

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON RAILWAYS
(2002)**

THIRTEENTH LOK SABHA

TWELFTH REPORT

**MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS
(RAILWAY BOARD)**

DEMANDS FOR GRANTS (2002-2003)

**[Action Taken by the Government on the Recommendations/Observations
contained in the 10th Report of the Standing Committee on Railways (2002)
on 'Demands for Grants – 2002-03' of the Ministry of Railways]**

**LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI**

December, 2002/Agrahayana, 1924 (Saka)

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COMPOSITION OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON RAILWAY (2002)

SHRI K. YERRANNAIDU - Chairman

MEMBERS

LOK SABHA

2. Dr. Madan Prasad Jaiswal
3. Shri Sohan Potai
4. Dr. (Smt.) Anita Arya
5. Shri Bhupendra Sinh Solanki
6. Smt. Abha Mahato
7. Shri Jaibhan Singh Pawaiya
8. Shri Salkhan Murmu
9. Shri Bahadur Singh
10. Dr. Ramesh Chand Tomar
11. Smt. Ranee Narah
12. Shri Rajo Singh
13. Smt. Santosh Choudhary
14. Shri Manikrao Hodlya Gavit
15. Shri Avtar Singh Bhadana
16. Shri Priya Ranjan Dasmunsi
17. Shri Moinul Hassan
18. Shri G. Ganga Reddy
19. Smt. Sushila Saroj
20. Shri Haribhau Shankar Mahale
21. Dr. Baliram
22. Shri M. Chinnasamy
23. Shri Prabhat Samantaray
24. Dr. Nitish Sengupta
25. Smt. Nivedita S. Mane
26. Shri Naval Kishore Rai
27. Shri Ajay Singh Chautala
28. Shri Ramdas Athawale
29. Shri Muni Lall

RAJYA SABHA

30. Shri Bhagatram Manhar
31. Shri Raju Parmar
32. Maulana Obaidullah Khan Azmi
33. Dr. Alladi P. Rajkumar
34. Shri Ram Nath Kovind
35. Shri Surendera Lath
36. Shri Tarini Kanta Roy
37. Shri N. Jothi
38. Shri S.R. Bommai
39. Shri Praful Patel
40. Dr. Arun Kumar Sarma

41. Shri Abani Roy
42. Shri Harendra Singh Malik
43. Shri Abhay Kant Prasad
- 44.

LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT

- | | | | |
|----|--------------------------|---|-------------------------|
| 1. | Shri John Joseph | - | Additional Secretary |
| 2. | Shri M. Rajagopalan Nair | - | Joint Secretary |
| 3. | Shri V.S. Negi | - | Deputy Secretary |
| 4. | Shri S.N. Dargan | - | Under Secretary |
| 5. | Shri U.C. Bharadwaj | - | Sr. Committee Assistant |
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INTRODUCTION

I, the Chairman of Standing Committee on Railways (2002), having been authorised by the Committee to present the Report on their behalf, present this Twelfth Report of the Standing Committee on Railways (2002) on Action Taken by the Government on the Recommendations/Observations contained in the Tenth Report of the Standing Committee on Railways (2002) on 'Demands for Grants 2002-2003' of the Ministry of Railways.

2. The Tenth Report was presented to Lok Sabha on 15.04.2002 and it contained 19 recommendations/observations. The Ministry of Railways have furnished their Action Taken Replies on all the recommendations/observations on 05.08.2002.

3. The Standing Committee on Railways (2002) considered the draft Action Taken Report and adopted the same at their sitting held on 12.12.2002.

4. An analysis of the action taken by the Government on the recommendations/observations contained in the Tenth Report of the Standing Committee on Railways (2002) Thirteenth Lok Sabha is given in Appendix-II.

NEW DELHI;
12 December, 2002
21 Agrahayana, 1924 Saka

K. YERRANNAIDU,
Chairman,
Standing Committee on Railways

REPORT

CHAPTER I

This Report of the Committee deals with the Action Taken by the Government on the recommendations/observations contained in the Tenth Report of the Standing Committee on Railways (2002) on 'Demands for Grants (2002-03) of the Ministry of Railways' which was presented to Lok Sabha on 15.04.2002.

2. Action Taken Notes have been received from the Government in respect of all the 19 recommendations/observations contained in the Report. These have been broadly categorized as follows:-

- (i) Recommendations/Observations which have been accepted by the Government – Para Nos.154, 160, 161 and 166 (a).
- (ii) Recommendations/Observations which the Committee do not desire to pursue in view of the Government's replies – Para Nos. 152, 153, 157, 158, 163, 165, 167 and 168.
- (iii) Recommendations/Observations in respect of which replies of the Government have not been accepted by the Committee – Para Nos.156, 159, 162, 164 and 166 (b).
- (iv) Recommendations/Observations in respect of which final replies are still awaited – Para Nos.151 and 155.

3. **The Committee desire that the final replies in respect of the recommendations/observations for which only interim replies have been given by the Government should be furnished to them expeditiously.**

4. The Committee will now deal with the Action Taken by Government on some of their Recommendations/Observations.

SETTING UP OF LAND MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY AND COMPUTERISATION OF LAND RECORDS.

(Para No.156)

5. The Committee, had, in the aforesaid Para, of the Report, found that the Railways owned about 4.23 lakhs hectares of land which was mainly used for locating service and operational infrastructure such as track, stations, workshops, staff colonies, etc. The Committee had observed earlier also that the Railways must set up a separate competent Land Management Authority at the Zonal Railway level, if necessary, so that a proper and scientific management of their land records could be ensured. The Committee had

been informed during evidence that the Railways had not yet updated their land records. The Committee further found that there was no change in the figures of Railway land under encroachment despite the fact that the Railways had put vigorous efforts to remove the encroachment over the years. The Committee took a serious note of the failure of the Railways' in completing their land records and desired that the same should be completed without further delay in a computerised form so that a perspective planning for commercial utilisation of their land could be made.

6. In their Action Taken Reply, the Ministry of Railways have stated:-

“Regarding the recommendation for setting up of a separate competent Land Management Authority at the Zonal Railway level, it may be reiterated that posts of Chief General Engineers had been created on the Zonal Railways to monitor land administration and management effectively to achieve the desired objectives brought out by the Committee i.e. (i) completion of land records, (ii) protection of the land not under encroachment, (iii) commercial utilisation of vacant land, and (iv) removal of existing encroachments. Setting up of separate Land Management authority at Zonal Level may not be practical since this may necessitate creation of posts which is not possible at this juncture. However, for efficient commercial utilization of Railway land, setting up of a separate Central Land Development Authority is under process.

Railways have by and large updated their land records. The total number of land plans involved are 49965, out of which 48750 Nos. are available and balance are being finalized. The Railway-wise position is as under:-

Railway	No. of land plans involved	No. of land plans available
Central	8306	8081
Eastern	8859	8607
Northern	7398	7398
NE	2655	2443
NF	2986	2986
Southern	5170	5106
SC	3255	2995
SE	7000	6850
Western	4336	4284
Total	49965	48750

Thus nearly 98% of land records have been compiled and further efforts are on as directed by the Standing Committee in this regard.

Land plans in Kharagpur Division of South Eastern Railway have been Microfilmed. Similarly the land plans from Mumbai CST to Mulund of Central Railway have been computerised. For the rest of the land plans in Central Railway, contracts for computerisation are under finalisation. A beginning has been made in some of the Zonal Railways to get the land plans computerised, and the progress is being monitored.

The area of Railway land under encroachment has decreased from 2455 hectares as on December, 1999 to 2162 hectares now. Position of encroachment is now being monitored on monthly basis in the Board's office. All Railways have issued Joint

Procedure Order to ensure more effective coordination amongst concerned deptts. to detect, prevent and remove encroachments and fix accountability for fresh encroachments.”

7. The Committee do not subscribe to the reasoning of the Ministry of Railways that setting up of separate Land Management Authority at Zonal Railways may not be practical as it may necessitate creation of posts, which is not possible at this juncture. Instead of accepting the recommendation of the Committee, the Railway, are setting up a separate Central Land Development Authority for what they call the efficient commercial utilisation of railway land. The intention behind the recommendation of the Committee was first to have a holistic view of the entire land on record of Railways so as to facilitate the vacation of encroached lands and chalk out a strategy to develop the surplus land for its optimum commercialisation. Therefore, in the opinion of the Committee, priority should be given to the setting up of separate Land Management Authority at Zonal level and thereafter the Central Land Development Authority also may be set up. They are of the firm view that without substantial inputs like availability of land, which only an exclusive authority can provide and manage, a Development Authority for Land cannot yield the desired results. Moreover, as far as creation of new posts are concerned for setting up such Land Management Authority at Zonal level, the Committee find that the reply of the Ministry is self-contradictory in that the same reasoning will be applicable in the case of setting up of a Central Land Development Authority also. Therefore, the Committee reiterate their earlier observation about the setting up of a separate Land Management Authority and desire that the Ministry should re-look into the matter taking into consideration the observations of the Committee. They further desire that the action taken in the matter may be apprised to them at the earliest. As regards compilation of land records and computerisation thereof is concerned, the Committee feel happy to note the efforts made by the Ministry of Railways in this direction. The Committee observe that almost 98% of land records have been already compiled and land plans of some of the Zonal Railways have been computerized. For the remaining land plans contracts for computerization are under finalisation. The Committee desire that the Ministry should accord top priority to the recording of the remaining lands and finish the exercise before the end of current financial year. They would like to be apprised of the action taken in this regard.

NINTH PLAN – NON ATTAINMENT OF PHYSICAL TARGETS OF PROJECTS **(Para No. 159)**

8. The Committee in the aforesaid paragraph had found that the Railways could not achieve the physical targets proposed during the IX Plan in spite of more allocations of fund and budgetary support provided than initially envisaged except under the Plan Head Track Renewal, Electrification and Coaches. They were not at all convinced with the reasons given by the Ministry of Railways for achieving poor results under other Plan Heads, particularly because the targets were fixed keeping into account all possible unforeseeable elements like inflation, etc. in advance. The Committee were of the considered view that the malady lay in mismanagement and unscientific planning and execution of the projects by the Railways. This view of the Committee was further strengthened by the representatives of the Planning Commission when they deposed

before the Committee that more than 50% of the projects had been undertaken by the Railways without the concurrence of the Planning Commission. The Committee could not help but to conclude that Railways' in-built inefficiency, unscientific planning and inadequate provision of fixing of accountability on the part of officials responsible for project implementation were the major reasons for achieving results far less than the envisaged targets. Therefore, the Committee desired that these should be addressed effectively without any further delay.

9. In their Action Taken Reply, the Ministry of Railways have stated:-

“It is true that the desired progress could not be achieved in projects under plan heads 'Doubling', 'New Lines', and 'Gauge Conversion' during the IX Plan. This was, mainly, due to increase in the shelf of projects under these plan heads during the IX Plan Period, which led to thin spread of available resources on the ongoing works. Further, the progress of work under various projects under implementation were impeded by problems of land acquisition, contractual failure, law and order problems, etc. Despite these problems, Railways were able to achieve/construct 662 Kms. of New Lines, 990 Kms. of Doubling and 2103 Kms. of Gauge Conversion against their respective targets of 819, 2500 and 3710 Kms. It may not be out of place to mention here that the expenditure incurred in the initial stages mostly accounts for land acquisition, building of embankment, carrying out other earth works, etc., on the planned route of the project. This does not get correctly reflected in the physical progress, which is monitored in terms of Route Kms.

In the case of Rolling Stock, the target set for acquisition is a function of the target set for growth in the Railway traffic - the total tonnage carried in case of freight and also increase in the number of passengers and the productivity of rolling stock assets. Since the improvement of productivity indices for locomotives and wagons improved to a much higher proportion than envisaged, the requirement of these classes of rolling stock came down. Also due to slowdown in the economy, the budgeted targets for freight loading could not be achieved by the Railways. To avoid infructuous expenditure, the level of acquisition of Rolling Stock was scaled down as a consequence. The physical progress expected to be achieved during the IX Plan in Rolling Stock is adequate for the projected levels of traffic.

Under the extant procedures, prior clearance of Planning Commission is necessary for Railway projects under plan heads New Lines, Gauge Conversion, Metropolitan Transport Projects and Railway Electrification. Further, as per the revised appraisal procedures adopted by the Government in 1994, all projects/works costing more than Rs.50 crore are first examined by an Expanded Railway Board, which includes representatives of Ministry of Finance, viz. Secretary (Expenditure), Planning Commission and Ministry of Programme Implementation. The Projects cleared by the Expanded Board are then sent to the Government for approval before the same are included in the budget/supplementary budget for taking Parliament's sanction. There have been instances in the past, where projects have been included in the budget anticipating clearances in due course. However, no expenditure against such projects was made until the same were cleared. As already announced by the

Hon. Minister of Railways while presenting the Budget proposals for the year 2002-03, in pursuance to a decision taken by Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, no new project would be included in the Budget without requisite clearances being available.

In view of the foregoing, it is submitted that the non-attainment of physical targets during the IX Plan Period should not be adduced to mismanagement or unscientific planning/execution of projects on the part of Railways, but on inadequate resources.”

10. The views of the Ministry of Railways that non-attainment of physical targets of projects fixed for IX Plan period in some plan heads should not be adduced to mismanagement and unscientific planning/execution of the projects on the part of Railways but on inadequate resources is not acceptable to the Committee. They have been informed time and again by the representatives of the Ministry of Finance (Deptt. Of Expenditure) and the Planning Commission that resources is not the major cause of slow progress of the ongoing projects, rather the in-built inefficiency of the Railways is the cause of slow progress. In the opinion of the Committee, inefficiency leads to mismanagement and unscientific planning, which finally results in inadequate progress. Therefore, the Committee cannot agree to attribute the failure to achieve the targets during the IX Plan to the inadequacy of resources. It is their considered view that the Railway's in-built inefficiency is responsible, to a large extent, for the non-achievement of physical targets during the IX Plan. They therefore, reiterate their earlier observation that Railways should address the problem of inefficiency without further delay and apprise the Committee of the concrete proposals/steps taken in this regard.

REPRIORITISATION OF PROJECTS

(Para No.162)

11. The Committee had noted in the aforesaid paragraph that the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) had approved the priority of projects in November, 1998. They also observed that there was a large shelf of ongoing projects which account for the huge throw forward of more than Rs. 35000 crore. The resources available to fund these projects were inadequate and incommensurate with the needs. The investments during the year had resulted in unproductive assets as the resources were spread out too thinly to be of any use. The Committee further noticed that the previous Standing Committee on Railways after having analysed the matter of prioritization of the ongoing projects in detail had recommended in their Ninth Report on Demands for Grants 2001-02 to review the existing priority of ongoing projects and make the same realistic. The Ministry of Railways also agreed to the views of the Committee in their action taken notes. However, the Ministry subsequently changed their earlier stand and informed the Committee during the examination of Demands for Grants 2002-03 that the existing priorities fixed by the CCEA in 1998 are adequate and reprioritization is not necessary. Having found a contradictory stand taken by the Ministry, the Committee strongly advised the Ministry to have a re-look into the matter to re-prioritize and save the valuable resources which were resulting in wasteful and unproductive expenditure due to the existence of a very large shelf of projects.

12. In their Action Taken Reply, the Ministry of Railways have stated:-

“The prioritisation of new line and gauge conversion projects was earlier approved by Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs in November, 1998. The projects have broadly been classified as those which are nearing completion, financially viable/operationally required, taken up on strategic consideration, in N.E. Region and other socially desirable projects. Earlier, it was proposed to re-fix the priority of projects within a category taking into account constraints of resources so as to result in optimum utilisation of available resources.

In the budget 2002-03, the allocation of funds has been proposed as per a rational and equitable formula based on the three factors, viz. area of the State, population, and the throw forward of projects in that State. While formulating the budget and allocating funds to individual projects, the progress of the works and their relative priorities are kept in mind.”

13. The Committee are not satisfied with the action taken by the Government on their recommendation as the latter has failed in substantiating the reasons as to why the re-prioritization of projects is not necessary. No doubt, while formulating the budget and allocating funds to projects, the progress of the works and their relative priorities are kept in mind, but this is not realistic enough to avoid delay and unproductive expenditure which occur due to spreading of resources thinly over a huge shelf of ongoing projects. The Committee, therefore, strongly reiterate their original recommendation with the hope that the Ministry will accord priority to re-examine the prioritisation of projects.

INVESTMENT IN THE PROJECTS IN N.E. STATES

(Para No.164)

14. The Committee had noticed in the aforesaid paragraph of the Report that as a matter of policy, the Central Government had decided since 1996 to provide 10% of the budgetary support for the development activities in the North East Region as that Region could not be brought into the mainstream of national development even after 54 years of Independence. This region, though strategically very important, remained socio-economically backward and politically alienated for a long time. Pursuant to that decision, the Ministry of Railways had been allocating funds to the NE region to develop Railway infrastructure. However, the Committee observed that the Ministry of Railways were not consistent enough while making allocations under the aforesaid policy. They further noticed that the Ministry of Railways had got originally Rs.3440 crore as Budgetary Support during the year 2001-02 and subsequently an additional Budgetary Support of Rs.898 crore was provided in the middle of the year to complete the projects. Hence, the total Budgetary Support the Ministry of Railways received during the year 2001-02 came to Rs.4338 crore. However, the Ministry incurred an expenditure of Rs.144 crore only which was far less than the amount as per the criteria. Keeping into account the strategic importance, backwardness and under development of the N.E. Region the Committee strongly recommended to the Ministry of Railways not only to allocate the mandatory 10% of the total Budgetary Support, but also to earmark additional resources for the development of Railway infrastructure in N.E. Region. They had also expressed their view that if labour component of the Railway projects is met

from the funds earmarked under the Rural Development Schemes, that would give a synergic effect to the implementation of the projects.

15. In their Action Taken Reply, the Ministry of Railways have stated:-

“Ministry of Railways have completed a number of Railway projects in the North East Region in the past few years. During last 10 years a new line from Jogighopa to Guwahati and the gauge conversion of Guwahati-Lumding-Dibrugarh, including linked fingers have been completed and commissioned. A number of major projects pertaining to new lines and gauge conversion are in progress in the region. These have a throwforward of about Rs.6500 crore beyond 01.04.2002. These projects include new lines from Kumarghat to Agartala, New Moinaguri-Jogighopa, Harmuti-Itanagar, Diphu-Karong, Rail-cum-Road bridge across river Bogibeel and gauge conversion of New Jalpaiguri/Siliguri-New Bongaigaon, Lumding-Silchar and Katakhal-Bhairabhi.

As per the prescribed guidelines, 10% of budgetary support is being ensured for the projects in the N.E. Region. While in some of the years expenditure has been less than 10% of the Budgetary Support, on the whole from 1996-97 onwards, the funds provided are as per the laid down policy. During 2001-02, budgetary allocation provided originally was Rs.3440 crore not including the Rs.100 crore allotted to the Udampur-Srinagar-Baramulla new line project. Additionally, Rs.898 crore was provided during the year for accelerating the progress of certain identified works which included Rs.100 crore for the Udampur-Srinagar-Baramulla project and Rs.40 crore for the gauge conversion of New Jalpaiguri-Siliguri-New Bongaigaon project of North East. The expenditure likely to be incurred in the region during 2001-02 for various schemes under implementation would be about Rs.330 crore.

In view of limited availability of resources, it has not been feasible to allocate additional funds to the N.E. Region. However, the Department of Development of North East Region has been requested to provide additional funds from Non-Lapsable Pool of Resources. As regards getting funds from Rural Development Schemes, it is mentioned that the matter has been taken up at Inter-Ministerial Level to explore the possibility of utilizing some funds from the Rural Schemes for the Railway Projects.”

16. From the aforesaid action taken reply, it is clear that the expenditure criteria of 10% of the total Budgetary Support, the Ministry have received from the General Exchequer, was not always adhered to by the Ministry of Railways since the inception of the said policy. In their action taken reply the Ministry of Railways have stated that the expenditure likely to be incurred in the North East Region during the 2001-02 for various schemes under implementation would be about Rs. 330 crore. Going by the formula in question for investment in N.E. Region, the expenditure could have been Rs.443.8 crore. As far as the recommendation of the Committee for additional allocation from internal generation of the Railways, the Ministry of Railways have stated that it has not been feasible in view of the limited availability of resources. However, the Ministry of Railways have requested the Department of Development of North Eastern Region to provide additional funds from the Non-Lapsable Pool of Resources. As regards getting funds from Rural Development Schemes, the Ministry of Railways have stated that the matter has been taken up at Inter-Ministerial Level. The Committee are not convinced at all with the reply by the Ministry of Railways as it has not been substantiated with concrete outcome as such. They strongly reiterate their earlier recommendation

and express their hope that the Ministry of Railways would take utmost efforts to take the matter to the logical end and the outcome thereof is apprised to the Committee.

CONSTITUTION OF SPECIAL CELL

(Para 166(b))

17. The Committee in the aforesaid paragraph had noticed that as per the Ministry of Railways, human failure remained the major cause of accidents and after 1998-99 human failure has increased to 64% of the total causes of the rail accidents. Therefore, the Railways had accorded priority to intensive training of Railway staff and upgradation of training aids connected with the train operations and safety. The Committee were informed during their study tours to Zonal Railways that the drivers of passenger trains, who did not conform to the prescribed test for safety or were found drunken had been shifted to goods trains. The Committee while not endorsing such minor penalties had recommended that such drivers must invariably be shifted to areas other than operation of trains and those who are found drunken during working hours must be punished with stringent departmental action. Further the Committee not satisfied with the assurances of efforts by the Railways for ensuring fool proof safety of passengers and goods had recommended that to accord more priority to the safety related works, a Special Cell be constituted under the direct supervision of the Chairman, Railway Board to give an accurate feedback to implement and review the works being funded under the Special Railway Safety Fund.

18. In their Action Taken Reply, the Ministry of Railways have stated:-

“To further control accidents due to human failure, a fund of Rs.73.50 crore has been earmarked from Special Railway Safety Fund (SRSF) for upgradation of training facilities in various training centres on Zonal Railways by providing modern methods of training and sophisticated infrastructure. The promotion to goods drivers, passengers mail and express drivers and high speed drivers takes place only when he clears the requisite promotional courses and psycho test wherever laid down. The performance of the drivers and their grading is continuously monitored by supervisory staff and officers. Simulators have been acquired to give intensive training to drivers. Railway Board have issued a new policy related to “Drunkenness on duty” to be implemented on Zonal Railways for the running staff. This policy lays down the reformatory, preventive as well as deterrent aspects. This policy lays down that the staff who are found in drunken state during surprise inspections or post-accident would be severely dealt with under D&AR and punished.”

19. **The Committee are deeply concerned over the way the Railways are handling the safety scenario in the operation of trains. They express their apprehension over the increasing element of human error in the train accidents. They are of the firm view that safety, being a sacrosanct area, must be accorded top priority. To ensure this, the Committee had recommended to create a Special Cell under the direct supervision of the Chairman, Railway Board to facilitate the quick implementation and review of the safety related projects being operated and executed under the Special Railway Safety Fund. As the Ministry have not furnished any action taken notes on this observations/recommendations of the Committee, the Committee have strong reasons to believe that the Ministry of**

Railways are not serious enough over the safety of passengers and goods in general and to the Committee's recommendations in particular. They cannot help but to strongly reiterate their earlier recommendation for the constitution of a Special Cell under the CRB to supervise and review directly the implementation of safety related projects under the Special Railway Safety Fund.

APPENDIX II

ANALYSIS OF ACTION TAKEN BY GOVERNMENT ON THE
RECOMMENDATIONS/OBSERVATIONS CONTAINED IN THE
TENTH REPORT 2002 (THIRTEENTH LOK SABHA)
ON 'DEMANDS FOR GRANTS 2002-03
OF THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS'

Total number of Recommendations/Observations	19
(i) Recommendations/Observations which have been accepted by Government (Vide recommendations/observations Para Nos.154, 160, 161 and 166 (a))	04
Percentage of Total	21%
(ii) Recommendations/Observations which the Committee do not desire to pursue in view of Government's replies (Vide recommendations/Observations Para Nos.152, 153, 157, 158, 163, 165, 167 and 168)	08
Percentage of Total	42%
(iii) Recommendations/Observations in respect of which replies of Government have not been accepted by the Committee and which require reiteration. (Vide recommendations/observations Para Nos.156, 159, 162, 164 and 166 (b))	05
Percentage of Total	26%
(iv) Recommendations/Observations in respect of which final replies of Government are still awaited (Vide recommendations/observations Para Nos.151 and 155)	02
	11%