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Title : Need for gauge conversion on Dindigul, Coimbatore section and upgradation of amenities at the Madurai, Tirunelveli and Dindigul Railway Stations in Tamil Nadu.

SHRI N.S.V. CHITTHAN (DINDIGUL): I wish to convey my appreciation to the Railway Authorities for introducing a special train between Chennai and Madurai with a number of second class bogies to facilitate the travelling of poor and middle class passengers. This should be converted on a regular basis for daily use upto Nagercoil.

The Madurai Division of Southern Railway has recorded a 14.2% growth in passenger traffic i.e. 127.48 lakhs last year to 145.64 lakhs passengers this year. This is the highest compared to other divisions including Chennai. The number of passengers in this division covers 13 districts including two in Kerala.

There is a shift of passengers from road to rail since it is a cheaper mode of transport. The electrification of railway track from Villupuram to Madurai covering a distance of 349 kms should be taken up a priority basis. Further, it should be extended upto Nagercoil in a phased manner.

The long felt need for gauge conversion between Dindigul and Coimbatore should also be taken up for early implementation. The Madurai Division has sent a

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\* Treated as laid on the Table.

proposal to upgrade the amenities at the Madurai, Tirunelveli and Dindigul Railway Stations at a cost of Rs. 3 crores and this should be cleared immediately.