minimize the dissatisfaction of the general public and the action taken against the staff found delinquent or otherwise negligent in responding to the enquiries made by the public, the Ministry of Railways in a written reply stated that enquiry complaints generally relate to phones not being picked up or put off receiver, giving incorrect information, rude behaviour on phone etc. There is, therefore, a need to minimize the human element in the enquiry systems by automising the same. Railways have initiated a 2 pronged action to improve the enquiry system by minimizing the human interface through installing high capacity integrated computerized enquiry systems, and also by planning other means of non telephone based enquiry systems, e.g. enquiry through railway's websites on internet, SMS on mobile phone, radio & TV channels, etc. in order to off-load the telephone enquiries

Staff manning the enquiry system who do not perform their duties properly are counseled appropriately and training is also given to the staff found deficient in the working knowledge.

61. During the oral evidence, the Chairman, Railway Board stated:

“We are making effort for providing more and more computerised information at the enquiry counter. Along with it we, are also making efforts to provide information through internet. In the same way we are also making provision for railway enquiry by SMS in Mobiles. We are also making efforts to provide information through TV and AIR. We have taken steps to increase the channels.”

62. Further he informed:-

“Our persons who are manning the enquiry booths are not very happy that is why Customer Care Institute is required to give them proper training so that they behave properly.

Training of the frontline staff is another area in Customer Care Institute. By now, we have trained about 46,000 people because there have been complaints even now about the improper behaviour of our staff. We are trying to sensitise them in this field.”

63. In reply to a query about the number of stations where Passenger Information System is in existence and how is it ensured that the announcement through this system is comprehensive, accurate, timely and audible to the commuters, the Ministry informed that communications with passengers is considered to be a very important area. Following means are considered for providing better information to the passenger:-

- (a) Computerised announcement system at stations. These have been provided at all 'A' class stations and are being extended.
- (b) Display boards at large number of stations – dynamic as well as static have been provided.
- (c) Standardised signages have been provided at all 'A' class stations.
- (d) Information through Indian Railway websites like www.indianrail.gov.in, www.trainequiry.com & www.irctc.co.in and through Interactive Voice Response System is also given to the passengers.

64. With the computerisation of announcement system there has been a qualitative improvement in the Passenger Information System. Now updated position to all the sub systems is being provided through an all India backbone of National Train Enquiry System which is working at 145 stations and nearly 56 control points are covered under this. It has been made available to all the control offices where updated position is fed into the computer system.

SIGN BOARDS

65. In Indian Railway Works Manual there is a detailed guidelines for provision of Station Boards of suitable design and size. Often these sign Boards are either missing or are wrongly spelt and inappropriately placed on many a stations. The Committee enquired as to who monitors these facilities. In reply Ministry stated that the availability of sign Boards at appropriate locations etc. is ensured during the inspections conducted by the officers/supervisors.

66. With regard to the query about displaying of signboard at stations stating the category of stations and the facilities available on the station, the Chairman, Railway Board stated:-

“We take note of it.”

CHAPTER – V

CLEANLINESS AND WATER AVAILABILITY

A. Cleanliness in Train and Stations

67. Cleanliness is Railways thrust area in this current financial year as declared by Minister of Railways. Cleanliness and hygiene are the high priority items that are monitored through an elaborate system over Zonal Railways

Cleanliness in Trains

68. The Indian Railways system covers over 8018 stations and carries over 13 million passengers daily. The clientele is varied in view of the social background/culture. Railway users stretch over a wide spectrum from extremely sensitive traveller to those who have a lesser sense of cleanliness

69. Asked about the initiative taken by the Railways to ensure cleanliness, the Ministry informed that a number of initiatives have been taken in this regard which include introduction of mechanized cleaning processes at major railway stations by private professional agencies, mechanised cleaning in running trains, supply of special uniforms and protective gear to staff engaged in cleaning activities, undertaking publicity campaigns and education of travelling public besides planning for modification of coaches by providing toilets of improved design as well as toilets with controlled discharge facility which open up when the train is in motion and therefore the station areas does not get dirty. Besides, cleanliness is checked at different levels starting from the supervisors in charge at the stations to officers of different departments located at the station, Division or Headquarters. Also it has been decided to give special attention to and focus on 'pay & use' toilets.

70. In order to further enhance the standard of cleaning of toilets, a new scheme 'Clean Train Stations' has been developed in which mechanized cleaning facilities will be provided at selected stations enroute on the entire system to ensure effective cleaning of coaches toilets during day time. This scheme will cover most of the long distance trains and all reserved coach including sleeper class coaches.

71. Pilot project of mechanized cleaning has been implemented at Ratlam, Western Railway since August, 2003. This scheme shall be extended to other stations also. Modular toilets with improved aesthetics and cleanability have been provided on some coaches of Jan Shatabdi Express trains. All new AC coaches (except First AC), all coaches with Centre Buffer Couplers (CBCs), and 280 non CBC Sleeper coaches (GSCNs) being manufactured at ICF and RCF in the year 2004-05 will also be provided modular toilets.

72. During oral evidence, the Chairman, Railway Board informed:-

“In 31 stations, mechanized cleaning is going on. The ‘Ratlam’ type of experiment has been very successful. Under this model, when the train stops at a station for 15 to 18 minutes, each toilet in the train is cleaned thoroughly. We will be expanding it this year. Our aim is to take ‘Ratlam, type of mechanized cleaning of all coaches to another 15 stations. During 2003-04, we had envisaged modular type of toilets. Most of the Jan Shatabdi and LHB type coaches have been fitted with modular toilets as well as discharge control toilets i.e. wherever the speed is less than 30 kmph, that is, while approaching or standing at a station, it should not discharge excreta. This concept is being extended to other trains also”.

73. Further he added:-

“These control discharge type and modular type toilets have been very successful. Most of the new type of coaches we picked up last year are easily cleanable and maintenance effort is less. It maintains good hygiene. Besides this, we have gone for mechanized cleaning and ‘pay and use’ toilets at the stations. That is well held and we are expanding very fast. Mechanized cleaning has been now in use at Hazrat Nizamuddin for nearly one year and at New Delhi and Delhi stations it started recently. In most stations we have given implements to our ‘safaiwalas’. They have been well trained in that activity. They have been given the attire because of which they have developed a sense of pride while working there. There are problems because of the limited strength of the ‘safaiwalas’ but we have tried to take care of that. We provide the implements from the outside so that their productivity goes up. We provide all proper mechanical implements. We have seen that the productivity of the ‘safaiwalas’ with mechanized cleaning goes ten times higher than when they use ordinary brooms, implements and manual methods”.

74. Regarding fixing of accountability on the delinquent employees for not performing their duties, the Ministry intimated that the staff found lacking in performing of cleaning duties are counselled and taken up as well. The effort is as much to motivate the staff as on taking punitive action.

75. The Ministry of Railways in their written replies stated that there are 186 train maintenance depots on IR and high pressure pipeline systems are planned to be installed at pit lines of these Depots in a phased manner subject to availability of resources. However, high pressure jet cleaning arrangements for cleaning trains enroute are available at 188 stations on IR.

Improvements in cleanliness in trains

76. Giving details about long term and short term measures taken for improvements in cleanliness in trains, the Ministry in their written replies have stated as follows:-

Improvements in cleanliness of trains

S.No.	Action taken/planned	Time Frame
1.	Use of High-pressure jet cleaning machines on about 200 station to clean coach toilets enroute.	Implemented
2.	Monthly intensive cleaning of each passenger carrying coach.	Implemented
3.	Deployment of travelling safaiwals on 71 important long distance trains.	Implemented
4.	Pest control on coaches through specialised agencies.	Short term
5.	Renovation of rakes at depots	Short term
6.	In order to bring about a quantum jump in Enroute cleaning of trains, a new scheme 'Clean Train Stations' has been developed in which mechanized cleaning facilities will be provided at selected stations enroute on the entire system to ensure effective cleaning of coach toilets and coaches during morning and evening hours. This scheme will cover most of the long distance trains and all reserved coaches including sleeper class coaches. Pilot project has been implemented at Ratlam station of WR since August, 2003. This scheme shall be extended to other stations also.	15 stations to be covered in short term and the scheme to be extended to 35 more stations in long term.
7.	Installation of high pressure jet pipe lines at all pit lines.	Long term
8.	Provision of modular toilets on new coaches of all reserved coaches.	Already introduced in Jan Shatabdis. All AC coaches are now being fitting with modular toilets.
9.	Installation of automatic train washing systems at large depots	Long term

A list of existing and planned clean train stations on Indian Railway, Zone-wise is enclosed at Annexure-VI.

Cleanliness at Stations

77. At stations, day-to-day cleanliness, functioning of booking windows, reservation system, waiting room furniture are being looked after by Station Managers. The day-to-day upkeep of station building, PF Sheds, Waiting Halls, water supply, lighting are looked after by Junior Engineers.

78. Regarding the provision of 'Pay & Use' toilets at stations, and the number of stations where this facility is available, the Ministry of Railways stated that since the task of bringing about perceptible cleanliness is stupendous, it has been decided to give focused attention to certain areas and one of them is introduction of 'Pay & Use' scheme of toilet. The facility is available at over 400 stations. Though no formal survey has been undertaken to get the response of the public yet the feedback indicates this facility is considered highly desirable and representations are received from various quarters to extend the same to more stations. However, about the plans to extend this facility at more stations the Ministry stated that it is proposed to provide 'Pay & Use' toilets at A to E category of stations.

79. On being asked that the cleanliness is not properly done at the terminal stations because of shortage of staff, the Chairman, Railway Board explained:-

“We have got the vacancies because we had been introducing new trains. After introduction of the trains, we were having the process of creation of posts and filling up of posts. So, recently last year we have taken a decision that whenever we declare any new trains, immediately the posts will be automatically created like the running staff. In the six monthly review, the posts will be automatically created and they will be filled up. So far as filling up of vacancies is concerned, we are going for an all out drive for this.”

B. Availability of Water

Drinking water at stations

80. Railways endeavour is to provide drinking water to passengers at all stations. Explaining about the provision of drinking water at stations specially during the summer season and making provision of drinking water available to passengers during journey in trains, the Ministry of Railways stated that some small stations do not have adequate water source either due to absence of water supply from municipality or presence of brackish water, inadequate ground water yield from hand pumps. Further even at some of those stations where piped/hand pump supply exists, water scarcity

comes up in summer due to lesser supplies by municipality, lowering in ground water table etc. and increased demand. In such cases, availability of drinking water is ensured at stations by arranging water through private water tankers. Even water special trains are run in areas facing heavy shortage of water. Water coolers, mobile water trollies, matkas are arranged for better availability of drinking water to the passengers. Many NGOs also supplement water to passengers by pios. In addition to normal facilities provided for drinking water at station premises, packaged drinking water/package natural mineral water in pouches/bottles is made available for sale through static as well as mobile catering/vending units. Private licensees have also been authorized to procure and sell any ISI approved brand packaged drinking water/natural mineral water.

Availability of water in Trains

81. Regarding the provision of drinking water in the trains, it was stated that in Rajdhani and Shatabdi Express trains, drinking water bottles are supplied to all the passengers. In other trains, sachet/pouches alongwith meals is supplied to the passengers. Moreover, in the past, water containers in AC-2 tier and jerry cans in 1st class and Sleeper class coaches of Mail/Express trains were provided but it was found that drinking water from these containers/jerry cans was not used by the traveling passengers for drinking purposes and as such the usage of this facility was minimal.

Watering of Coaches

82. Railways provide elaborate arrangements for watering of coaches both at starting stations as well as enroute. The watering installations are provided at nominated stations enroute and work is regularly monitored to ensure proper filling of water. Adequate halts are provided at these stations in a systematic manner to ensure availability of water in toilet of coaches throughout the journey.

83. During oral evidence, the Chairman, Railway Board informed:-

“As regards water in the toilet, our efforts are that we have got watering station for every four to five hours. We are trying to ensure that after every 200 to 250 km coaches are watered. There should be sufficient pressure available for water filling, like 100 liters per minute or so, so that whatever is the capacity, half of it is at least filled. Sometimes there is sudden water failure somewhere may be because it was a summer season and it could not be watered due to some reasons like water failure. Even in that case we do not allow a longer run without watering. We try to stop it at another watering station even though it may not be a scheduled watering station. We try to relay the message on the control.”

CHAPTER – VI

WAITING ROOM AND OTHER PASSENGER AMENITIES

Waiting Room/Rest Room Facility

84. Waiting rooms at stations are intended only for bonafide passengers waiting for or arriving by trains, for short duration. The passengers arriving by night trains may remain in the waiting room until morning. Similarly, outward passengers traveling by night trains may remain their till the departure of their train. Waiting rooms are occupied by the passengers according to class of ticket held by them. Ladies waiting room are reserved exclusively for use of lady passengers.

As a part of the passenger amenities waiting rooms at the stations have been provided under the direct control of the station masters/station superintendents. At big stations, waiting rooms remain open round the clock.

85. When it was asked that these waiting rooms are mostly found closed or are dirty with very few facilities, the Ministry stated that at important stations, waiting room remains open round the clock and at smaller stations, these are opened only during the passing of the trains or on request by the passengers. This practice is adopted to prevent unauthorised occupation of waiting rooms by unscrupulous elements and to ensure the proper upkeep of these rooms.

86. The Chairman, Railway Board added during oral evidence as under:-

“In certain stations where the users or the passengers are not many, to avoid or to ensure that there is no misuse of these waiting rooms by the miscreants, it is kept under lock and key of the Station Manger. Station Managers room is nearby. He can be approached and he will open the waiting room.”

Retiring Rooms

87. Retiring room is one of the desirable amenities to be provided in stations of category ‘A’, ‘B’ and ‘D’. The retiring rooms are provided at stations where a number of 40% occupation is expected. Retiring rooms are normally reserved for a period upto 24 hours but are not allowed beyond two days. For subsequent day 25% extra charges are levied.

88. When asked about the reasons for not allotting retiring room for 'C' category stations even though the same has been provided for 'D' category stations, the Ministry explained that 'C' Category stations are suburban stations which cater to only local passengers and therefore retiring room facility is not provided at these stations.

89. On being further asked as to why no separate ladies and gents retiring rooms have been provided at 'B' category stations, the Ministry while clarifying the position stated that the retiring room at 'B' category stations can be fully occupied by ladies also. In view of this it is not considered desirable to earmark separate retiring room for ladies.

Medical facilities

90. To provide medical facilities to the passengers First-Aid boxes are provided with Guards of all passengers trains at all Railway Stations. Station staff and Guards are trained in First-Aid skills. Railway doctors (as well as) private doctors are summoned at stations en-route and their services are availed by needy sick passengers in extreme emergencies. According to the Ministry of Railways in a year on an average 12,000 passengers are given medical treatment/attended by doctors.

91. When enquired about the medical aid Railways are providing to the passengers travelling by 162 long distance trains where stoppages are very less, the Chairman, Railway Board replied:-

“To provide medical assistance in long distance trains a system was introduced nearly two years back that doctors who are travelling in a train will be given ten per cent concessions if they give an undertaking that whenever called for they will be giving medical attention to the co-passengers, who need medical assistance, while travelling. It has been quite successful since then.”

92. He further added:

“It was implemented in February, 2003. Since then 29,000 doctors have availed the concession and their services have been availed. In all these trains, First Aid Boxes are provided with Guards, etc. and now these have been augmented so that in cases of simple medical assistance like fever, etc. these type of medical assistance can be provided to the passengers. In those boxes resuscitation equipment are also there in case of emergency. This has been well received in all these trains.

We have kept these augmented first aid boxes at 156 stations and 39,038 staff have been trained in this connection, whether he is a Guard or Ticket checker or other persons on the train. We are also planning to train RPF personnel in this regard. They are required where the doctors are not available, but if doctors are there, it becomes binding on them to give medical advice.”

Availability of Chemists

93. As per extant policy guidelines Railways are to provide exclusive chemist shops at all large and important railway stations. At all other class ‘A’ Stations chemist corners as an extension of existing bookstalls/curio stalls is to be provided by Railways. Stand alone chemist shops are also provided at a number of stations.

Foot over bridges

94. Foot over bridges are provided to connect the main platform with the area having main habitation. With the passage of time, there is no extension of FOB for the other side of the station, which has developed as a result of increase in population at that side.

95. During the oral evidence when it was suggested that the extension of FOB should be done and approach roads provided, if it is felt that it is required because of development or increase in population on the other side of the station. The Chairman, Railway Board stated:-

“As regards FOB, it is provided to take care of the safety aspect as it connects one platform to the other platform. Normally, we extend the FOB up to the booking office on the circulating area at all the important ‘A’ category stations, and other important stations, but it is not done in all the stations. It is provided only from the point of view of safety, but wherever booking offices have some in the circulating area, and if it is an important station, then we do extend it up to the booking office, that is, the circulating area.

As regards stations where the city has developed on the other side also, we have reviewed a number of demands, and we have sanctioned a number of works of second entry, namely, for providing booking offices on the other side also. At places where FOBs already exist connecting the first entry, and if we have provided the second entry also, then we will give instructions that logically it should be extended to the other side.”

96. When asked whether there was any proposal to construct foot over bridges near yard to facilitate the staff as well as the passengers to cross the lines to go on the other side so as to prevent any mishappenings/accidents, the Ministry in their written reply stated that under the Plan Head ‘Passenger Amenities’ Railways provided FOBs only for the use of bonafide railway passengers to the Stations to approach Railway platforms. However, where there are large number of staff residing number off-side of stations, small width FOB are provided only from the point of view of use by staff and not for facilitating general public.

Bonafide passengers are required to cross the platforms, lines etc. at the stations only. As regards, the staff on duty in yards, they are guided by guidelines for safety while in the yard area. In view of the above, FOBs for passengers & staff in the yards are neither required nor provided.

Platform Height

97. When the Committee pointed out during the evidence that at number of stations platforms have became lower than the track after track renewal work was completed, the Chairman, Railway Board explained:-

“For all major projects like gauge conversion works, new lines, doublings, etc. we have already given instructions that there will be no rail-level platforms for the broad gauge. As regards the existing rail-level platforms, we are debating on it in our full Board Meetings that there should be no rail-level platforms in the broad gauge, and we should at least go for middle-level platforms”

98. On the suggestion of the Committee that guidelines should be issued to all the Zonal Railways for including the expenditure for raising the platform with the track renewal works, the Chairman, Railway Board assured:-

“We should try to maintain the platform levels, as per the schedule of dismensions, at the places where we have done the track renewal work, gauge conversion work, etc., and there is no debate on it. You are fully right in saying it, and we will reiterate these instructions. These instructions already exist, and we will reiterate if it is a rail-level platform, then the required height should be maintained.”

Complaint Books

99. Asked about the maintenance of complaint book and the areas where maximum number of complaints reported, the Ministry of Railways informed that complaint cum suggestion books are maintained at stations/trains. Any complaint regarding waiting rooms can also be lodged in station complaint book. Complaints are mainly in respect of working of booking, reservation and enquiry offices, punctuality of trains and improper behaviour of railway staff. The acknowledgement of the complaint/suggestion is given to the passenger at the point of registration of complaints/suggestions and each complaint/suggestion is investigated/examined properly and reply sent to the complaints. Whenever system corrections are called for action is taken to undertake the same.

In regard to touts CRB submitted before the Committee.

“They are generally in tout with railway personnel at mass contact areas such as booking & reservation office, ticket checking etc. We have conducted many checks about it, we have made it a thrust area. Catering and cleaning are such departments where many complaints are received. We have made ADRM in region and AGM in Zonal Railways the incharge of public grievance cell”

He further added.

“At every station the guard is in possession of complaint book. If a superintendent is present in train, he has the complaint book, under present circumstances, the RPF is also being provided this book. The AGM and ADRM review it every month.

100. When asked about the mechanism regarding redressal of grievances, the Ministry in their written replies stated that it is an important thrust area with the Ministry of Railways. Indian Railways have a well knit Public Grievances Redressal Machinery which takes prompt action on the complaints registered by the travelling public. In this regard instructions have been issued to the Zonal Railways.

101. When further enquired whether there was any practice of replying to the complaints about progress in his complaint the Ministry stated that as per existing instructions and practice, the complaints/suggestions are being acknowledged by the Railway and after due investigation, a full and self contained reply is sent to the complaint.

AUTOMATIC TELLER MACHINES FACILITIES

102. ATMs are installed at important stations of Indian Railways to facilitate the passengers to withdraw cash through their Credit Cards and performing other activities. ATMs are installed and operated by reputed banks, which are selected through press advertisements.

When asked whether ATM facilities have been provided at any of the stations the Ministry in a written reply stated that as per information received from eleven Zonal Railways, ATMs are available at about 40 locations.

The Ministry of Railways also informed that the proposals are also in hand to extend this facility at other locations.

CHAPTER – VII

CATERING FACILITIES

103. The catering activities of the Indian Railways are presently being looked after by the Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) which has been fully operational from August, 2001. All the catering activities of the Indian Railways either departmental or franchised, have been taken over by the IRCTC alongwith the staff which was deployed at the time of taking over. The staff is being trained by the IRCTC to give professional touch before they are put on regular duties. IRCTC have been enforcing and insisting that whatever private caterers come, their staffers are also well trained.

104. When asked whether the entire catering staff and the catering department have been taken over by IRCTC or an option was offered to staff to join IRCTC, the Chairman, Railway Board stated:—

“The decision is that whatever is the private or departmental staff, both will be transferred to IRCTC. As regards departmental staff, whatever staff are there, they have to go there. They will be taken to start with as on deemed deputation with IRCTC because we will have PV, DP, and PSP departments also. They will be trained and they will become the staff of IRCTC. But we are having a dialogue with the federations and we are making sure that their emoluments are, in no way, retarded. All their emoluments that they were getting are duly protected.”

105. He further informed about their service condition:-

“Initially, they have placed under IRCTC on deputation, but they have an option that within three years they can give an option to come back to the Railways. We will have to then keep them on supernumery posts and redeploy them after training wherever we have vacancies.”

106. Asked about the grant of license/contract to the major pantry or catering contract on food plazas, the Chairman, Railway Board intimated:-

“As regard IRCTC awarding the major pantry or catering contract, it is a two packet system and we are following the rules of the contract. Anybody who is capable, who have fulfilled all the eligibility criteria and who is financially capable and who is

experienced can apply. So, all the leading players in this field are competing and we cannot have any restrictions, as per the law of contract. If anybody is capable and is able to grab more than one, he can have it. We cannot give for one year or two years, because unless we give for a sizeable period in which they have to do a lot of investments it will not be useful but nonetheless, we are also reviewing this policy that these major awarding contracts whether we should have these for optimum five years or three years, and we have taken a conscious decision on that. But it cannot be for a very short period as we want some real good professional players in this field. They have to make investments. So, unless he can get back the dividend out of the investments, he will not come forward.”

107. When asked whether pantry cars are available in all the trains Chairman, Railway Board informed:

“Out of 680 Mail-Express long route trains, arrangement for pantry car has already been made in almost 234 trains. There are 17 Sampark Kranti Trains out of which one has already been introduced and there is arrangements for pantry car in it. Provision for pantry car would be made in the remaining 16 trains also. We try to provide pantry cars in accordance with the number of pantry coaches being manufactured every year. In case we fail to provide pantry car in long distance trains, train side vending is provided.”

CHAPTER – VIII

MONITORING AND MAINTENANCE OF PASSENGER AMENITIES

108. Railways endeavour is to keep the amenities provided at the stations as per the norms. Any short coming/mal functioning noticed in the amenities provided at the stations and trains, either during inspection or through passenger complaint, are attended to. There is a system of review and updating of available facilities at the stations and trains. Statistical data is maintained in this regard. The available facilities at stations/trains are periodically checked by inspecting officials. Deficiencies noticed or brought to their notice by general public and people's representatives are attended to. There is a system for monitoring passenger complaints and ensure regular follow up.

Maintenance of Passenger Amenities

109. Regarding the mechanism for provision/upkeep of various amenities at stations and on trains and for taking long and short term remedial measures, the Ministry of Railways intimated that certain facilities are provided at the time of construction of new stations based on anticipated traffic. Such works are done as a part of projects like Traffic Facilities, Yard Remodeling, Gauge Conversion, New Lines etc. Amenities are further augmented from time to time based on the needs and expectations of the travelling public and as per growth of traffic. Works in this regard are processed through the annual Works programmes of the Railways. Station-wise data is maintained on passenger amenities availability, required and shortfalls. Where there are shortfalls, works are planned to make up the same. Annual review of these data helps in planning to remove deficiencies. The works costing Rs. 50 lakhs and above are approved by the Parliament. The works costing between Rs. 30 lakhs to Rs. 50 lakhs are approved by Railway Board and work costing less than Rs. 30 lakh can be approved by General Managers of the Railways.

110. Regarding the checks/inspections conducted by the concerned authorities specifically the inspection Report of Shri Panjhzari, Chairman of Personnel Amenities Committee at National level, the Ministry of Railways informed that the Inspections are carried out by various officers from Railway Board, Zonal Railway and Divisional offices, including Executive Director Passenger Amenities (now re-designated as Executive Director Passenger Marketing) as per their respective schedules. The respective quota for inspection as laid down for various officers is maintained in Zonal Railways and Divisions.

111. The passenger Amenities Committee consisting of Chairman and a few members is constituted by the Ministry of Railways at National level to check the passenger amenities provided at railway stations and on trains.

112. The Committee inspects various stations and holds discussions with officers of the zonal railways and submit their inspection reports from time to time. The various features reported in the inspection reports of the Passenger Amenities Committee are generally with regard to the cleanliness and environmental conditions, drinking water arrangements, dissemination of information to the passengers through enquiry offices, public address system, indication boards, provision of lights, fans and other electrical amenities, provision and maintenance of public conveniences, reservation and booking arrangement for passengers, security of passengers in carriages and station premises, losses in railway revenue etc. The suggestions and observations of the committee are referred to zonal railways for taking appropriate action.

113. To monitor the work of the Standing Action Committee, a committee consisting of Advisers (now Additional Members) was also constituted. The Report sent by the Committees indicated that action to make good deficiencies had been in progress and the upgradation and provision of passenger amenities is a continuous process depending upon various constraints including the funds availability etc.

114. When asked if any survey has been conducted to ascertain whether the basic amenities at various stations are commensurate with the level of traffic handled, the Ministry have stated that the survey had been conducted and the data on availability of passenger amenities are updated every year on 1st of April by regular survey. The Division-wise surveys are conducted over a period of time in the course of a year. Last survey was conducted about a year back. Functionally, minimum amenities have been provided at all stations. However, deficiencies still exists in terms of quantum of amenity at number of stations e.g. 10 taps against 12 required etc. Railways have been directed to give top priority to elimination of deficiencies in minimum essential amenities at stations. The deficiencies are planned to be eliminated by March, 2005.

Maintenance of Passenger Amenities in Trains:

115. Indian Railways provide several passenger amenities in trains like cushions on seats and berths, curtains, fully equipped toilets with running water in taps, lights, fans etc. Also, cleanliness is ensured on trains, which forms an important part of passenger comfort. A well-equipped system is in place to ensure proper upkeep of these passenger amenities on day-to-day basis and also complete overhaul on periodic basis.

116. Day to day maintenance of rakes is carried out in washing lines at coaching depots which are equipped with facilities like pit, pressurized air, electrical charging facility, watering hydrants, lighting arrangement etc. This includes preventive maintenance as per predetermined schedules to ensure desired level of safety and reliability in which thorough attention to passenger amenity fittings is also provided. All missing fittings are replaced and damaged ones are repaired. Coach toilet water tanks are filled and the train is cleaned from both, inside and outside. Trains leave washing line only after a detailed check in fully fit condition, ready for service.

117. During the oral evidence, the Chairman, Railway Board informed the Committee:-

“So far as the maintenance of the passenger amenities in the coaches of running trains and the cleanliness thereof is concerned, we have the system by which every train after completing its journey comes back and it is again given a primary maintenance. At the other end, if it is a long distance train, whatever are the deficiencies like some switch is not working, some bulb is fused or some upholstery is given away, these things are definitely attended to in that. The mopping or the floor cleanliness is done over there. This is the basic minimum amenity which is prescribed. Every train in the primary depot will be given a thorough cleaning every month and it is ensured that everything is all right. If the shutters are not working, they are also repaired once in a month in the depot during the primary maintenance itself.

Another system which we have introduced is that on long distance important trains, we have gone for the rake renovation. We attend three to four coaches thoroughly. We ensure one hundred per cent fittings, windows are functioning properly, all the electric gadgets are properly functioning, and if the upholstery is torn, it is also set right. This is called ‘rake renovation.’ Besides this, after 10 to 12 years,

we send our coaches to Bhopal and in Bhopal we do the mid-life rehabilitation of these coaches. It gives a lease of another 15 new years for the coach.”

118. He further added:

“We are doing roughly 350 coaches per year in Bhopal. The coaches which have become old definitely need more maintenance effort, more cleanliness effort and we have to look into that.

We have roughly 44,000 coaches. We are not able to cater to all. But all the long distance, mail and express train coaches are sent. We are able to cater for nearly 350 coaches per year. That is the capacity. We want to increase it to 425 in the near future. We are not sending ordinary passenger train coaches there. We are not able to send them there.”

119. When asked about coaches in short distance trains, the Chairman, Railway Board explained:

“We are able to do rake renovation. We do it locally. We give a thorough attention. We have got two systems, namely Intermediate Overhaul (IOH) and Periodical Overhaul (POH). We are doing POH for all the passenger train coaches every 18 months. In the POH, we try to see that all the passenger amenity items are fully attended. In the IOH, they normally attend to the safety items mainly besides some items of amenity. They thoroughly attend to that so that the ordinary passenger coaches get a treatment during POH.”

120. When enquired further whether the system is working well, the Chairman Railway Board responded:

“This is working well. But there may be some overdue arrears some where which we are looking into. As a special drive, we launch it also. There are some sort of anti-social elements are also there. They try to fiddle with the coaches. But nonetheless we are responsible for that.”

121. Asked about the steps taken to effect better coordination among the various agencies involved in upkeep of passenger amenities, the Ministry informed that in order to ensure better coordination amongst various agencies involved in upkeep of passenger amenities, Additional General Managers at Zonal Railway Headquarter level and Additional Divisional Railway Managers at Divisional Headquarter level have been nominated as nodal officers. These officers interact with the concerned

officers of various departments from time to time and take short term and long term measures to ensure provision and maintenance of the passenger amenities. Besides, multi-discipline Service Improvement Groups at the zonal, divisional headquarters and stations level have also been activated to inspect amenities at stations and to suggest/take remedial measures for rectifying the deficiencies/shortcomings in passengers amenities.

122. While commenting upon the query that in some of the trains there are no light/lights are not working with the result many a times passengers are put to inconvenience and at time they pay through their lives, the Ministry of Railways stated that all endeavours are made by Railways to make good defects of electrical equipments including lights whenever it comes to the notice. These defects are attended to and rectified promptly as soon as these are reported. After lodging the complaint of poor light/no lights by the passengers to the station master, the train lighting staff, if available, at that station attends the fault. Else, the message is passed on by the station master to the next major station where the train lighting staff is available and the fault is rectified. Further, instructions have been reiterated to keep a regular watch on the maintenance of lights in passenger coaches. No serious accident has been reported on account of no lights/poor lights in the passenger coaches. As regards broken vestibule, it is stated that after the one unfortunate incidence when the lady passenger fell through vestibule, there was recommendation to switch over to UIC vestibule which has since been completed on all coaches.

Onus of Proper Maintenance of Passenger Amenities

123. When asked as to who is directly responsible for proper maintenance and availability of facilities for passengers in trains and station, the Ministry in a written reply stated that coaching depot in-charge is responsible for maintenance of amenities in trains. The major maintenance of coaches is done in the Workshops. The smaller deficiencies in the coaches are attended to in the sick lines and even at stations. Deficiencies which come about during run such as failure of air conditioning, shortage of water are taken care of as far as possible at the next halting station where facilities are available.

124. At stations, day-to-day cleanliness, functioning of booking windows, reservation system, waiting room furniture are being looked after by Station Managers. The day-to-day upkeep of station building, PF Sheds, Waiting halls, water supply, lighting are looked after by Junior Engineers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

CATEGORISATION OF STATIONS

125. The Committee note that the guidelines governing passenger amenities issued in 1952 were reviewed by the Railways for the first time in the year 1995 and Ministry of Railways issued revised guidelines under which the facilities which were operationally required and were an essential feature of the infrastructure of station such as booking office, platforms, platform shelter, lighting etc. were excluded from the list of passenger amenities and termed as 'infrastructure facilities'. The facilities provided over and above this infrastructure facility were covered under the passenger amenity. As some deficiencies were found in the guidelines issued in 1995 such as scale/quantum of amenities to be provided, whether the additional facilities as per norms would be a continuous process with growth of passenger traffic etc., the Ministry of Railways had made a further revision of the guidelines in 1999 to overcome these deficiencies and issued revised guidelines classifying the facilities to be provided at stations into three categories viz. 'Minimum Essential Amenities', 'Recommended Amenities' and 'Desirable Amenities'. Since then the Railways are following these guidelines of 1999 till date while providing passenger amenities. However, the Committee were informed during evidence that further revision of these guidelines were made in 2003. The Committee are of the opinion that in view of the change in living standard of people at large and technology developments these guidelines should be updated and reviewed regularly so that any deficiency occurring in the guidelines with the fast changing time could be rectified immediately.

126. The Committee further find that under the extant guidelines, Railways have categorized their entire 8018 stations into 6 categories (category 'A' to 'F') on the basis of the passenger earnings to provide the amenities on that particular station. The yardstick for providing the facilities is linked with the category of station. The Committee were informed during the evidence that the Railways transport 60 per cent of total Railway passengers every day on Suburban Railways, that is why Railways had taken into account the annual passenger earnings as a guiding factor while going for the 1999 circular that categories the stations. Though the passenger earnings of some stations may not be substantial or upto the requisite level to place a particular station in a higher category, the Committee are of the view that factors like geographical location, religious importance and commercial significance of the place may be considered while deciding the categorization. Similarly, there are other categories also like the places where educational institutes for specialized studies are located in

remote areas and the suburban stations where the number of passengers are more but the earnings are less due to various concessions provided, such stations also require desired level of amenities because they are frequently used by a large number of passengers during peak hours/ periods. Hence, the Committee are of the view that the categorization of stations may not be done merely on the basis of the earnings but the relative importance of station such as number of tickets sold at that station also be duly considered while making such categorizations. The Committee would like to be apprised of the steps taken in this regard.

127. The Committee further note that more than 90 per cent of the stations are in 'E' & 'F' category. These stations are used mostly by the rural people/people residing in remote areas. Moreover, the stoppage of train at these stations is also very less and for short time. Besides, usually the passengers do not board the train instead they only get down at these stations as the duration of stoppage is very less, with the result the passenger earnings from such stations is very less though number of passengers using these stations is much more. Taking into account that the Railways are the service providers, the Committee opine that larger sections of passengers should get satisfactory amenities at all stations. Keeping this in view, the Committee desire that at least basic facilities like water coolers, FOBs, platform shelters, waiting hall, announcement system in English, Hindi and regional languages about arrival/departure schedule of trains in both E and F category stations and some other facilities at 'F' category stations such as seating arrangements, lavatories, urinals, fans etc. may be provided at these stations on priority basis. They also impress upon the Ministry to chalk out an action plan for upgradation of these stations over a given period of time depending on usage of these station by passengers, to a higher category and provide amenities accordingly.

MODEL STATIONS

128. The Committee note that in 1999 the Ministry of Railways had selected 61 stations as model stations in different Zones to provide higher level of passenger facilities. They appreciate that as of now 317 stations have been selected in various Zones to be developed as model stations by March 2008, so that they may function as trend setters for other stations for the purpose of providing passenger amenities. In this regard Railways have prepared an action plan also. The Committee have been apprised that so far 61 stations have been provided with upgraded amenities. The criteria adopted for selection of these model stations depends on the importance and significance of the station rather than the category of the station. The Committee, however, feel that there could be many more aspects also such as population growth, geographical location and educational significance in determining the criteria for

selection of model stations. They urge the Ministry to review and make the basis/criteria more elaborate, transparent with well defined parameters in regard to the selection of Model stations. They also desire that the development work of the remaining selected model stations be taken on priority basis by fixing Zone-wise targets for each year so that maximum number of these stations can be developed much before the targeted date of March, 2008. The Committee also emphasise that in the case of those stations which will be categorized afresh as model station, the infrastructure/facilities should be developed within a period of two years.

The Committee also note that every year new stations are being included in the list of model stations. They, therefore emphasize that the amenities on the stations selected earlier as model station should be provided in a time bound manner.

129. The Committee find that on number of occasions the basic amenities such as drinking water taps, lights, fans etc. are not functional in trains and at stations. At the same time the passengers are unaware of the facilities/amenities which are actually sanctioned or available at that particular station and the authority with whom the complaint can be lodged for rectification. The Committee, therefore, desire that category of stations should be displayed appropriately at stations through signboards indicating the sanctioned list of facilities/amenities and those which are available, together with the name, designation, telephone number of the officer responsible and accountable for maintaining these amenities. They are of the firm view that this practice will make the passengers aware of the various amenities which they are entitled to and help them to procure the same.

UTILISATION OF FUNDS

130. The Committee are constrained to note that for the last several years the funds allocated for passenger amenities are not being utilized fully by the Railways. They were informed by the Ministry of Railways that because of slow progress of work due to contractual problems, delay in finalisation of plans and estimates, difficulty in executing works under traffic conditions, regulation on plan expenditure imposed in the course of the year, the funds could not be utilized fully in some years. With regard to the finalisation of plan and estimates, the Committee were informed that the proposal for passenger amenities like other Plan Heads is scrutinized by different Committees such as Standing Passenger Amenities Committee of Zonal Railway, Standing Committee on Passenger Amenities in Railway Board, Additional Members Committee and at Board level. The Committee feel that this is a very lengthy process which consumes a lot of time. The planning itself takes a substantial portion of time during the

financial year thereby causing delay in completion of projected works resulting in cost and time over runs. The Committee, therefore, desire that an action plan must be prepared by all Zonal Railways well in advance so that the fund is allotted in time and works completed within the same financial year.

131. The Committee were apprised that for full utilization of allotted fund, a decision has now been taken by Railway Board that henceforth, each Zonal Railway will plan 15 percent to 20 percent more works than what is budgeted during the year and Zonal Railways would be responsible for financial management. By planning excess works the Zonal Railways would fully utilized the funds allotted for passenger amenities. The Committee appreciate the decision of the Ministry of Railways according to which the responsibility of financial management now rest on the Zonal Railways, which would review the fund utilization status every month rather than every quarter of the year. They are hopeful that under this new methodology the Railways, would be able to spend all the funds allocated to them under the head 'Passenger Amenities' instead of surrendering unutilized funds at the end of the year. They desire that the directions in this regard may be given to all Zonal Railways and scrupulously implemented so as to complete all the projected works as per the time schedule. The Committee would like to be apprised of the completion status of the projects as well as the utilization of the funds during the financial year.

TICKETING

132. During oral evidence, the Committee were informed that internet kiosk system for ticketing has been introduced in 2001-02 in more than 100 major cities. As on date these are functioning at 120 locations all over the country and it has become quite popular now. Nearly 3500 passengers are using this facility everyday. The ticket is delivered to the person by courier and if one happens to be in Delhi he can also collect from one of the nominated counters at Delhi. The Committee were further informed that this system is well hailed by the users and there is a popular demand for extension of internet time period from 0400 hours to 2300 hours in place of 0800 hours to 2200 hours. Taking the above facts into account, the Committee desire that this network may be expanded further to other cities also so that more and more passengers can use this facility rather than waiting in queues for long hours. Keeping in view the popularity of the system they also urge the Railways to extend the time period of the internet ticketing from 0400 hours till 2300 hours at the earliest.

133. The Committee were informed that a pilot project had been initiated in Delhi regarding booking tickets through SMS on Mobiles. They were also apprised that this facility is being extended to other States such as Andhra Pradesh after the success of the pilot project in Delhi. The Committee feel that people have easy access to mobiles in the present times. They are of the opinion that this would not only be the easiest method for the passengers to book the tickets but also would reduce the queues at the booking counters. They, therefore, emphasise that the facility for booking tickets through SMS on mobiles should be extended all over the country at the earliest.

134. The Committee were informed that the facility of 'Tatkal Reservation' which is presently available on 110 Mail/Express trains in nominated classes only is being extended to all the trains by 14 November, 2004. The Committee note that of late the charges for tatkal reservation have been raised drastically to Rs.150/- and Rs.300/- for sleeper class and first class respectively. The Committee desire to know the logic in drastic and abrupt raising of the charges for 'Tatkal Reservation.' They would also like to be apprised of the status of extension of the scheme to other trains.

ENQUIRY SYSTEM

135. The enquiry system consisting of Public Address System, Electronic Train Display Board, Auto Answering System, Interactive Voice Response System (IVRS), National Train Enquiry System (NTEs) and the Staff manning the enquiry counters play a vital role in enhancing the customer friendly image of Railways. However, the behaviour of front line staff at the enquiry booths are often found to be improper to the extent of being, rude and non-cooperative at times. Sometimes the information given by them is also found to be incorrect. During the examination of the subject, the Committee were informed that 9 per cent of the complaints received were regarding improper behaviour of the Railway staff and 7 per cent were regarding the enquiry. The Committee opine that to improve the enquiry system by minimizing this human interface, though computerized enquiry system has been started by the Railways and non telephone based enquiry system is also being planned such as enquiry through website, SMS, Radio, TV etc., yet the human factor cannot be eliminated completely. The Committee, therefore, stress that the front line staff manning the enquiry booths must be imparted training for effecting improvement in their behavior/attitude before being deployed to man these counters so that they are available at the counters alert with updated information,

well behaved, helpful and courteous in their approach while dealing with customers. The Committee also emphasize that at 'A', 'B', 'C' category stations enquiry system should function round the clock and at the same time more telephone lines should be provided at the enquiry offices so that the public in general and passengers in particular may not face inconvenience.

136. The Committee further note that the information aired through the enquiry booths/display boards, voice recording system regarding the arrival/departure time schedule of trains based on the details provided by control office or central enquiry and from operating staff on duty are found to be delayed, incorrect and incomprehensible as the process of transmission of information is very long and passes through many hands before being announced. The voice recording system particularly is so bad that it becomes difficult to know the exact timings of the trains. They also find that there is a lack of cooperation between the coaching/commercial control staff and the enquiry staff. Besides, the audibility of the announcements made on stations is very poor. The Committee, therefore, strongly recommend that immediate rectification regarding transmission of information be made and co-operation between the coaching/commercial control staff and enquiry staff enhanced. They emphasise that all out efforts be made to ensure that display through this system is clear comprehensive, accurate and timely. The Committee desire the some system should be developed to provide updated information. The arrival and departure of the train should be electronically displayed at all the platforms. They also stress that the announcements should not be made hurriedly it should be at a proper pace, accurate and audible to commuters.

137. The Committee find that announcements are made in a very few superfast trains only. They suggest that a brief announcement should be made in the train about the approaching station with its topography, historical background, cultural, tourist and pilgrimage significance to make the commuters aware about the place even if they are not getting down there and make their journey interesting.

CLEANLINESS

138. The Indian Railway system carries over 1.3 million passengers daily. The cleanliness is supposed to be checked strictly at different levels from the supervisors in charge at the stations to officers of different departments located at stations, divisions or headquarters. However, it is a common experience that the cleanliness in trains and at stations is not maintained properly.

Given the mammoth size of the Railways, the Committee do appreciate that it is not physically possible for the Railway Board to verify and check each and every station and train. Nevertheless, the Committee desire that a system of random checking by special inspection teams may be conceived at the Railway Board level and based on the feed back of reports of these teams, corrective measures may be taken to improve the cleanliness at stations as well as in trains. They urge the Railways to extend further the innovative and mechanized cleaning method of Ratlam type to other stations as well at the earliest. They emphasise that control discharge type and modular type toilets may be installed in new coaches and in coaches which are sent to the coaching depots for maintenance. The Committee also recommend that manual & physical cleaning of tracks at stations, platforms and trains may be carried out regularly till the aforementioned systems are installed. They also desire that cleanliness should be ensured by spraying of bleaching powder etc. so that no stench is their. Special attention should be given towards the cleanliness as well as maintenance of the toilets. Since this year has been declared as a cleanliness year by the Railways, the Committee desire that the precincts of the Railway Stations including the tracks be kept thoroughly neat and clean as this would provide desirable environment to the tourists/passengers from all over the world.

139. The Committee were also informed that due to shortage of 'safaiwalas' the cleanliness on the station premises and in the trains is hampered considerably. They, therefore, recommend that the vacancies in the category of 'safaiwalas' may be filled up on priority basis so that the cleanliness may not suffer on this account. They emphasize that the decision of the Government for automatic creation of posts as soon as the new trains are declared should be implemented forthwith.

140. The Committee were further informed that the response to the 'Pay & Use' toilets at the station premises had been commendable. Considering the fact, the Committee desire that the Railway should explore more possibilities of setting up of 'Sulabh Sauchalayas' in collaboration with the 'Sulabh International' or any other non-governmental organisation so as to maintain certain level of cleanliness in and around station premises. Apart from this they stress that in case of deliberate shirking of work by delinquent employees, punitive or deterrent action must be taken against them.

WAITING ROOM/RETIRING ROOM

141. As per the category of station, facilities/amenities are provided at stations. These facilities include provision of waiting rooms at A, B&D categories of stations. Instructions are there to keep the waiting rooms open round the clock. However, the Committee were informed that sometimes just to avoid the misuse by the miscreants, these rooms are kept under lock and key by the Incharge/Station Manager. It is generally noticed that the waiting rooms at stations lack basic facilities/amenities and if at all these amenities are available, they are inoperative. The Committee, therefore, desire that the Station Managers may be made accountable for providing/maintaining the amenities in the waiting rooms and any lapse on this account should be taken up seriously.

142. The Committee also find that there are no separate ladies retiring room at 'B' & 'D' categories of stations. They are of the view that during late nights and odd hours the women passengers cannot relax in the presence of waiting male co-passengers in the common waiting rooms. They, therefore, desire that separate ladies retiring rooms be provided in 'B' & 'D' category stations also.

COMPLAINTS

143. The Committee observe that there is no proper system of registration of complaints at Railway stations. They were informed that the complaint books are available with the Guards at stations, Superintendent if he is present in train, RPF personnels and in coaches. However, in practice these complaint books are not supplied to the complainants on demand by the railway staff nor the complaint books are available/to be seen in the coaches. Moreover, the procedure for disposal of these complaints is also not transparent. The Committee, therefore, desire that a system of registering the complaints may be developed at each of the Zonal and Regional level so that every complaint is duly recorded. Further, they stress that adequate publicity be made about the availability of complaint books, the manner in which complaint could be lodged, on a display board at a prominent place in each and every coach. They desire that AGM and ADRM who have been appointed as the incharge of public grievance cell in the Zone and Region respectively should review the status of disposal of complaints every month. The Committee also desire that the status/outcome/action taken on these complaints, may be communicated to the complainants in a time bound manner within three months.

TRANSFERS

144. The Committee note that though the policy of rotational transfer of staff on commercial seats is there but these are not strictly followed in practice. The person deployed on one seat is allowed to continue there for years together. This may develop personal vested interests leading to corruption. Many a times it has been found that the touts operate in connivance with the railway staff. The Committee are of the opinion that the surveillance maintained by the vigilance department needs to be further strengthened. They emphasise that Railway should ensure that as per the instructions no person is allowed to hold a sensitive post for more than three years and the policy of rotational transfers may be strictly followed in letter and spirit.

INDIAN RAILWAY CATERING AND TOURISM CORPORATION (IRCTC)

145. IRCTC had been established in 2001 to take care of the catering activities of Indian Railways and it has taken over all catering activities of Indian Railway either franchised or departmental alongwith the staff which was deployed at the time of take over. IRCTC emphasise that all the staffers from private caterers besides the staff taken over from the department by IRCTC should be imparted professional training in sanitation and hygiene.

The Committee note that still a dual system of catering exists in the railways. The IRCTC is further engaging private contractors for fulfilling the catering demands of the Indian Railways. There are so many complaints received by the Railways against these private contractors regarding the quality and quantity of the foodstuff provided by these contractors. The Committee further observe that under the extant policy thousands of static and mobile catering workers, who were taken over by the IRCTC at the time of taking over of Railway catering activity, are likely to be rendered surplus on reversion to Railways. The Committee, therefore, emphasize that the earlier system of dual catering should continue. They also stress that extant policy with regard to awarding of contracts by IRCTC to private operators should be reviewed at the earliest. The Committee urge the Ministry to check regularly the quality of food served in the trains as well as at stations, besides the prices of the food items supplied by these contractors should be regulated and monitored regularly so that the food items are not overpriced. Special effort should be made to ensure that these are prepared in hygienic condition and the quality is not allowed to suffer at any cost. The Committee also desire that vending machines for beverages should be installed at 'A' and 'B' stations.

146. The Committee find that out of 680 Mail Express trains pantry car has been made available on 234 trains only. During the evidence it was submitted that all the 17 Sampark Kranti Express Trains would also be provided with pantry cars. They were also informed that as per the number of coaches manufactured every year provision of pantry cars are made accordingly. The Committee desire that Ministry of Railways should make efforts to enhance manufacture of pantry coaches so that at least pantry cars may be made available in all long distance trains, where journey of more than 15 hours is involved. They also emphasise that necessary steps may be taken at the earliest in order to provide hygienic food with quality assurance to the passengers of long distance trains rather than providing food from train side vending.

FOOT OVER BRIDGES

147. The foot over bridges (FOB) are provided to connect the platforms with the area having main habitation of the city. The Committee find that over the years as a result of increase in population, the cities have developed on the other side of the stations, but no extension of FOB connecting other side of the station has been constructed, which causes great inconvenience/safety hazards to the passengers. They feel that necessary guidelines in this regard should be issued to all the Zonal Railways that such stations should be identified where the city has developed on the other side while the FOBs have not been extended so far. The Committee desire that extension of FOB be provided in these identified places on priority basis. They also desire that the expenditure on FOB may be incurred as an integral part of rail infrastructure and not from 'Passenger Amenities Head'.

The Committee also observe that at certain stations there are high level platforms and FOBs where it becomes difficult for the heart patients and handicapped to climb. Similarly, the booking counters are also situated at 1st or 2nd Floor of the building in some places. They, therefore, recommend that ramp type FOBs should be provided atleast at the busy stations for the handicapped persons and passengers suffering from heart ailment, arthritis, asthmatic disease etc. Also booking counters for such passengers should be provided at ground floor.

148. The Committee also observe that in certain stations the booking windows are provided only at one side of these station after they have been extended or their category has been raised due to increase in population on the other side of the city. They are of the opinion that this

causes inconvenience to commuters and may lead to mishappening, accidents or evasion in buying a ticket. They stress that Railway should identify such stations Zone-wise and open the booking windows on either side of the stations also. They also emphasise that in such cities more number of booking offices be set up to facilitate passengers to buy Railway ticket as this would ultimately increase revenue of Railways.

RAISING OF LEVEL OF PLATFORMS

149. The Committee find that due to adoption of uni gauge system in Indian Railways i.e. gauge conversion from NG and MG to BG or due to change in classification of stations or material modification works such as new line works or doublings, at stations the platform level has become lower than even the level of tracks. They find that this is hazardous for the passengers. They have been informed that instructions have been given that there should be no rail level platforms and at least middle level platforms should be constructed. The Committee recommend that the height of the platform should be raised at all the stations on priority basis. They desire that the expenditure on these works should be incurred from the funds allotted for rail infrastructure rather than from 'Passenger Amenities' head.

COACH MAINTENANCE

150. Every passenger is a valued customer for Railways irrespective of the strata in society from which he comes. In fact IInd class passengers contribute a major portion of Railways income, hence the amenities provided to these passengers has a vital importance. The Committee were informed that there is a well equipped system in place to ensure proper upkeep of these passenger amenities on day to day basis and also complete overhaul on periodic basis. They were also apprised that day to day maintenance of rakes is carried out in washing lines at coaching depots which are equipped with facilities like pit pressurized air, electric charging facility, watering hydrants, lighting arrangements. Further the trains leave washing line only after a detailed check in fully fit condition, ready for service such as all missing fittings are replaced and damaged once are repaired. However, the Committee observe that the facilities in II Class/General compartment coaches are ill maintained. It has been noticed that in some of the trains there are no lights/fans or they are not in working condition. These deficiencies can be attributed to lack of maintenance/poor supervision. The Committee, therefore, recommend that a system of surprise checks by the SMs/higher officers may be introduced to oversee the maintenance work before the train is brought to the platform and at

the stations. This team may also be authorized to fix the responsibility on the delinquent employees in case any lapse is found so that appropriate action could be taken against them.

151. The Committee were informed that in order to enhance the life of a coach rake, renovation is done at Bhopal after 10 or 12 years of use which is called as mid-life rehabilitation of coaches. This gives a lease of another 15 years' life for the coach. Roughly 350 coaches of Mail/Express Trains per year are sent to Bhopal for renovation, as that is the capacity. Railways have now proposed to increase it to 425. This renovation is carried out only in case of the coaches of long distance trains. The coaches of passenger trains are being taken care of locally by Intermediate Overhaul (IOH) and Periodical Overhaul (POH) which is done after every 18 months. The Committee note that the coaches of the long distance trains and the passenger trains get renovation/ overhauling but there is no set procedure/pattern for renovation/overhauling of coaches of local trains. The Committee, therefore, desire that atleast IOH/POH of the coaches of the local/suburban trains may be carried out regularly.

AUTOMATIC TELLER MACHINE

152. The Committee note that Automatic Teller Machines(ATMs) are installed at 40 important stations to facilitate the passengers to withdraw cash through their credit cards and perform other activities. They were informed that ATMs are installed and operated by reputed Banks which are selected through press advertisements. The Committee urge the Ministry to take steps to tie up with various Nationalized/Private Banks to extend this facility of ATMs to the passengers at all the other important stations as well at the earliest.

**NEW DELHI;
December, 2004
Agrahanaya, 1926 Saka**

**(BASUDEB ACHARIA)
Chairman,
Standing Committee on Railways**

Annexure-I

S.No.	Page No.	Para No.	Line	Addition/modification
1.	42	2	3 from below	After 'station' add – such as number of tickets sold at that station.
2.	43	3	6 from below	After 'shelters' add – Waiting hall, announcement system in English, Hindi and regional language about arrival/departure schedule of trains.
3.	44	4	8 Last line	Add after 'March, 2008'. The Committee also emphasise that in the case of those stations which will be categorised afresh as model station, the infrastructure/facilities should be developed within a period of two years. Add sub para – The Committee also note that every year new stations are being included in the list of model stations. They, therefore, emphasize that the amenities on the stations selected earlier as model station should be provided in a time bound manner.
4.	48	11	Last line	Add – The Committee also emphasize that at 'A', 'B' 'C' category stations enquiry system should function round the clock and at the same time more telephone lines should be provided at the enquiry offices so that the public in general and passengers in particular may not face inconvenience.
5.	49	12	9 from above and 6 from below Line 4 from below	After 'coaching' add – /commercial control Add after 'and timely' The Committee desire that some system should be developed to provide updated information
6.	50	14	4 from below	Add after 'installed.' They also desire that cleanliness should be ensured by spraying of bleaching powder etc. so that no stench is there. Special attention should be given towards the cleanliness as well as maintenance of the toilets.
7.	54	21	1	Substitute the lines after 'contractors' by following:- The Committee further observe that under the extant policy thousands of static and mobile catering workers, who were taken over by the IRCTC at the time of taking over of Railway catering activity, are likely to be rendered surplus

				<p>reversion to Railways. The Committee, therefore, emphasize that the earlier system of dual catering should continue. They also stress that extant policy with regard to awarding of contracts by IRCTC to private operators should be reviewed at the earliest. The Committee urge the Ministry to check regularly the quality of food served in the trains as well as at stations, besides the prices of the food items supplied by these contractors should be regulated and monitored regularly so that the food items are not overpriced. Special effort should be made to ensure that these are prepared in hygienic conditions and the quality is not allowed to suffer at any cost. The Committee also desire that vending machines for beverages should be installed at 'A' and 'B' stations.</p>
8.	54	22	3 from below	<p>After 'trains' add – Where journey of more than 15 hours is involved.</p>
9.	55	23	05	<p>Add sub para – The Committee also observe that at certain stations there are FOBs where it becomes difficult for the heart patients and handicapped persons to climb. Similarly, the booking counters are also situated at 1st or 2nd floor of the building in some places. They, therefore, recommend that ramp type FOBs should be provided at least at the busy stations for the handicapped persons and passengers suffering from heart ailment, arthritis, asthematic disease etc. Also booking counters for such passengers should be provided at ground floor.</p>