

ELEVENTH REPORT

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE (2014-2015)

(SIXTEENTH LOK SABHA)

TATKAL AND ADVANCE RESERVATION SYSTEM IN INDIAN RAILWAYS

[Action Taken by the Government on the Observations/Recommendations of the
Committee contained in their Eightieth Report (15th Lok Sabha)]

MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS

*Presented to Lok Sabha on 18.12.2014
Laid in Rajya Sabha on 18.12.2014*



LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI

December, 2014/Agrahayana, 1936 (Saka)

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COMPOSITION OF THE PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE
(2014-15)

Prof. K. V. Thomas — *Chairperson*

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- | | | |
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* Elected *w.e.f.* 3rd December, 2014 *vice* Shri Rajiv Pratap Rudy who has been appointed as Minister *w.e.f.* 9th November, 2014.

† Elected *w.e.f.* 3rd December, 2014 *vice* Shri Jayant Sinha who has been appointed as Minister *w.e.f.* 9th November, 2014.

†† Elected *w.e.f.* 3rd December, 2014 *vice* Dr. M. Thambidurai who has been chosen as Hon'ble Deputy Speaker, Lok Sabha and has since resigned from the membership of the Committee.

INTRODUCTION

I, the Chairman, Public Accounts Committee (2014-15), having been authorized by the Committee, do present this Eleventh Report (Sixteenth Lok Sabha) on Action Taken by the Government on the Observations/Recommendations of the Committee contained in their Eightieth Report (Fifteenth Lok Sabha) on **‘Tatkal and Advance Reservation System in Indian Railways’** relating to Ministry of Railways.

2. The Eightieth Report was presented to Lok Sabha/laid in Rajya Sabha on 30th April, 2013. Replies of the Government to the Observations/Recommendations contained in the Report were received on 22nd April, 2014. The Public Accounts Committee considered and adopted the Eleventh Report at their sitting held on 9th December, 2014. Minutes of the sitting are given at *Appendix-I*.

3. For facility of reference and convenience, the Observations and Recommendations of the Committee have been printed in thick type in the body of the Report.

4. The Committee place on record their appreciation of the assistance rendered to them in the matter by the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India.

5. An analysis of the action taken by the Government on the Observations/Recommendations contained in the Eightieth Report (Fifteenth Lok Sabha) is given at *Appendix-II*.

NEW DELHI;
17 December, 2014

26 Agrahayana, 1936 (Saka)

PROF. K.V. THOMAS,
Chairperson,
Public Accounts Committee.

CHAPTER I

REPORT

This Report of the Public Accounts Committee deals with Action Taken by the Government on the Observations/Recommendations of the Committee contained in their Eightieth Report (Fifteenth Lok Sabha) on 'Tatkal and Advance Reservation System in Indian Railways' based on Para 2.2 of C&AG Report No. 34 of 2010-11 Union Government—Railways relating to the Ministry of Railways (Railway Board).

2. The Eightieth Report (Fifteenth Lok Sabha) was presented in the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha on 30.04.2013. It contained nine Observations/Recommendations. Action Taken Notes have been received from the Ministry of Railways in respect of all the Observations/Recommendations and are broadly categorized as follows:—

- (i) Observations/Recommendations which have been accepted by the Government:

Recommendation Para Nos. 1, 2, 4, 5, 8 & 9

Total: 06

Chapter-II

- (ii) Observations/Recommendations which the Committee do not desire to pursue in view of the replies received from the Government:

Recommendation Para Nos. 3 and 7.

Total: 02

Chapter-III

- (iii) Observations/Recommendations in respect of which replies of the Government have not been accepted by the Committee and which required reiteration:

Recommendation Para No. 6

Total: 01

Chapter:-IV

- (iv) Observations/Recommendations in respect of which the Government have furnished interim replies:

Recommendation Para No. -Nil-

Total: Nil

Chapter:-V

3. The detailed examination of the subject by the Committee had revealed many systemic and other deficiencies which adversely affect the smooth functioning, speed and efficiency of Tatkal and Advance Reservation System in Railways. The Committee observed various technical, financial and resource constraints which hamper the working of Railway reservation system. But, grave issues like serious malfunctioning, corrupt practices and blatant flouting of rules by RTSAs bring a bad name to the Indian railways and degrade its public image. The manipulation and corrupt practices in Tatkal Ticket Bookings and slow server speed seriously affect the whole system of reservation and causes great inconvenience to the public at large. It results in the loss of credibility and transparency of the whole system of ticket reservation. Indian Railways is the lifeline of long distance transport system in India which gives service to millions of passengers every day. Any manipulation in reservation system, therefore not only affects the journey but many other aspects of their lives too, directly or indirectly. The scrutiny of the functioning of the "Tatkal and Advance Reservation System" revealed that genuine users, for whom the scheme was intended, were not able to access the facility with ease as it was susceptible to manipulation. Audit also revealed other lapses in delivery of services such as booking of tickets before and after business hours; delay in announcement of special/new trains, reservations with incomplete names of passengers, etc.

4. The Action Taken Notes furnished by the Ministry of Railways on the Observations/Recommendations of the Committee contained in their Eightieth Report (Fifteenth Lok Sabha) have been reproduced in the relevant Chapters of this Report. In the succeeding paragraphs, the Committee will now deal with the Action Taken by the Government on some of their Observations/Recommendations made in the original Report which either need reiteration or merit comments.

A. Installation of new Generation advanced E-Ticketing System

Recommendation (Para No. 2)

5. The Committee had noted that Tatkal and Advance Reservation could also be booked through IRCTC website. The test check of accessibility of IRCTC server revealed that during login of IRCTC's website exactly at 08.00 hours on the day of Advance Reservation Period, the system would hang seemingly due to insufficient capacity of the server to meet the growing requirement of net users. Admitting that the system was prone to malfunctioning, the representative of the Ministry had submitted that entire PRS system and e-ticketing has been developed for Tatkal which will be rolled out within one/two months as the last stage of work was going on. Since the use of e-ticketing facility is catching up fast among passengers due to its inherent ease and convenience, the Committee recommended that the capacity of the internet bandwidth and IRCTC server should be upgraded by installing high capacity server so that the system is able to cope up with the surge in online bookings. High capacity server should be installed after conducting 'load testing' for easy access of users. Further, the Committee expected that the new software which the Ministry proposes to roll out, would have the latest features with fast search engine; blocking of in-active session, etc.

6. The Ministry of Railways in its Action Taken Notes have stated as under:

"Recommendations of the Committee have been noted. The new Generation e-ticketing system will have the capacity for booking 7 lakh tickets per day."

7. The Committee appreciate that Ministry of Railways have taken a sincere note of its recommendation as regards installing higher capacity and efficient new generation e-ticketing system capable of coping with higher customer load. The Ministry have informed the Committee that the new generation e-ticketing system will have the advanced capacity of booking 7 lakh tickets per day. But, further details and blueprint or plan as regards implementation, installation of such an advanced e-ticketing system have not been revealed. The Ministry remained completely silents in its reply about the tentative time frame by which the said installation would be completed though in their earlier reply it was informed that it would be rolled out in one/two months. The Committee, would therefore like the Ministry to submit a detailed master plan or a blueprint as to how it envisages to implement the new generation advanced e-ticketing system, the additional resources, expenditure which may be involved and the tentative timeline by which the same could be achieved. The Ministry should apprise the Committee about the constraints and challenges, if any in achieving the target. The Committee, therefore, desire that the Ministry should take appropriate and timebound action on its recommendations.

8. The Committee are of the considered view that we should look at services like Tatkal from the perspective of social equity as well. Tatkal schemes provide support to people with urgent needs. By paying a premium, they are able to get confirmed tickets. Now, by the recent Government decision half of these tatkal tickets are being implemented as dynamic fare system, where it will be sold in premium. What is happening is that those who can afford to pay premium as well as those who have access to internet can get confirmed berths easily, whereas those who do not have cannot get the ticket. This system is legitimizing inequity. It is high time that the Ministry of Railways institutionalizes the concerns of poor. The Committee, therefore, would like the Ministry to reduce the premium on tickets of Tatkal reservation to a minimum essential level. Also, the Committee feel that it will be in greater public interest if the percentage of advanced reservation is enhanced and that of Tatkal reservation reduced to a feasible and sustainable level. It will also be appreciated if a certain quota restriction is put on ticket reservation bookings by internet so as to provide a better equitable opportunity for the pors, disadvantaged and deprived classes of society having no access to internet, thus making them available the benefits of ticket reservation in a more fair and just manner.

B. Verification of Identity of passengers travelling in Reserved Compartments

Recommendation (Para No. 5)

9. The Committee had noted that the computerized PRS software had been modified to establish passenger identity so as to overcome proxy travel. While welcoming the measures taken by the Railways to establish passengers' identification, the Committee had recommended that carrying a proof of identity while travelling in reserved accommodation in trains should be made mandatory for all passengers to

keep a check on passengers travelling on transferred tickets. The Committee, had therefore, recommended that necessary instructions in this regard may be issued at the earliest, the situation monitored regularly and the procedures updated for the successful operation of the scheme and they be apprised within three months from the date of presentation of their report.

10. The Ministry of Railways in its Action Taken Notes have stated as under:

"The carrying of proof of identity while travelling in all classes of reserved accommodation has been made mandatory *w.e.f.* 01.12.2012. As per these instructions, in case of reserved ticket (except Tatkal) any one of the passenger has to produce any one of the prescribed proof of identity (in original) during the journey failing which all the passengers are treated as travelling without ticket. In case of Tatkal ticket, the passenger has to carry the same Identity Proof in original, which is indicated on the ticket."

11. The Committee take due note that the Ministry have made carrying the proof of identity mandatory while travelling in all classes of reserved accommodation to check the incidents of proxy travelling. The Ministry must ensure that proper awareness campaign is made so that the passengers are properly informed about the list of Valid Identity Cards which are well accepted as proof of identity. The Committee, would also like the Ministry to ensure that non-carrying of valid identity proof by mistake by children, women, old persons and poor illiterate persons do not become a point of undue harassment to them at the hands of railway officials. In such circumstances, the TTE should exercise sufficient caution as well as diligence to deal the situation with due regard to the rules.

C. Prosecution and licence cancellation of RTSAs involved in irregularities

Recommendation (Para No. 6)

12. The Committee had noted that Rail Travellers Service Agents (RTSAs) were the license holder agents authorized by the Ministry of Railways to procure rail tickets on behalf of passengers by charging nominal service charges from passengers fixed by the Railways from time to time. The Audit had noticed involvement of RTSAs in various irregularities as pointed out in the Audit Report. However, the representatives of RTSAs who appeared before the Committee denied the Audit findings. The contention was that they had been provided separate counters at the reservation centers and their agents carry identity cards issued by the Ministry of Railways and could be caught and their licenses cancelled in case they were found involved in irregular activities. Notably, in the last five years, no case had been registered against RTSAs except in Delhi where 9 cases were reported. The Committee had felt that the RTSAs or their agents could not have continued doing their irregular activities without active involvement/connivance of the officials manning the PRS. The Committee, had therefore, desired the Railways to investigate all such cases where RTSAs were involved in irregularities and take deterrent punitive action against those agents as well as against the involved officials of the Railways.

13. The Ministry of Railways in its Action Taken Notes have stated as under:

"Whenever any RTSA is found involved in any irregularities with or without the connivance of Railway officials, action is taken against the erring agents as per provisions of authorisation of RTSA Rules, 1985. Disciplinary proceedings are also initiated against Railway staff found involved in any irregularity. Moreover, the transactions of RTSAs are monitored to reduce the chances of irregularities committed by them. Moreover, orders have been passed by the Hon'ble Supreme Court to permit Ministry of Railways to amend RTSA Rules, 1985 so as to allow RTSAs to book tickets through internet only."

14. The Committee find the reply of the Ministry as regards action taken against RTSAs for alleged irregularities as unconvincing and sketchy devoid of relevant facts. The Ministry have not provided the details of prosecutions and licence cancellation of RTSAs involved in alleged irregularities in ticket bookings. Again, no details have been furnished with respect to the number of disciplinary proceedings initiated against Railway staff and officers involved in irregularities. The Committee is utterly shocked to observe that despite widespread media reports about irregularities in ticket bookings by RTSAs, barely 9 cases were reported in last five years that too from Delhi region. How can the Ministry expect the Committee to be convinced of the fact that during last 5 years, no irregularity has been found against RTSAs in other parts of the country. It puts a serious question mark over the enforcement machinery of railways which is supposed to be vigilant and pro-active in matters in unearthing the irregularities and taking punitive actions thereafter. The Committee, therefore, reiterate that RTSAs or their agents could not have continued with their illegal activities without active connivance of the officials manning PRS. The Committee, therefore, strongly desire that the Ministry should furnish before it the details pertaining to number of cases of prosecutions and licence cancellations initiated against RTSAs in different Railway zones. Ministry may specifically mention in how many cases, disciplinary proceedings were initiated against railway staff with details of the date of initiation of the proceedings and present status. A zone wise list should be submitted along with details of punitive action taken against erring RTSAs as well as Railway officials. The Committee desire to have a detailed reply as to what system/machinery the Ministry have in place to check such alleged irregularities.

D. Disciplinary action against erring officials conniving with RTSAs and flouting norms in Kolkata High Court case

Recommendation (Para No. 8)

15. The Committee were informed that the scheme of giving licences to RTSAs was framed in 1985. They were further informed by the representative of the RTSAs that there were around 30 travel agents in Kolkata who on the basis of injunction of the Kolkata High Court given 27 years back were still enjoying full status of RTSA and operating from there. However, they did not pay any Licence Fee, security deposit/ guarantee and without having any liability. The Railways had reportedly given them a 'counter' also to operate. The Committee were perturbed to know that unauthorised

agents without paying any license fee guarantee or security deposit were operating as Railway agents only on the basis of a stay order given almost three decades back by the Hon'ble High Court of Calcutta. The Court's stay of operation of the Railways order did not grant the travel agents the right to flout the terms and conditions that go with continuing their functioning in the system. As mentioned earlier here too, the obvious flouting of the terms and conditions by the said travel agents could not have been continued without the connivance/negligence of the local Railway officials. The Committee, had therefore, recommended thorough inquiry and initiation of appropriate disciplinary proceedings against the erring officials. Also the Committee desire to be apprised about the status of the case within three months from the date of presentation of the Report to the Parliament including the action taken for review of the stay and expeditious disposal of the case.

16. The Ministry of Railways in its Action Taken Notes stated as under:

"In pursuance of RTSA Rules, 1985 South Eastern Railway invited applications from interested parties by issuing a Press Notification on 1.2.1986. Out of 339 applications received, 16 were selected and licensed under the said rules to act as RTSA. Applicants whose cases were rejected went to Court and in 23 cases the Hon'ble Calcutta High Court issued an interim order in favour of the applicants to continue their business on the authority of status-quo orders issued time to time by the Hon'ble High Court without any interruption.

Though affidavits were filed by the Railway in all such cases, the cases did not come up for final hearing. In one such case, the Court passed order directing the Railway administration to reassess the number of RTSAs required to be licensed, keeping in view the increase in train services and passengers and to issue fresh notification. Till such time the applicants have been allowed by the Hon'ble Court to continue its business of procuring and supplying of Railway reserved tickets to its clients.

In the meantime, Zonal Railways were advised not to hold fresh selection of RTSAs since the existing RTSA Scheme is under review whereby all RTSA will be barred from entry into the PRS centres. However, efforts are being made by Eastern and South Eastern Railways to enlist the pending cases for final hearing and getting the interim orders vacated. Over Eastern Railway, all except two of Railway advocates dealing with the respective cases have been depanelled. The remaining two Railway advocates have been engaged for analogous hearing of the cases by Eastern Railway."

17. While vetting the reply of the Railways the Audit had observed that:

"In case of RTSAs of South Eastern Railway involved in court cases, it was observed that there are 24 court cases involving RTSAs, but in absence of the list of the 23 RTSA mentioned in Railway's reply, proper verification is not possible. As such, list of these 23 RTSA may be furnished. The Ministry in reply to vetting comments have stated that the list of 23 RTSAs is being forwarded to Audit."

18. The Committee were dismayed to note that 24 RTSAs, without any Licence Fee, security deposit/guarantee and without any liability, are operating from the Railway premises on the basis of injunction of the Kolkata High Court given 27 years back. A giant Government Department like the Railways could not even enlist the pending court cases and plead the case appropriately to ensure justice. The Committee, therefore, desire details of the measures taken in chronological order to get the stay vacated and the steps being taken presently to remedy the situation. The Ministry may also clarify the reasons for delay in making amendment in RTSA Rules, 1985 as per hon'ble Supreme Court judgement. The Committee are of the considered view that such blatant flouting of norms may not be possible without connivance of local railway officials. The Committee, therefore, recommends that an appropriate enquiry should be conducted and disciplinary proceedings be initiated against the staff/officials responsible. The Committee, would also like the Ministry to submit the status report regarding details of inquiries conducted and disciplinary proceedings launched and action taken against the railways officials responsible for the flouting of norms.

CHAPTER II

OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS WHICH HAVE BEEN ACCEPTED BY GOVERNMENT

Recommendation (Para No. 1)

The Committee note that advance reservation system was introduced in Indian Railways to facilitate passengers to book their tickets in advance. The scheme of Tatkal reservation was introduced by the Railways in December, 1997 to provide reservation facility to those passengers who could not plan their journey in advance. This facility is available on payment of premium charges on 'first-come-first-served' basis. Advance reservation of tickets can be done from 08.00 hrs. to 20.00 hrs. and Tatkal booking from 10.00 hrs. to 20.00 hrs. through Passenger Reservation System (PRS) and Indian Railways Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) website/agents. Audit scrutiny of the functioning of Tatkal and Advance Reservation System revealed that genuine users, for whom the scheme was intended, were unable to avail the facility with ease as it was susceptible to manipulation. Audit pointed out irregularities in booking of tickets through PRS counters; booking of all Tatkal quota within a few minutes of opening of reservation; irregular booking by Reservation Clerk, connivance of railway agents and Booking Clerks; irregular booking through internet and authorized railway agents. During examination of the subject, the Committee wire informed that the scheme of Tatkal reservation has been revised with effect from November, 2011 and major modifications have been made with a view to minimize the chances of misuse of Tatkal scheme. These changes *inter-alia* include production of self attested photo copy of proof of identity mentioned in the scheme; reduction from two days to one day (excluding the day of journey) for booking of Tatkal tickets; booking of only four passengers per PNR; denying access to the authorised agents during the first two hours of the opening of booking both through internet as well as across the computerized PRS counters. The Committee have also been informed that with effect from 10th July, 2012 the timing of opening of reservation of Tatkal tickets has been changed to 10.00 hours instead of 08.00 hours as per earlier provision and web service agents have been permitted to book only one Tatkal ticket per train per day on internet that too after 12.00 hours. While taking note of the measures taken by the Ministry post audit scrutiny. The Committee would like to be apprised about the implementation of these measures and desired impact thereof within three months of the presentation of this report.

[Part-II, Sl. No. 1, Para No. 1 of 80th Report of PAC (15th Lok Sabha)]

Action Taken

In addition to the measures indicated in the report of PAC, following measures have been taken by the Railways to reduce the scope of misuse of Tatkal scheme:—

- (i) Requisition forms of different colours have been provided by some Zonal Railways for booking Tatkal tickets to ensure its easy identification.
- (ii) Adequate number of Commercial/Vigilance & RPF/GRP are posted at major reservation offices to keep a watch on the activities of touts/anti social elements.

The measures enumerated in the report have been effectively implemented. The impact of these measures is evident from the following:—

- (i) An analysis of checks conducted at the reservation offices reveals that there is a drastic drop in the number of cases of travelling on transferred tickets, which has been reduced by 61%.
- (ii) The steps taken by Indian Railways to curb malpractices in Tatkal scheme have to a larger extent been appreciated by the Rail users as reported by Zonal Railways.

Audit *vide* their U.O.I. No. 347-Rly/TBA/Tatkal/12-137/2010 Vol. II dated 31.03.2014 have vetted the Action Taken Note.

Sd/-
(V. Vaidehi)
Exe. Director Finance (BC)

[Ministry of Railways' case No. 2013-BC-PAC/XV/80 dated 22.04.2014]

Recommendation (Para No. 2)

The Committee note that Tatkal and advance Reservation could also be booked through IRCTC's website. The test check of accessibility of IRCTC server revealed that during login of IRCTC's website exactly at 08.00 hours on the day of Advance Reservation Period, the system would hang seemingly due to insufficient capacity of the server to meet the growing requirement of net users. Admitting that the system was prone to malfunctioning, the representative of the Ministry submitted that entire PRS system and e-ticketing has been developed for Tatkal which will be rolled out in one/two months as the last stage work was going on. Since the use of e-ticketing facility is catching up fast among passengers due to its inherent ease and convenience, the Committee recommend that the capacity of the internet bandwidth and IRCTC server should be upgraded by installing high capacity server so that the system is able to cope up with the surge in online bookings. The high capacity server should be installed after conducting 'load testing' for easy access of users. Further, the Committee hope that the new software which the Ministry proposes to roll out, would have the latest features with fast search engine; blocking of in-active session, etc.

[Part-II, Sl. No. 2, Para No. 2 of 80th Report of PAC (15th Lok Sabha)]

Action Taken

Recommendations of the Committee have been noted. The new Generation e-ticketing system will have the capacity for booking 7 lakh tickets per day.

Audit vide their U.O.I. No. 347-RIY./TBA/Tatkal/12-137/2010 Vol. II dated 31.03.2014 have vetted the Action Taken Note.

Sd/-
(V. Vaidehi)
Exe. Director Finance (BC)

[Ministry of Railways' case No. 2013-BC-PAC/XV/80 dated 22.04.2014]

Recommendation (Para No. 4)

Notably, as a commercial policy, Railways appoint Rail Travellers' Service Agents (RTSAs) and Railway Tourist Agents for booking of tickets on payment of prescribed charges. However, no separate quotas have been assigned to these agents and there are separate counters at major stations for agents for booking tickets. Initially appointed for three years, the licenses of these RTSAs are renewed subject to satisfaction of local Railway administration. What has surprised the Committee is that though the RTSAs are appointed by the Railways, yet there is no provision in the computerized Passenger Reservation System (PRS) for identification of RTSA to keep the records/ transactions of bookings made by the agents. The representative of the Ministry testified before the Committee that effective from July, 2012 authorized agents have been denied access to Tatkal accommodation both through internet as well as across the computerized PRS counters during the first two hours of opening of booking. Further, web service agents are allowed to book only one Tatkal ticket on his ID per train per day on internet after 1200 hours. The Committee are of the considered view that the PRS need further orientation and therefore, recommend that the Ministry should take immediate measures to deactivate multiple user IDs of agents so that they are unable to manipulate the booking process. In order to keep a stringent check on the activities of RTSAs and website agents, the feasibility of issuing digitized ID needs examination to identify the tickets booked so that the scheme is not abused. Further, inspection of transactions done by RTSAs'/website agents' should be done at regular intervals to ensure that the licenses of only those RTSAs are renewed who comply with the prescribed procedure.

[Part-II, Sl. No. 4, Para No. 4 of 80th Report of PAC (15th Lok Sabha)]

Action Taken

Indian Railway Catering & Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) has already taken a large number of measures to reduce the chances of misuse of reservation system by e-ticketing agents (including RTSAs who have been registered for selling e-tickets) which are as under:—

- (i) The agents of IRCTC are permitted to book only one Tatkal ticket per train per day on the internet.

- (ii) There have been reports of use of scripting software for pre-filling of online reservation forms and there by booking tickets faster. Several checks have been put on the website of IRCTC to prevent such activities. An IT-Anti Fraud Squad has also been formed at Internet Ticketing Centre to detect cases of fraud and fraudulent activity. In order to address this issue, the following steps have been taken by IRCTC:—
- a. "Captcha" has been put and strengthened for booking in the 'Plan My Travel' to check fraudulent booking through automation software.
 - b. Only two tickets can be booked per IP address between 1000 hours and 1200 hours. IP address check has helped in preventing multiple bookings from same office complex/internet cafe/machine, etc. This also helps in facilitating bookings by genuine users and prevents bookings for commercial gains.
 - c. Single session per user ID check has been implemented *w.e.f.* 26.5.2012. With this step, a user on *irctc.co.in* will be able to open his account for booking of e-tickets only once at a time. Multiple sessions with single user ID cannot be opened simultaneously, thus enabling maximum users to access website and reduce congestion.
 - d. On payments initiated before 1000 hours booking of Tatkal tickets through the internet has been disallowed.
 - e. Agents of IRCTC are not permitted to book Tatkal, ARP opening as well as normal tickets between 0800 hours and 1200 hours.
 - f. Quick Book Option has been disallowed between 0800 hours and 1200 hours. Cash Cards have been disallowed between 0800 hours and 1200 hours.
 - g. Individual users are permitted to book only two tickets between 1000 hours and 1200 hours.
 - h. For all customers who have booked tickets between 1000 hours & 1005 hours, telephonic enquiries are being made by IT Anti Fraud team of IRCTC for cross checking validity of the booking and the travelling passenger.
 - i. User IDs of Agents found to be involved in irregularities have been deactivated by IRCTC.
 - j. The Security Audit, Process Audit and Functional Audit of e-ticketing system has been conducted through STQC (Standardization, Testing and Quality Certification), Department of Information Technology (DIT), Government of India.
- (iii) As regards RTSAs, Hon'ble Supreme Court has passed the orders to permit Ministry of Railways to amend RTSA Rules, 1985 so as to allow RTSAs to book tickets through internet only. Once this provision is implemented by amending the existing Rules, they will be required to purchase a class 3

personal digital certificate from any Indian certifying authority for their authorised user (only one authorised user will be permitted). The details of which will be provided to them by IRCTC.

In case of violation of any condition of the proposed Rules, suitable action will be taken against defaulting RTSAs and the action may include suspension/termination/deactivation of ID.

In the RTSAs Rules, there is already a provision for inspection of the premises and records of RTSAs by the competent authority or any officer authorised by him.

Audit *vide* their U.O.I. No. 347-Rly./TBA/Tatkal/12-137/2010 Vol. II dated 31.03.2014 have vetted the Action Taken Note.

Sd/-
(V. Vaidehi)
Exe. Director Finance (BC)

[Ministry of Railways' case No. 2013-BC-PAC/XV/80 dated 22.04.2014]

Recommendation (Para No. 5)

The Committee note that the computerized PRS software has been modified to establish passenger identity so as to overcome proxy travel. While welcoming the measures taken by the Railways to establish passengers' identification, the Committee recommend that carrying a proof of identity while travelling in reserved accommodation in trains should be made mandatory for all passengers to keep a check on passengers travelling on transferred tickets. The Committee, therefore, recommend that necessary instructions in this regard may be issued at the earliest, the situation monitored regularly and the procedures updated for the successful operation of the scheme and they be apprised within three months from the date of presentation of this report.

[Part-II, Sl. No. 5, Para No. 5 of 80th Report of PAC (15th Lok Sabha)]

Action Taken

The carrying of proof of identity while travelling in all classes of reserved accommodation has been made mandatory *w.e.f.* 01.12.2012. As per these instructions, in case of reserved ticket (except Tatkal) any one of the passenger has to produce any one of the prescribed proof of identity (in original) during the journey failing which all the passengers are treated as travelling without ticket. In case of Tatkal ticket, the passenger has to carry the same Identity Proof in original, which is indicated on the ticket.

Audit *vide* their U.O.I. No. 347-Rly./TBA/Tatkal/12-137/2010 Vol. II dated 31.03.2014 have vetted the Action Taken Note.

Sd/-
(V. Vaidehi)
Exe. Director Finance (BC)

[Ministry of Railways' case No. 2013-BC-PAC/XV/80 dated 22.04.2014]

Recommendation (Para No. 8)

The Committee were informed that the scheme of giving licences to RTSAs was framed in 1985. They were further informed by the representatives of the RTSAs that there were around 30 travel agents in Kolkata who on the basis of injunction of the Kolkata High Court given 27 years back are still enjoying full status of RTSA and operating from there. However, they do not pay any Licence Fee, security deposit/guarantee and without having any liability. The Railways has reportedly given them a 'counter' also to operate. The Committee are perturbed to know that unauthorised agents without paying any license fee, guarantee or security deposit are operating as Railways agents only on the basis of a stay order given almost three decades back by the Hon'ble High Court of Kolkata. The Court's stay of operation of the Railways order does not grant the travel agents the right to flout the terms and conditions that go with continuing their functioning in the system. As mentioned earlier here too, the obvious flouting of the terms and conditions by the said travel agents could not have been continued without the connivance/negligence of the local Railway officials. The Committee, therefore, recommend through inquiry and initiation of appropriate disciplinary proceedings against the erring officials. Also the Committee would like to be apprised about the status of the case within three months from the date of presentation of the Report to the Parliament including the action taken for review of the stay and expeditious disposal of the case.

[Part-II, Sl. No. 8, Para No. 8 of 80th Report of PAC (15th Lok Sabha)]

Action Taken

In pursuance of RTSA Rules, 1985, South Eastern Railway invited applications from interested parties by issuing a Press Notification on 1.2.1986. Out of 339 applications received, 16 were selected and licensed under the said rules to act as RTSA. Applicants whose cases were rejected went to Court and in 23 cases the Hon'ble Kolkata High Court issued an interim order in favour of the applicants to continue their business on the authority of status-quo orders issued time to time by the Hon'ble High Court without any interruption.

Though affidavits were filed by the Railway in all such cases, the cases did not come up for final hearing. In one such case, the Court passed order directing the Railway administration to reassess the number of RTSAs required to be licensed, keeping in view the increase in train services and passengers and to issue fresh notification. Till such time the applicants have been allowed by the Hon'ble Court to continue its business of procuring and supplying of Railway reserved tickets to its clients.

In the meantime, Zonal Railways were advised not to hold fresh selection of RTSAs since the existing RTSA Scheme is under review whereby all RTSA will be barred from entry into the PRS centres.

However, efforts are being made by Eastern and South Eastern Railways to enlist the pending cases for final hearing and getting the interim orders vacated. Over Eastern Railway, all except two of Railway advocates dealing with the respective cases

have been depanelled. The remaining two Railway Advocates have been engaged for analogous hearing of the cases by Eastern Railway.

Audit vide their U.O.I. No. 347-Rly./TBA/Tatkal/12-137/2010 Vol. II, dated 31.03.2014 have vetted the Action Taken with following remarks:

"The Action Taken by the Railway Administration on the observations/recommendations of the PAC may be treated as vetted. However, in case of RTSAs of South Eastern Railway involved in court cases, it was observed that there are 24 court cases involving RTSAs, but in absence of the list of the 23 RTSA mentioned in Railway's reply, proper verification is not possible. As such, list of these 23 RTSA may be furnished."

Ministry's Comments

The list of 23 RTSA is being forwarded to Audit.

Sd/-
(V. Vaidehi)
Exe. Director Finance (BC)

[Ministry of Railways' case No. 2013-BC-PAC/XV/80, dated 22.04.2014]

Recommendation (Para No. 9)

The Committee observe that Railways have introduced a scheme wherein certain Post Offices will be providing Railway Tickets through counters operated by the Railway staff. This, in the considered view of the Committee, will strain the already depleted financial resources of the Railways. It would also entail payment of salaries, safeguarding the cash and transportation of cash, etc. The Committee would, therefore, like the Railways to review the scheme and consider to sale the Railway tickets by the counters operated by the staff of Postal Department on nominal commission basis, being more sound financial proposition and a win-win situation for both of them. Alternatively, the Railways may consider allotting terminals to RTSAs or other agents who may issue tickets by charging nominal fees as may be fixed by the Railways. The Committee would like to be apprised of the action taken within three months of the presentation of this Report.

[Part-II, Sl. No. 9, Para No. 9 of 80th Report of PAC (15th Lok Sabha)]

Action Taken

At present, the facility of providing reserved tickets through the computerised PRS terminals provided in Post Offices is available at around 241 locations. Under this scheme, the Railways bear the expenditure for provision of hardware, software and the cost of leased line. The cost for provision of infrastructure and manning of these counters is being borne by Department of Posts.

As regards provision of computerised PRS terminals to RTSAs, the position has already been clarified above in reply to para 7 above.

Audit *vide* their U.O.I. No. 347-Rly./TBA/Tatkal/12-137/2010 Vol. II, dated 31.03.2014 have vetted the Action Taken Note.

Sd/-
(V. Vaidehi)
Exe. Director Finance (BC)

[Ministry of Railways' case No. 2013-BC-PAC/XV/80, dated 22.04.2014]

CHAPTER III

OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS WHICH THE COMMITTEE DO NOT DESIRE TO PURSUE IN VIEW OF THE REPLIES RECEIVED FROM THE GOVERNMENT

Recommendation (Para No. 3)

The Committee are deeply concerned that running of special trains is announced at a notice of shorter duration during festivals/rush seasons like Holi, Durga Pooja, Diwali, Chhat, Eid, Christmas, summer vacations, etc. The delay in announcement of special trains deprive general public an opportunity to plan their journey and get a confirmed reservation. It also results in loss of revenue to Railways due to less occupancy of such trains. According to the Ministry, summer special trains are planned in advance and the time table of these special trains is also published. The Committee, therefore, recommend that information regarding running of special/new trains during festivals/rush seasons should be announced sufficiently in advance and given wide publicity so that the Railways earn more revenue besides fulfilling the Citizen's Charter on Passengers Services of Indian Railways.

[Part-II, Sl.No. 3, Para No. 3 of 80th Report of PAC (15th Lok Sabha)]

Action Taken

For introduction of special trains during Summer Season and Diwali/Durga Pooja initiatives have usually been taken to notify the same well in advance for facilitating booking of train tickets by general public. However, during special events, requirement/demand normally comes at short notice from various corners. Moreover, introduction of such special trains largely depend upon availability of coaching stock, haulage confirmation from concerned railways and other operational parameters and, therefore, notification for special trains in many cases does not become practically possible to be issued much in advance.

Audit vide their U.O.I. No. 347-Rly./TBAT/Tatkal/12-137/2010 Vol. II, dated 31.03.2014 have vetted the Action Taken Note.

Sd.
(V. Vaidehi)
Exe. Director Finance (BC)

[Ministry of Railways' case No. 2013-BC-PAC/XV/80, dated 22.04.2014]

Recommendation (Para No. 7)

The Committee note that the Ministry of Railways conceptualized "Computerized Ticket Service Provider Licence (CTSPL) Scheme". Under this scheme 3 RTSAs in Mumbai given terminals on experimental basis in 2002. The Scheme was, however, subsequently discontinued, ostensibly due to opposition from the Federation/Trade Unions in the interest of ensuring positive industrial relations despite the good return in terms of revenue the Scheme brought to the Railways. The Committee note that the scheme was convenient to the public and beneficial to the Railways as well. The CTSPL scheme was introduced around 10-12 years back when not many people were using internet/mobile for buying tickets. Now, almost half of the Rail tickets issued are booked through the internet. However, considering the fact that half of the Railway Tickets booked even now are done manually or through agents and that the reach of Computer with internet facility is largely confined to urban middle and upper classes, the Committee recommend that the Railways reconsider re-introduction of CTSPL scheme and provide terminals/IDs to RTSAs particularly in smaller towns where booking facilities are lacking and the facility of internet is not available to every family. Moreover, keeping in view the fact that almost 50% of the tickets are presently booked through internet, the Committee see no reason for any opposition to such a move which would be beneficial to the people and the Railways as well.

[Part-II, Sl. No. 7, Para No. 7 of 80th Report of PAC (15th Lok Sabha)]

Action Taken

- (i) The scheme of Computerized Ticket Service Provider Licence (CTSPL) was introduced in the year 2000 when there was no concept of internet ticketing.
- (ii) The concept of internet ticketing was introduced in 2002 (i-ticket) and the concept of e-ticketing was introduced in the year 2005. Thereafter, this scheme has become very popular and now approximately 45% of the tickets booked are e-tickets.
- (iii) In the month of September, 2013, around 60% of the total reserved tickets booked were through internet.
- (iv) Approximately 1 lakh agents are already issuing reserved tickets through computerised reservation system of Indian Railways through internet. Earlier there was no concept of internet ticketing and hence, physical terminals were provided to the RTSAs.
- (v) Moreover, a large number of steps have been taken by the Railways which include:—
 - * Proliferation of computerised PRS centers to approximately 2653 locations.
 - * For those locations in far-flung areas having less number of transactions, computerised PRS-Cum-UTS terminals have been provided.

- * The facility of issuing reserved tickets has also been provided in approximately 241 Post Offices.
- * SMS based ticketing has also been started which facilities booking of e-tickets even through mobile phones which do not have internet facility.

Keeping in view the facts quoted above, it is clearly evident that in the present scenario, there is no need to re-introduce the scheme of CTSPL.

Audit *vide* their U.O.I. No. 347-Rly./TBA/Tatkal/12-137/2010 Vol. II, dated 31.03.2014 have vetted the Action Taken Note.

Sd./-
(V. Vaidehi)
Exe. Director Finance (BC)

[Ministry of Railways' case No. 2013-BC-PAC/XV/80 dated 22.04.2014]

CHAPTER IV

OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS IN RESPECT OF WHICH REPLIES OF THE GOVERNMENT HAVE NOT BEEN ACCEPTED BY THE COMMITTEE AND WHICH REQUIRE REITERATION

Recommendation (Para No. 6)

The Committee note that Rail Travellers Service Agents (RTSAs) are the license holder agents authorized by the Ministry of Railways to procure Rail tickets on behalf of passengers by charging nominal service charges from passengers fixed by the Railways from time to time. The Audit has noticed involvement of RTSAs in various irregularities as pointed out in the Audit Report. However, the representatives of RTSAs who appeared before the Committee denied the Audit findings. The contention is that they have been provided separate counters at the reservation centers and their agents carry identity cards issued by the Ministry of Railways and can be caught and their licenses cancelled in case they are found involved in irregular activities. Notably, in the last five years, no case has been registered against RTSAs except in Delhi where 9 cases were reported. The Committee feel that the RTSAs or their agents could not have continued doing their irregular activities without active involvement/connivance of the officials manning the PRS. The Committee, therefore, desire the Railways to investigate all such cases where RTSAs are involved in irregularities and take deterrent punitive action against those agents as well as against the involved officials of the Railways.

[Part-II, Sl. No. 6, Para No. 6, of 80th Report of PAC (15th Lok Sabha)]

Action Taken

Whenever any RTSA is found involved in any irregularities with or without the connivance of Railways officials, action is taken against the erring agents as per provisions of authorisation of RTSA Rules, 1985. Disciplinary proceedings are also initiated against Railway staff found involved in any irregularity. Moreover, the transactions of RTSAs are monitored to reduce the chances of irregularities committed by them.

Moreover, orders have been passed by the Hon'ble Supreme Court to permit Ministry of Railways to amend RTSA Rules, 1985 so as to allow RTSAs to book tickets through internet only.

Audit vide their U.O.I. No. 347-Rly./TBA/Tatkal/12-137/2010 Vol. II, dated 31.03.2014 have vetted the Action Taken Note.

Sd.

(V. Vaidehi)

Exe. Director Finance (BC)

[Ministry of Railways' case No. 2013-BC-PAC/XV/80 dated 22.04.2014]

CHAPTER V
OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS IN RESPECT OF WHICH
GOVERNMENT HAVE FURNISHED INTERIM REPLIES

—NIL—

NEW DELHI;
17 December, 2014
26 Agrahayana, 1936 (*Saka*)

PROF. K.V. THOMAS,
Chairperson,
Public Accounts Committee.

APPENDIX I

MINUTES OF THE ELEVENTH SITTING OF THE PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE (2014-15) HELD ON 9TH DECEMBER, 2014

The Committee sat on Wednesday, the 9th December, 2014 from 1500 hrs. to 1730 hrs. in Committee Room 'D', Parliament House Annexe, New Delhi.

PRESENT

Prof. K.V. Thomas — *Chairperson*

MEMBERS

Lok Sabha

2. Shri Bhartruhari Mahtab
3. Shri Ramesh Pokhriyal "Nishank"
4. Shri Neiphiu Rio
5. Shri Dushyant Singh
6. Shri Janardan Singh Sigriwal
7. Shri Kirit Somaiya

Rajya Sabha

8. Dr. Satyanarayan Jatiya
9. Shri Sukhendu Sekhar Roy

SECRETARIAT

1. Shri A.K. Singh — *Joint Secretary*
2. Smt. Anita B. Panda — *Director*
3. Shri Jayakumar T. — *Additional Director*

Representatives from the office of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India

1. Shri P. Mukherjee — Dy. CAG
2. Shri S. Nandeolkar — Director General (Rlys.)
3. Shri L.S. Singh — Principal Director
4. Shri P. Tiwary — Principal Director

2. At the outset, the Chairperson welcomed the Members and the representatives of the Office of the C&AG of India to the Committee. The Chairperson then apprised the Members that the meeting has been convened to consider and adopt two Draft Reports, and to take oral evidence of the representatives of Ministry of Home Affairs on the subject 'Disaster Preparedness in India' based on C&AG Report No. 5 of 2013.

3. The Committee, thereafter, took up the following Draft Reports for consideration:

- (a) Draft Report on Action Taken by the Government on the Observations/ Recommendations of the Committee contained in their Eightieth Report (Fifteenth Lok Sabha) on "**Tatkal and Advance Reservation System in Indian Railways**".
- (b) Draft Report on Action Taken by the Government on the Observations/ Recommendations of the Committee contained in their Eighty-second Report (Fifteenth Lok Sabha) on "**Sale and Distribution of Imported Pulses**".

4. After some discussions, the Committee adopted both the Draft Reports with minor modifications.

5. The Committee, then, authorized the Chairperson to finalise the two Reports adopted by them, in light of their suggestions and factual verifications received from the Audit and present the same to the House on a date convenient to him.

APPENDIX II

(Vide Para 5 of Introduction)

ANALYSIS OF THE ACTION TAKEN BY THE GOVERNMENT ON THE OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE CONTAINED IN THEIR EIGHTIETH REPORT (FIFTEENTH LOK SABHA)

(i) Total number of Observations/Recommendations	9
(ii) Observations/Recommendations which have been accepted by the Government Para Nos. 1, 2, 4, 5, 8 and 9	Total: 6 Percentage: 66.66
(iii) Observations/Recommendations which the Committee do not desire to pursue in view of the reply of the Government Para Nos. 3 and 7	Total: 2 Percentage: 22.22
(iv) Observations/Recommendations in respect of which the replies of the Government have not been accepted by the Committee and which require reiteration Para No. 6	Total: 1 Percentage: 11.11
(v) Observations/Recommendations in respect of which the Government have furnished interim replies —NIL—	Total: 0 Percentage: 0

PARLIAMENTARY PUBLICATIONS CAN ALSO BE OBTAINED FROM THE FOLLOWING AUTHORISED AGENTS:—

Sl.No.	Name of Agent	Sl.No.	Name of Agent
	ANDHRA PRADESH		
1.	M/s. Ashok Book Centre, Benz Circle, Vasavya Nagar, Vijaywada-520 006 (AP).	13.	M/s. Jayna Book Depot, Chowk Chhapparwala, Bank Street, Karol Bagh, New Delhi-110 005.
	BIHAR	14.	M/s. Standard Book Co., 125, Municipal Market, Connaught Place, P.B. No. 708, New Delhi-110 001 (T. No. 23411919).
2.	M/s. Progressive Book Centre, Zila School, Pani Tanki Chowk, Ramna, Muzaffarpur-842 002 (Bihar).	15.	M/s. D.K. Agencies (P) Ltd., A/15-17, Mohan Garden, Najafgarh Road, New Delhi-110 059.
	DELHI	16.	M/s. Vijay Book Service, C-D/123/C, Pitam Pura, New Delhi-110 034.
3.	M/s. Jain Book Agency, C-9, Prem House, Connaught Place, P.B. No. 1113, New Delhi-110 001.		MADHYA PRADESH
4.	M/s. Bookwell, 2/72, Sant Nirankari Colony, Kingsway Camp, Delhi-110 009.	17.	M/s. Suvidha Law House, 28, Malviya Nagar, Roshanpura, Bhopal-462 003.
5.	M/s. Rajendra Book Agency, IV-D-50, Lajpat Nagar, Old Double Storey, New Delhi-110 024 (T. Nos. 26412362 & 26412131).		MAHARASHTRA
6.	M/s. Central News Agency Pvt. Ltd., P-23, Connaught Circus, New Delhi-110 001.	18.	M/s. Usha Book Depot, 585/A, Chitra Bazar, Khan House, P.B. No. 2621, Mumbai-400 002.
7.	The Manager, M/s. Books India Corporation, Publishers, Importers & Exporters, L-27, Shastri Nagar, Delhi-110 052.	19.	M/s. Jaina Book Agency (India), 649-A, Girgaum Road, Opp. 2nd Dhobi Talao Lane, Mumbai-400 002.
8.	M/s. Sangam Book Depot, LG-3, Akarshan Bhawan, 23, Ansari Road, Darya Ganj, New Delhi-110 002.		PUDUCHERRY
9.	M/s. Biblia Impex Pvt. Ltd., 2/18, Ansari Road, New Delhi-110 002 (T.No. 23262515).	20.	Editor of Debates, Legislative Assembly Department, Puducherry-605 001.
10.	M/s. Universal Book Traders, 80, Gokhale Market, Opp. New Courts, Delhi-110 054 (T. No. 23911966).		TAMILNADU
11.	M/s. Seth & Co., Room No. 31D, Block-B, Delhi High Court, Sher Shah Road, New Delhi-110 003.	21.	M/s. M.M. Subscription Agencies, 123, Third Street, Tatabad, Coimbatore-641 012.
12.	M/s. Dhanwantra Medical & Law House, 592, Lajpat Rai Market, Delhi-110 006 (T. No. 23866768).	22.	M/s. C. Sitaraman & Co., 73/37, Royappettah High Road, Chennai-600 014.
			UTTAR PRADESH
		23.	M/s. Law Publishers, Sardar Patel Marg, P.B. No. 1077, Allahabad (UP).
		24.	M/s. Ram Advani Bookseller, Mayfair Building, Hazrat Ganj, GPO Box No. 154, Lucknow-226 001.