

**FOURTH REPORT**  
**PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE**  
**(1980-81)**

**(SEVENTH LOK SABHA)**

**RESTORATION AND CONSTRUCTION OF  
RAILWAY LINES**

**MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS**

**(RAILWAY BOARD)**

**[Action taken on 125th Report (Sixth Lok Sabha)]**



सत्यमेव जयते

*Presented in Lok Sabha on* 23 NOV 1980  
*Laid in Rajya Sabha on* 23 DE 1980

**LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT  
NEW DELHI**

*November, 1980/Agrahayana, 1902(S)*

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CORRIGENDA TO THE FOURTH REPORT OF PUBLIC  
 ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE (SEVENTH LOK SABHA)

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<u>Page</u>	<u>Para</u>	<u>Line</u>	<u>Err</u>	<u>Read</u>
(v)	1	11	Bagaba	Bagaha
35	1.14	6 from bottom	after payment <u>add</u> 'of' 'compensation' was pending. As such the Ministry of Railways' .....	
35	1.14	5 from bottom	Delete the whole line starting from 'circumstances' to 'railway'.	

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**PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE**  
(1980-81)  
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Shri Chandrajit Yadav

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3. Shri Subhash Chandra Bose Alluri
4. Shri Tridib Chaudhuri
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1. Shri H. G. Paranjpe—*Joint Secretary.*
2. Shri D. C. Pande—*Chief Financial Committee Officer.*
3. Shri T. R. Ghai—*Senior Financial Committee Officer.*

## INTRODUCTION

I, the Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee, as authorised by the Committee, do present on their behalf this Fourth Report on action taken by Government on the recommendations of the Public Accounts Committee contained in their Hundred and Twenty-Fifth Report (Sixth Lok Sabha) relating to Ministry of Railways (Railway Board) on Restoration and construction of Railway Lines. The 125th Report dealt with misuse of authority in regard to restoration of the Chhitauni-Bagaha rail project and the construction of a railway line between Jhanjharpur and Laukahabazar under the North-Eastern Railway. In this Action Taken Report, the Committee while dealing with the Chhitauni-Bagaha rail link have *inter alia* expressed their concern over the present plight of the project which has not made any headway even after a lapse of more than 7 years. The Committee have in this connection recommended that in future all relevant matters like relative priorities of each scheme, resources position and response of the parties concerned should be taken into account before taking final decision and commencing work on the scheme.

2. On 20 August, 1980, the following 'Action Taken Sub-Committee' was appointed to scrutinise the replies received from Government in pursuance of the recommendations made by the P.A.C. in their earlier Reports:

1. Shri Chandrajit Yadav—*Chairman*,
  2. Shri K. P. Unnikrishnan
  3. Shri K. P. Singh Deo
  4. Shri V. N. Gadgil
  5. Shri Satish Agarwal
  6. Shri N. K. P. Salve
- } *Members*

3. The Action Taken Sub-Committee of the Public Accounts Committee (1980-81) considered and adopted the Report at their sitting held on 2 December, 1980. The Report was finally adopted by the Public Accounts Committee (1980-81) on 10 December, 1980.

4. For reference facility and convenience, the recommendations and observations of the Committee have been printed in thick type in the body of the Report and have also been reproduced in a consolidated form in the Appendix to the Report.

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

NEW DELHI;  
17 December, 1980  

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26 Agrahayana, 1902 (S)

CHANDRAJIT YADAV,  
*Chairman,*  
*Public Accounts Committee.*

## CHAPTER I

### REPORT

1.1. This Report of the Committee deals with the action taken by Government on the recommendations and observations of the Committee contained in their 125th Report (Sixth Lok Sabha) which was presented to the Lok Sabha on 20 April, 1979 on paragraphs 8 and 9 regarding Restoration and Construction of Railway Lines included in the Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India for the year 1976-77, Union Government (Railways).

1.2. Action Taken Notes in respect of all the 16 recommendations or observations contained in the Report have been received from the Government and these have been categorised as follows:

(i) *Recommendations or observations that have been accepted by Government:*

Sl. Nos. 4, 6, 7 and 11.

(ii) *Recommendations or observations which the Committee do not desire to pursue in the light of the replies received from Government.*

Sl. Nos. 1, 2, 3, 9, 12, 13—15.

(iii) *Recommendations or observations replies to which have not been accepted by the Committee and which require reiteration:*

Sl. Nos. 5, 8, 10 and 16.

(iv) *Recommendations or observations in respect of which Government have furnished interim replies:*  
Nil.

1.3. The Committee will now deal with the action taken by Government on some of their recommendations.

*Restoration of Chhitauni—Bagaha rail link (Paragraphs 1.64 and 1.67—Sl. Nos. 5 and 8)*

1.4. While assessing the need of the project of the Ministry of Railways to restore the Chhitauni—Bagaha rail link, the Committee

in paragraphs 1.64 and 1.67 of their 125th Report (Sixth Lok Sabha) had observed:

"1.64. Though the Planning Commission had not given its clearance to the scheme and the State Governments had also expressed in the meantime their inability to bear the expenditure on river training works, the Ministry of Railways proceeded with it apace totally in disregard of the normal procedure. The project was formally inaugurated on the 22 October 1973 as scheduled and on 9 November 1973, the Ministry of Railways communicated the sanction to the estimate of Rs. 6.74 crores for the restoration of Chhitauni—Bagaha metre gauge rail link. When asked about the compelling circumstances and urgency under which the Ministry of Railways had communicated their sanction on 9 November 1973, the Chairman, Railway Board stated in evidence that "the Minister wanted this work through". On being asked why this particular project got a priority when there were so many other backward areas in the country, the Chairman, Railway Board further stated: "It is not for me to answer that". In reply to yet another question whether the fact that the then Prime Minister herself wanted to go out there and simultaneously open a project was a reason for sanctioning the project, the Chairman, Railway Board stated: "That is one of the reasons recorded". All this clearly shows that the sanction of project was rushed through more for extraneous reasons than for the genuine requirements of the area and the people at that point of time. This is also borne out by the fact that the State Governments of U.P. and Bihar showed no keenness to the urgency of scheme although the matter was addressed to them by the then Minister of Railways himself."

"1.67. From the foregoing paragraphs the Committee can only conclude that the decisions taken in this case have been taken on *ad hoc* basis without taking into consideration the relative importance of the scheme or the economic feasibility of the project. This is a glaring instance of misuse of political authority disregarding not only the



views of the Planning Commission but also the lack of enthusiasm on the part of the State Governments concerned. This is deplorable to say the least.

1.5. In their Action Taken Note dated 7 December, 1979 the Ministry of Railways (Railway Board) have replied:

1.64. "The project was sanctioned because there was a public demand for restoration of the rail link. Moreover the construction of the bridge and river crossing at that point of time was found technically feasible and was to serve as a control point for the Gandak as envisaged by the Gandak High Level Committee. The State Governments, particularly, Uttar Pradesh, were keen on this project as it would be evident even from Dr. K. L. Rao's letter of May '73.

1.67. "The project was undertaken in accordance with the policy announcement made by the Railway Minister in 1973-74 and reiterated by him in 1974-75 that "restoration of dismantled lines could be undertaken so that the people who enjoyed railway facilities in the past and were deprived of them during the Second World War or on account of floods etc. have these facilities back again." The restoration of this particular line was undertaken to connect the backward areas of U.P. and Bihar and also to serve as a control point for the Gandak River. The construction of this line had also been subsequently accepted by the Planning Commission on economic grounds. The U.P. Government have also communicated in September '78 their willingness in principle to pay Rs. 5.1 crores towards the river training works and had earlier deposited Rs. 30 lakhs. The Bihar Government have not paid their share amounting to Rs. 26 lakhs and efforts would continue to be made to persuade them to pay their share of the cost. However, the work on the bridge itself has not been taken in hand so far, as the final design of the bridge and the guide bunds have to be decided in the light of the recent radical changes in the course of the river. It is not correct to state that decisions were taken on *ad hoc* basis without taking into consideration the importance of the scheme or the economic feasibility of the project."

1.6. The Committee had not contested the Ministry of Railway's decision to take up the Project to restore the Railway line from Chhitauni to Bagaha in terms of the new policy announced by the

then Railway Minister in 1973-74. However, they are not convinced with the argument adduced by the Ministry of Railways for the undue haste and unusual promptitude with which the project was processed and pushed through in the Ministry of Railways disregarding not only the views of Planning Commission but also the lack of enthusiasm on the part of the State Governments of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. The Ministry of Railways have sought to justify their action on the ground of technical feasibility as envisaged by the Gandak High Level Committee and in view of the keenness of State Governments concerned. The Committee are of the view that along with technical feasibility, the Ministry of Railways should have also determined the relative importance of the scheme. Unfortunately, the advice of the Planning Commission in this direction that the scheme had to be considered along with other schemes for construction of new lines or restoration of dismantled lines for determining the inter se priorities of all such schemes was totally disregarded by the Ministry of Railways. Further, even in terms of the recommendations made by the Gandak High Level Committee the cost of river training works was to be shared by the Governments of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. The very fact that those State Governments expressed their inability at that time to bear the financial burden of the initial cost and maintenance of all river training works were evident enough to show that they were not so enthusiastic in the project. As such, the Committee cannot agree with the contention of the Ministry of Railways that the State Governments were keen on the project.

1.7. The Committee note that whereas the Uttar Pradesh Government have communicated their willingness to bear their share towards river training works, the matter still remains to be settled with the Bihar Government. Further, the Committee have been informed that the work on the bridge has not been taken in hand so far pending the finalisation of the design of the bridge and the guide bunds in the light of the recent radical changes in the course of the river. In this connection, it is pertinent to note that as a consequence of the delay in the construction of the bridge, the restoration of the rail link between Chhitauni and Bagaha will be further delayed. The Committee are greatly concerned at the present plight of the Project which was processed and pushed through in the very unusual manner and whose inauguration was got done in October, 1973, but which has not made any headway even after lapse of more than 7 years. This only fortifies the apprehension of the Committee that the idea of the project itself was

not adequately conceived. The Committee desire that the issue of sharing the cost of river training works with Bihar Government and other pending issues be resolved expeditiously so that the execution of the project is speeded up.

1.8. The Committee also recommend that in future all relevant matters like the relative priorities of each scheme, resources position and the response of the parties concerned should be taken into account before taking final decision and commencing work on the scheme.

*Construction of a metre gauge branch line from Jhanjharpur to Laukahabazar—Unauthorised modification in the alignment due to improper Survey (paragraph 2.39—Sl. No. 10)*

1.9. Dealing with another case of construction of a railway line between Jhanjharpur and Laukaha Bazar in Samastipur Division, the Committee in paragraph 2.39 of their 125th Report (Sixth Lok Sabha) had observed:

“The Committee find that in the final location survey report the length of the projected line was shown as 42.3 kms. but during the execution of the project the alignment had to be materially modified as it was found that the alignment proposed during survey was passing through two villages which was not considered a desirable feature. The effect of this modification was that the length of the alignment increased by one kilometre, entailing increase in estimated cost by Rs. 5.35 lakhs. While explaining the reasons why this change in alignment became necessary, the Ministry of Railways have stated that due to severely limited time available for field work several essential items of field work were omitted for the time being. The Committee have not been apprised of the reasons for the utmost urgency displayed in the execution of the project even without a proper survey of the alignment. The Committee cannot but express their displeasure at the casual manner in which this project seems to have been executed.”

1.10. In their Action Taken Note dated 25 January, 1980 the Ministry of Railways (Railway Board) have stated:

“It is correct that the length of the projected line was fixed as 42.3 kms. during the Final Location Survey but in view of the requirement for the future development of Andhra

and Andhrathari villages, and the proposed Andhra Thari Railway Station, the alignment had to be slightly diverted during the actual execution of the project, resulting in an increase of one kilometre in the total length of the alignment, resulting in increase in the cost of about Rs. 5.35 lakhs.

While forwarding the final location survey report to the Railway Board, the Railway had mentioned that the survey team had actually located the alignment in the field and "collected details necessary for preparing the construction estimate." They had also stated that certain items of work, such as fixing of permanent alignment pillars, plain tabling etc. could not be done in the short time available but these would be carried out before the actual construction was taken up.

The Ministry of Railways, therefore, submit that a survey of alignment was conducted and the Survey Team actually pointed out what they could not complete in time. The survey team, experienced shortage of time in carrying out certain formal activities, expected of it, in terms of the Codal provisions. As the performance of these activities are obligatory in terms of the Engineering Code, a special reference to this aspect was made by the survey team in their report. Necessary corrections were carried out during the execution of the project. Changes in the alignment of a railway line, in a new project are not an abnormal feature, even when a detailed location survey is carried out after observing all the necessary formalities. If, during the execution of the project, it is considered that diversion of the alignment would be mutually beneficial to both the railway and the local people, such changes are normally carried out during the execution of the project.

During the relevant period the public demand for provision of transport facilities by the Railway was vehement keeping a view the requirements of expansion of irrigation schemes, provision of good seeds, flood protection, soil conservation, supply of fertilizer etc. to activate the economy of the area. This public demand was strongly supported by the local leaders and Ministers of the State

Government of Bihar, stressing that no dent would be made on the poverty of the area without a railway line. It was in such a climate that the railway administration had to plan and execute the construction of this railway line.

The Ministry of Railway would, therefore, request the Committee to re-consider their observations that they cannot but express their displeasure at the casual manner in which the project has been executed."

1.11. The Committee had desired to know the reasons for the utmost urgency displayed in the execution of the project to construct a new metre gauge branch line from Jhanjharpur to Laukahabazar in Samastipur Division even without a proper survey of alignment. The Ministry of Railways have now put forth the plea that they were responding to a vehement public demand for the provision of transport facilities. The Ministry of Railways have further pleaded that the Survey Team had experienced shortage of time in carrying out certain formal activities in terms of the Codal provisions and that the Team had brought to the notice of the Railway Board what they could not complete in time. In support of this, it has been stated that changes in the alignment of a railway line in a new project are not an abnormal feature, even when a detailed location survey is carried out after observing all the necessary formalities. The Committee appreciate the consideration of public demand but they would like to emphasize that in the process the observance of important factors such as location survey and proper alignment should not be overlooked.

*Execution of Jhanjharpur—Laukaha bazar metre gauge branch line without proper observance of rules and procedures (Paragraph 2.45—Sl. No. 16)*

1.12. Commenting on the delay in the execution of the Jhanjharpur—Laukaha bazar line and the wide gap in the expenditure on the project between the estimates and the actuals, the Committee in paragraph 2.45 of their 125th Report (Sixth Lok Sabha) had observed:

"What has perturbed the Committee most is the fact that the line which was targeted for opening latest by the end of June 1975 was actually opened for passenger traffic from November 1976, even though a portion of the line

had been ready in all respects since January 1976 but due to paucity of funds and other factors it was not possible to push through the works to open this portion of the line. Ironically the delay in opening of this section entailed an avoidable expenditure of Rs. 2.50 lakhs on field establishment during January to October 1976. The net result has been that the actual total expenditure on the project came to Rs. 2.62 crores against the sanctioned estimates of Rs. 1.97 crores only. The Committee feel that the execution of this project has not been handled in a business like fashion. In their anxiety to keep up the targets, no care had been taken to follow the laid down procedures with the result that there had been lot of infructuous expenditure incommensurate with any tangible benefits. This is yet another instance in which there has been misuse of authority and when the rules and procedures have been given a go-bye thereby resulting in avoidable infructuous expenditure."

1.13. In their Action Taken Note dated 25 January, 1980 the Ministry of Railways (Railway Board) have stated:

"In accordance with the then policy of the Central Government for the construction of new unremunerative projects in under-developed areas, the State Government was required to bear the initial cost of the land, on the project line. Although the target for opening the new MG line upto Laukaha Bazar was originally fixed as June 1975, the same could not be adhered to, due to delay by the State Government in disbursing the compensation to various land-owners. The land-owners resisted the opening of the line, without the necessary compensation having been paid to them. This aspect, together with the non-availability of sufficient funds during 1975-76, resulted in postponment of the target date for opening of the entire line.

The conclusion that the delay in opening the section entailed an avoidable expenditure of Rs. 2.5 lakhs on field establishment, during January to October 1976 is, however, not correct. The staff, which was available in the field, was just enough to complete the works required to be done for opening the balance section, which had not been completed by January 1976. The staff and labour had actually been reduced from January 1976 onwards depending on the actual needs, and only bare minimum

staff was kept till the opening of the entire line. No avoidable expenditure was thus incurred on this project.

As has already been pointed out in reply to para 2.38 above, the increase in cost of the project has been due to various factors, most of which were beyond the control of the Railway Administration.

The Ministry of Railways submit that these aspects may kindly be taken into account by the Committee in the context of the observations made by them."

**1.14. The Committee do not agree with the contention of the Ministry of Railways that most of the factors which necessitated an increase in the cost of the project to construct a metre gauge branch line from Jhanjharpur to Laukahabazar were beyond the control of the Railway Administration. On the other hand, most of the factors other than normal escalation in the cost of labour and materials were due to the unrealistic and hurried manner in which detailed estimates were drawn up. Further, adducing the reasons for the delay in the opening of the new line, the Ministry of Railways have apportioned the blame on the Bihar Government for its failure in disbursing the compensation timely to various land owners consequent to which the land owners resisted the opening of the line. The Committee are of the view that the Ministry of Railways cannot exonerate themselves completely from this because physical possession of the land was taken in July, 1974 itself on grounds of urgency when finalisation of acquisition proceedings and payment of compensation was pending. As such, the Ministry of Railways should have pursued from the very beginning with the Bihar Government to expedite the disbursement of compensation so that the circumstances which led to the delay in the opening of the railway line could have been avoided.**

## CHAPTER II

### Recommendations or observations that have been accepted by Government

#### Recommendation

The Committee find that although there is no requirement under the rules that enjoins on the Railways to get each and every project cleared from the Planning Commission, yet as a matter of convention the Railway Board does seek clearance from the Planning Commission before undertaking a major project like a new line or restoration of an old line. In accordance with the extant practice, the Ministry of Railways did write to the Planning Commission on 17 October, 1973 asking them to convey their concurrence for taking up the restoration of the line between Chhitauni and Bagaha and also to allot necessary funds for the same. The Planning Commission had also been requested to give an early decision as the work on the project had already been scheduled to be inaugurated by the then Prime Minister on 22 October, 1973. The Planning Commission were prompt in their reply in as much as they wrote back on 20 October, 1973 saying that it was difficult to take a definite view on the scheme as it had to be considered along with other schemes for construction of new lines or restoration of dismantled lines for determining the *inter se* priorities of all schemes. The Planning Commission had also advised the Railway Board in the instant case to ensure that the Governments of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar agreed to take up the river training works which would be required in connection with this line as in terms of the recommendations made by the Gandak High Level Committee the cost of river training works had to be shared by the Governments of U.P. and Bihar.

[Sl. No. 4 (Para 1.63) of Appendix to 125th Report of PAC (1978-79) (Sixth Lok Sabha)]

#### Action Taken

The observations of the Committee have been noted.

[Ministry of Railways (Railway Board) O.M. No. 79-BC-PAC/VI/125(1-8) dated 7 December, 1979]



### Recommendation

From the correspondence exchanged between the Ministry of Railways and the Planning Commission in regard to restoration of this work, the Committee find that in 1974 the Ministry of Railways had been advised by the Planning Commission not to take up this work. The view of the Planning Commission was that there was hardly any room for taking up 'unremunerative' railway projects for promotional purposes and at that point of time it was essential to maximise the use of railway capacity which had already been built up as a result of heavy investments made in the recent past. Moreover, the Planning Commission felt that if this project had to be taken up, it must be considered as a line required for developing a backward area and on that ground its *inter se* priority would have to be determine. It was not till 26 February, 1977 that on some information and traffic estimates subsequently proved by the Railways, the Planning Commission accepted that this could be considered a bridge link which was justified on economic grounds but even then the Planning Commission had advised further investigations. The Committee find that even as the correspondence was going on with the Planning Commission, the Railway Board were proceeding in their own way to ensure that the project was pushed through overlooking the fact that this was going to be unremunerative and the State Governments concerned had not agreed to share the cost of river training works. At one stage the Railway Board even offered to bear the cost of the training works in case the State Governments declined to do so.

[Sl. No. 6 (Para 1.65) of Appendix to 125th Report of PAC  
(1978-79) (Sixth Lok Sabha)]

### Action Taken

The observations of the Committee have been noted.

[Ministry of Railways (Railway Board) O.M. No. 79-BC-  
PAC/VI/125(1-8) dated 7 December, 1979]

### Recommendation

Not only that, the Railway Board actually proceeded to execute the work without waiting for the clearance from the Planning Commission. So-much-so that even tenders for the substructure of the bridge had been invited but had to be cancelled as it was felt subsequently that until a clear position emerged with reference to

the sharing of the cost of guide bunds and protection works by the Governments of U.P. and Bihar, processing of tenders would be premature. However, several preliminary works, which included the construction of the rail link between Bagaha and Madanpur at a cost of Rs. 67.69 lakhs, had been undertaken before a decision had been taken for the construction of the railway bridge or for the river training works. The total expenditure on such works booked upto the end of March, 1977 amounted to Rs. 1.49 crores although the physical progress was only to the extent of 6.5 per cent. Explaining the reasons for the advance action taken by the Ministry of Railways (Railway Board) it has been stated that this was necessary "in view of the urgency of the work expressed at that time."

[Sl. No. 7 (Para 1.66) of Appendix to 125th Report of PAC (1978-79) (Sixth Lok Sabha)]

#### **Action Taken**

The observations of the Committee have been noted.

[Ministry of Railways (Railway Board) O.M. No. 79-BC-PAC/VI/125(1-8) dated 7 December, 1979]

#### **Recommendation**

Another disquieting feature was that such a major modification in the alignment had been made without the prior approval of the Railway Board as required under the rules. Unfortunately it was left to Audit to point out that an essential codal provision had been overlooked by the Railway Administration inasmuch as no prior approval of the Ministry of Railways (Railway Board) had been taken. On the basis of Audit Objection ex post facto sanction of the Railway Board was obtained. Again, the reason given for delay in obtaining the Railway Board's sanction for the material modification has been that 'tight target' made the entire organisation busy with the work of actual execution and they had no time to obtain the necessary sanction. The Committee cannot be persuaded to believe that a project of this magnitude could be executed in such a haste.

[Sl. No. 11 (Para 2.40) of Appendix to 125th Report of PAC (1978-79) (Sixth Lok Sabha)]

**Action Taken**

Increase in the length of the alignment by 1 Km. was entirely due to re-location of the Andhrethari station. As the execution of the work on this project was being carried out on almost a war footing, the officers and staff remained busy in the field. In view of the limitations of time available, for completing the project, they could not devote timely attention to the observance of all the necessary formalities. This resulted in the delay.

The Committee's observations have, however, been noted.

[Ministry of Railways (Railway Board) O.M. No. 79-BC-PAC|VI|125(9—15) dated 25 January, 1980]

## CHAPTER III

**Recommendations or observations which the Committee do not desire to pursue in the light of the replies received from Government**

### Recommendation

The Committee note that one of the piers of the railway bridge across the river Gandak, which connected the terminal stations of Chhitauni on Captainganj—Chhitauni (U.P.) section and Bagaha on Markatiaganj—Bagaha (Bihar) section of the North Eastern Railway, was washed away in 1924. Since then the bridge had been abandoned and no attempt was made to reconstruct the bridge as "it was felt that it was not worthwhile building the bridge". In 1971, following the visit of the then Minister of Irrigation and Power to the area, a High Level Technical Committee was constituted by the Ministry of Irrigation and Power in consultation with the Governments of U.P. and Bihar to go into the problem of stabilisation of the river Gandak. This Committee had recommended establishment of control points along the course of the river with a view to stabilise its course and one such control point was proposed to be located at Chhitauni Ghat. In May 1973, the then Minister of Irrigation and Power (Dr. K. L. Rao) wrote to the Ministry of Railways suggesting that advantage may be taken of this control point for construction of a railway bridge, which in his opinion would serve the dual purpose of providing communication link as well as a control structure to check the river's movement westwards.

[Sl. No. 1 (Para 1.60) of Appendix to 125th Report of PAC (1978-79) (Sixth Lok Sabha)]

### Action Taken

It has been stated that no attempt was made to reconstruct the bridge as "it was felt that it was not worthwhile building the bridge". This statement does not bring out the position fully and correctly. As had been stated by the Chairman Railway Board before the PAC no attempt was made to reconstruct the bridge as "it was felt that it was not worthwhile building the bridge, *unless the river was tamed*".

It has been stated that Dr. K. L. Rao wrote to the Minister of Railways "suggesting that advantage may be taken of this control point for construction of a railway bridge...." In this connection, a reference is invited to Dr. K. L. Rao's letter dated 18th May, 1973. A reference to Dr. K. L. Rao's letter would indicate that he had suggested a regulator or a bridge at some suitable point to rectify the westward movement of the Gandak and he had given this suggestion to the High Level Gandak Technical Committee. He had further suggested that in view of the demand of the local public, a bridge of the Gandak near Chittauni appeared to be useful as it would serve the dual purpose of providing a communication link as well as a control structure to check the river's movements towards the west.

In this connection, Para 14.2.2.3 of the Summary of the Recommendations of the Report of the Gandak High Level Committee reproduced below is relevant:—

"The river can also be trained along a suitable alignment by the utilisation of structures required for other purposes such as rail or road bridges, diversions works such as weirs barrages etc. Such structures with adequate waterways, if located at suitable intervals could meet the objective of stabilising the river course in a central channel to a considerable extent. The importance and necessity of suitable number of proper all weather means of communication across the river can hardly be over-emphasised for the development of this vast area which has remained backward for want of these and other facilities. It is understood that the restoration of the Captainganj—Bagaha railway link which has remained disrupted since 1924 is under active consideration of the Railways. Model studies indicated that siting of the railway bridge near across Section No. 47 would be suitable and the construction of this bridge will stabilise the river flow in a distance of about 5 kms. on either side. This Railway bridge and other road bridges, when taken up, should be suitably sited to enable them to derive full benefit of the system of the flood protection works, existing and proposed, along the Gandak and also to serve as control structures for stabilisation of the river flow in a central-

ised course. The construction of control points merely as river training work was not considered economically feasible.

[Ministry of Railways (Railway Board) O.M. No. 79-BC-PAC/VI/125(1-8) dated 7 December, 1979]

### **Recommendation**

Thereafter the Ministry of Railways (Railway Board) plunged into action. In June 1973, the Railway Administration was directed to carry out urgently a survey for the restoration of Chhitauni-Bagaha rail link. In July 1973, the Railway Administration submitted to the Railway Board an estimate amounting to Rs. 6.74 crores representing the cost of the railway bridge, the rail link, stations and buildings, residential quarters etc. entirely chargeable to the Railways. The Railway Administration was directed in August, 1973 to obtain formal acceptance of the State Governments of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar to the arrangements regarding sharing of the cost of training works, which had been recommended by the Gandak High Level Committee. In September, 1973, the Governments of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar were also requested to convey their acceptance to bear the initial costs and the maintenance of all training works falling in their respective territories. Simultaneously on 5 September, 1973, the then Chairman, Railway Board recorded on the relevant file that "the Minister of Railways has decided that the function in connection with the Chhitauni bridge will be held on the 22 October, 1973. For Chhitauni bridge probably the foundation stone will be laid by the Prime Minister herself." The Chairman, Railway Board had further directed that as the Minister of Railways would be having a meeting with the Board on the 13 September, 1973, the file for sanctioning of the project must be got ready for obtaining the orders of the Minister. The formal approval of the Minister to a total estimate of Rs. 6.74 crores to cover the cost of Gandak bridge proper and the rest of the Railway line but excluding the cost of training works was sought by the Chairman, Railway Board on 18 October, 1973 and the same was accorded by the Minister on the same day. It had also been recommended that the work might be approved out of turn during the then current financial year as it was "considered to be very important for the development of the backward areas of Eastern U.P. and Bihar, which are at present having very unsatisfactory communications and are cut off from each other." Administrative approval to the propo-

sal was conveyed to the Railway Administration telegraphically and since this was a non-budget work, an application for token advance of Rs. 1000 from the Contingency Fund of India was put up for sanction on the same day (18 October, 1973).

[Sl. No. 2 (Para 1.61) of Appendix to 125th Report of PAC  
(1978-79) (Sixth Lok Sabha)]

#### **Action taken**

It is not strictly correct to state that the Ministry of Railways plunged into action only after the receipt of Dr. K. L. Rao's letter of 18-5-73. The proposal for a survey for restoration of Chhitauni-Bagaha had been sent by the North-Eastern Railway on 6-5-73 on the basis of public demand which had been projected very strongly, in April 1973 during the Prime Minister's visit and a survey was, therefore, sanctioned.

[Ministry of Railways (Railway Board) O.M. No. 79-BC-PAC/VI/125(1-8) dated 7 December, 1979]

#### **Recommendation**

The Committee are astonished at the quick pace with which the whole project was processed and pushed through in the Ministry of Railways after the then Minister of Irrigation and Power had suggested in May 1973 that the restoration of railway bridge near Chhitauni might be considered in the context of the river training scheme for Gandak. Within a short span of about six months, a bridge which had been abandoned for about half a century, and which was considered 'not worthwhile' assumed sudden importance. Not only the estimates for the construction of the bridge were got prepared and approved urgently but even the work on the project was got inaugurated by the then Prime Minister herself on 22 October, 1973. It is interesting to note that a project which had been conceived as a part of the integrated scheme for the Gandak river training work soon acquired a very high importance in the development of backward areas of Eastern Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. It is significant to note that the scheme was changed though there was no decision on record to abandon the integrated scheme.

[Sl. No. 3 (Para 1.62) of Appendix to 125th Report of PAC  
(1978-79) (Sixth Lok Sabha)]

### **Action Taken**

Normally when a decision is taken in principle that a work is to be started, the Railway Ministry deals with the case expeditiously. There was a pressing public demand for the restoration of the line. The construction of the Valmikinagar Barrage and certain river training works had to a large extent stabilized the river and it was technically feasible to construct a bridge on the Gandak with suitable guide bunds which would maintain a central channel in the reach of the river and project the railway embankment. The preparation of the estimate of the bridge and the restoration of the link is not a difficult task and the Railway can prepare such an estimate within 4 months. While communicating the sanction, due caution was taken in that the Railway was advised that no expenditure was to be incurred on the bridge till all the technical details of the guide bunds and training works were decided after model studies.

There is no question of abandoning the integrated scheme as the railway bridge was to serve as a control point also in addition to helping in the restoration of communications between the backward areas of U.P. and Bihar. It is because of this fact that this bridge would serve as a control point, the Railway could ask the State Governments to bear the cost of the river training works. Dr. K. L. Rao in his letter dated 12th October, 1973 had himself stated that the bridge would form one of the control points for the proper training of the unstable Gandak river besides providing a much needed communication link between the backward districts of Bihar and U.P.

[Ministry of Railways (Railway Board) O.M. No. 79-BC-  
PAC/VI/125(1-8) dated 7 December, 1979]

### **Recommendation**

Whereas in the earlier case dealt with in the previous Chapter; the Committee have had an occasion to deal with the problem of unprincipled approach to the question regarding construction of new railway lines and restoration works, the present case highlights some of the glaring shortcomings noticed in the actual execution of a project which had been sanctioned on grounds of urgency. The Committee note that in May, 1973, the North-Eastern Railway Administration had submitted an abstract estimate of Rs. 228 crores for the construction of new metre gauge branch line (42.55 Kms.)



from Jhanjharpur to Laukahabazar in Samastipur Division. At the instance of the Railway Board the Railway Administration carried out a final location survey and submitted a survey report and detailed estimate to the Railway Board on 28th July, 1973 showing the estimated cost of the project as Rs. 2.93 crores (inclusive of cost of land and rolling stock) and the length of the line as 42.3 Kms. The Committee have been informed that the sanctioned project cost, excluding the cost of land, was Rs. 1.97 crores. But the actual expenditure on the project, which was around Rs. 2.5 crores in June, 1977 had finally gone up to Rs. 2.62 crores thus showing an increase of Rs. 65 lakhs (32 per cent) over the sanctioned estimate. The Committee regret to find that the increase in the expenditure by Rs. 65 lakhs is not entirely attributable to the normal escalation in the cost of labour and material. There are wide gaps between the estimates and the actuals of several items, which lead to Committee to conclude that the detailed estimates had been drawn up hurriedly, unrealistically and without any proper survey. Some of these cases are dealt with in the succeeding paragraphs.

[Sl. No. 9 (Para 2.38) of Appendix to 125th Report of PAC (1978-79) (Sixth Lok Sabha)]

#### **Action Taken**

An Engineering Feasibility Study and Traffic Appreciation for the construction of a new MG line from Jhanjharpur to Laukahabazar was sanctioned by the Railway Board in Aug. 71. The survey report which included an abstract estimate for Rs. 2.2 crores was submitted by the Railway Administration in Jan. 1972.

Keeping in view the urgent demand made by the Public during the then Minister of Railways visit to Laukahabazar on 24-2-73, for the construction of a new railway line in the interest of development of this under-developed area, the North Eastern Railway approached the Railway Board, in May, 1973, for sanction to the abstract estimate amounting to Rs. 2.2 crores. The Railway Board asked the Railway in June 1973 to carry out a Final Location Engineering survey and submit the survey report by middle of July, 1973. Accordingly, the survey was carried out and the survey report along with the detailed estimate amounting to Rs. 2.93 crores, for a length of 42.3 Kms. was submitted by the railway in July 1973. The estimated cost of Rs. 2.93.39.350 (Gross) including the cost of land, amounting to Rs. 62.12.201 and the cost of rolling stock amounting to Rs. 34.93.000. The cost of the project, excluding the cost of land and rolling stock, was Rs. 1,96,34,000.

Sanction was accorded to the construction estimate amounting to Rs. 2,58,51,140 excluding the cost of rolling stock, in June 1974. Excluding the cost of land, the sanctioned cost of the project was Rs. 2.59—0.62—1.97 crores. The actual expenditure on the project up to Sept. 1973 was Rs. 2,61,46,866 say Rs. 2.62 crores, resulting in an increase of about Rs. 65 lakhs over the sanctioned estimate, excluding the cost of land. Apart from the increase in the cost of labour and materials, the increase in the cost of the project over the estimated cost was due to (i) increase in the length of the alignment by one kilometre, (ii) increase in the length of water-way of major bridges, (iii) increase in the number of minor bridges, (iv) increase in the number of level crossings, (v) provision of rail fencing along the track passing parallel to roads, (vi) provision of covered goods shed at Vachaspatinagar, Pautauna and Laukahabazar and (vii) provision of higher plinth for the buildings.

The increase in the length of line by one kilometre was necessitated by the requirement of future development of Andhra and Andhrathari villages, and the need for future expansion of station yard. The increase in the water-way of bridges including the number of bridges, provision of rail fencing and increase in the level crossings was made at the instance of Government of Bihar. These are accommodation works and are to be borne by the Railway Administration in terms of Rule 11 of the Indian Railway Act, 1890. Owing to unprecedented floods, during 1975, it was considered necessary to raise the plinth of the buildings to keep them above the latest high Flood Level. Provision of covered goods shed at the three stations, which was not anticipated earlier, was considered necessary at the time of construction of the rail link, keeping in view the actual needs. As these factors were based on subsequent events, they could hardly have been anticipated or taken care of at the time of the final location survey. While it is correct that the increase in expenditure of Rs. 65 lakhs is not entirely due to normal escalation in the cost of labour and materials the Ministry of Railways submit that the conclusion that the detailed estimate had been drawn up hurriedly, unrealistically and without any proper survey does not automatically follow therefrom. As already mentioned above, various pressing extraneous factors which arose subsequently contributed to the increase in the magnitude of the work resulting in increase in cost.

[Ministry of Railways (Railway Board) OM No. 79-BC-PAC/VI  
125 (9.15) dated 25 January, 1980.]

#### **Recommendation**

As per detailed estimates the total quantity of earthwork in formation was assessed at 7 lakh cu.m. for original work and 0.70

takh cu.m. for maintenance at an estimated cost of Rs. 21.36 lakhs. According to the calculations made by the Ministry of Railways the actual quantity of earth work executed was 7.78 lakh cu.m. against the estimated quantity of 7 lakh cu.m. This represented an increase of 11.1 per cent over the estimated quantity. However, the actual expenditure incurred on earth work in formation amounted to Rs. 46.97 lakhs against the estimate of Rs. 21.86 lakhs thus recording an increase of about 115 per cent over the estimated cost. A bulk of the increase in the cost of earth work in formation has been attributed to the very low rates provided for in the estimate which proved to be unrealistic due to unforeseen factors. It is seen that the rate for earth work provided in the sanctioned estimate was Rs. 31.20 per 10 cu.m. against which the average rate that actually obtained on the project was Rs. 60.40. And the unforeseen factor was that the estimate rate had been based on the prevalent rates on Samastipur-Muzaffarpur conversion project whereas the conditions on this project route proved to be more arduous by way of communications. It is difficult to be convinced by such far fetched explanations now being offered by the Ministry of Railways.

[Sl. No. 12 (Para 2.41) of Appendix to 125th Report of PAC  
(1978-79) (Sixth Lok Sabha)]

#### Action Taken

While the quantity of earth work in formation, as per the original survey report was about 7 lakh cu.m., the quantity actually executed was 7.78 lakh cu.m., as has been pointed out by the Committee. The cost of earth work as provided in the estimate was Rs. 21.86 lakhs and the actual expenditure as indicated by the Audit was Rs. 49.90 lakhs. The break up of the excess as already recorded in para 2.23 of the Committee's report is as under:—

	Rs. Lakhs
(1) Increase due to repairs of rain-cuts and flood damages. . . . .	2.93
(2) Variation between the estimated rate and the rate obtaining in early stages of construction. . . . .	13.85
(3) Increase in quantity of earth work due to longer length of the line and higher formation in certain stretches. . . . .	4.71
(4) Increase due to other factor like increase in labour rates, Bihar Bund, fluctuations in tempo of work and lower productivity of labour drawn from land-owners. . . . .	6.56
Total	28.05

The rates provided in the estimate were based on the prevailing rates on the Samastipur-Muzaffarpur conversion project. These rates

were adopted, as more authentic rates actually applicable to the areas were not available with the survey team. The project area suffered from lack of transport facilities and means of communication, and this was an important factor, which not only affected import of trained labour from outside the project area, but also resulted in increase of overall rates for labour and materials. The general rates in the project area were very much higher than those prevailing on the Samastipur-Muzaffarpur conversion project.

The Ministry of Railways request the Committee to give due weightage to those factors.

[Ministry of Railways (Railway Board) O.M. No. 79-BC-PAC/VI/125 (9.15) dated 25 January, 1980.]

### **Recommendation**

The Committee further note that although the sanctioned estimate did not provide for any road decking on the rail bridge on Kamlabalan river, temporary road decking was subsequently provided for at a cost of Rs. 2.89 lakhs. When asked why could not the provision for temporary road decking be made in the original estimates, the Railway Board replied that the provision of road decking was thought of as a means to continue the construction activity during the rainy season as well in order to achieve tight target. In this context it is interesting to note that by the time the road decking was completed and opened to traffic, the work on the projected line from Jhanjharpur to Andhnathari (now Vachaspati Nagar) had already been completed and most of the materials including quarry products were carried by rail only. Thus the purpose for which road decking was provided was not achieved.

[Sl. No. 13 (Para 2.42) of Appendix to 125th Report of PAC (1978-79) (Sixth Lok Sabha)]

### **Action Taken**

The need for provision of road decking on the rail bridge Kamla Balan river was felt in April 1974, for transporting materials for Jhanjharpur-Laukaha Bazar project. This work was, therefore, taken in hand immediately, with the intention of completing it within 3 months. It could, however, not be completed and opened according to schedule, as the State Govt. who were required to construct the approach roads, could not complete the same till June 1975. As soon as the road approaches were ready, the road decking was opened to traffic. While it is true that part of the material was led to the project site by other means, the road decking was put to the best use possible immediately after its opening for completing the

project. Incidentally, it may be mentioned that the State Government of Bihar has also been interested in the retention of the road decking, even after the completion of the project. The maintenance and operating charges for the road decking on the railway bridge is being paid by the State Govt., since the date it was opened to traffic. The state Government have recently intimated that would like the road decking to be retained for a further period of 10 years, and that they would continue to pay the maintenance and operating charges. The matter is under correspondence with the State Government and the State Govt. have been asked to communicate their willingness to bear the depreciated cost. Under the circumstances, the facility provided in 1975 not only served its purpose at that time to the maximum extent possible in the execution of the project, but also serves the local population of the area even now. The State Govt. is contributing towards its maintenance.

[Ministry of Railways (Railway Board) OM No. 79-BC-PAC|VI|  
125 (9—15) dated 25 January, 1980.]

#### **Recommendation**

It is further to be noted that in their anxiety to keep up the tight schedule laid down for completing the work on the project, the Railway Administration first laid a section of the track with 50 lbs. rails instead of the 60 lbs. second hand rails as had been provided for in the final location survey and traffic appreciation reports. Very shortly thereafter the non-standard rails laid earlier were replaced by second hand 60 lbs. rails which resulted in avoidable expenditure of Rs. 39,000 on account of labour charges alone. The total infructuous expenditure on this count has not been calculated.

[Sl. No. 14 (Para 2.43) of Appendix to 125th Report of PAC (1978-79)  
(Sixth Lok Sabha)]

#### **Action Taken**

As has already been pointed out the project area lacked means of transportation and communication. It was, therefore, absolutely necessary to provide some practical means of transportation for movement of various construction materials, including P. Way materials, for completing the project. By linking part of the track length with 50 lb. rails, which were readily available, it was possible to lay a departmental siding on the alignment of the project line which enabled construction material being moved expeditiously. In the absence of the siding, the work would perhaps not have been completed. The estimate caters for construction materials been transported. The method of transportation is not specified, and

even if it were given, it can always be modified by the construction engineers to suit the conditions at site i.e. as the occasion demands. The expenditure incurred in laying 50 lb. rails, for opening the project is, therefore, a charge to the transportation of construction materials. If 60 lb. rails had been available earlier, these could have been used for laying the construction siding in the first instance. Unfortunately, 60 lb. rails were not readily available. If the project officers had waited for the releases from Samastipur-Sonpur Conversion project being made available, it would have unnecessarily delayed the laying of the siding with consequent delay in transporting materials on the project. The Ministry of Railways submit that, under the circumstances, the expenditure incurred in laying 50 lb. rails, cannot be considered as infructuous.

[Ministry of Railways (Railway Board) O.M. No. 79-BC-PAC|VI|  
125 (9—15) dated 25 January, 1980)]

#### **Recommendation**

Yet another disturbing feature is the extra payment made by the Railway Administration to the private contractor for the supply of screened shingles. The Committee have no doubt that the quantity of shingles supplied by the contractor at exorbitant rates could have definitely been arranged departmentally only if care had been taken to assess the requirements as also the comparative price payable to the contractor *vis-a-vis* departmentally cost for supply and transportation.

[Sl. No. 15 (Para 2.44) of Appendix to 125th Report of PAC  
(Sixth Lok Sabha).]

#### **Action Taken**

As already explained in this Ministry's reply to point No. 17 on which written information was desired by the PAC the stocks of shingle of 38 mm size and 19 mm which were available in the quarries of the construction organisation at Balbal were primarily meant for conversion work between Samastipur and Gorakhpur. The shingle available at the open line quarry at Bhiknathori was meant for open line and was consumed subsequently by open line. Had this departmental stocks of shingle been diverted for Jhanjharpur-Laukahabazar construction project, it would have only resulted in avoidable delay for the completion of those projects for which the material had been arranged departmentally. The deciding factor for calling for tender and resorting to purchase through contract was non-availability of wagons and the erratic movement due to railway strike and other disturbances in Bihar. For adhering

to the targets for the project it was necessary to exploit other source of transport of shingle and this necessitated calling for tenders wherein full option of source and mode of transport was afforded to tenderers. Open tenders had been invited and lowest rates had been accepted after negotiation. Sufficient efforts had also been made by the Railway Administration to award the contract at the lowest possible rates. In this case the Railway had no alternative but to accept the supply of shingle from fresh sources. Hence the question of comparison with any other rate and incurrence of extra cost does not arise.

[Ministry of Railways (Railway Board) OM No. 79-BC-PAC|VI|  
125 (9-15) dated 25 January, 1980].

## CHAPTER—IV

### RECOMMENDATIONS OR OBSERVATIONS REPLIES TO WHICH HAVE NOT BEEN ACCEPTED BY THE COMMITTEE AND WHICH REQUIRE REITERATION

#### Recommendation

Though the Planning Commission had not given its clearance to the scheme and the State Governments had also expressed in the meantime their inability to bear the expenditure on river training works, the Ministry of Railways proceeded with its pace totally in disregard of the normal procedure. The project was formally inaugurated on the 22 October, 1973 as scheduled and on 9 November, 1973, the Ministry of Railways communicated the sanction to the estimates of Rs. 6.74 crores for the restoration of Chhitauni-Bagaha metre gauge rail link. When asked about the compelling circumstances and urgency under which the Ministry of Railways had communicated their sanction on 9 November, 1973, the Chairman Railway Board stated in evidence that "the Minister wanted this work through". On being asked why this particular project got a priority when there were so many other backward areas in the country, the Chairman, Railway Board further stated: "It is not for me to answer that". In reply to yet another question whether the fact that the then Prime Minister herself wanted to go out there and simultaneously open a project was a reason for sanctioning the project, the Chairman, Railway Board stated: "That is one of the reasons recorded". All this clearly shows that the sanction of project was rushed through more for extraneous reasons than for the genuine requirements of the area and the people at that point of time. This is also borne out by the fact that the State Governments of U.P. and Bihar showed no keenness to the urgency of scheme although the matter was addressed to them by the then Minister of Railways himself.

[Sl. No. 5 (Para 1.64) of Appendix to 125th Report of PAC  
(1978-79) (Sixth Lok Sabha)]

#### Action Taken

The project was sanctioned because there was a public demand for restoration of the rail link. Moreover the construction of the bridge and river crossing at that point of time was found techni-



cally feasible and was to serve as a control point for the Gandak as envisaged by the Gandak High Level Committee. The State Govts. particularly, Uttar Pradesh, were keen on this project as it would be evident even from Dr. K. L. Rao's letter of May '73.

[Ministry of Railways (Railway Board) O.M. No. 79-BC  
PAC/VI/125(1-8) dated 7 December, 1979.]

### **Recommendation**

From the foregoing paragraphs, the Committee can only conclude that the decision taken in this case have been taken on *ad hoc* basis without taking into consideration the relative importance of the scheme or the economic feasibility of the project. This is a glaring instance of misuse of political authority disregarding not only the views of the Planning Commission but also the lack of enthusiasm on the part of the State Governments concerned. This is deplorable to say the least.

[Sl. No. 8 (Para 1.67) of Appendix to 125th Report of PAC  
(1978-79) (Sixth Lok Sabha).]

### **Action Taken**

The project was undertaken in accordance with the policy announcement made by the Railway Minister in 1973-74 and reiterated by him in 1974-75 that "restoration of dismantled lines could be undertaken so that the people who enjoyed railway facilities in the past and were deprived of them during the Second World War or on account of floods etc. have these facilities back again". The restoration of this particular line was undertaken to connect the backward areas of U.P. and Bihar and also to serve as a control point for the Gandak River. The construction of this line had also been subsequently accepted by the Planning Commission on economic grounds. The U.P. Government have also communicated in September '78 their willingness in principle to pay Rs. 5.1 crores towards the river training works and had earlier deposited Rs. 80 lakhs. The Bihar Govt. have not paid their share amounting to Rs. 26 lakhs and efforts would continue to be made to persuade them to pay their share of the cost. However, the work on the bridge itself has not been taken in hand so far, as the final design of the bridge and the guide bunds have to be decided in the light of the recent radical changes in the course of the river. It is not correct to state that decisions were taken on *ad hoc* basis without taking into consideration the importance of the scheme or the economic feasibility of the project.

[Ministry of Railways (Railway Board) O.M. No. 79-BC—  
PAC/VI/125 (9-15) dated 25 January, 1980.]

### **Recommendation**

The Committee find that in the final location survey report the length of the projected line was shown as 42.3 Kms. but during the execution of the project the alignment had to be materially modified as it was found that the alignment proposed during survey was passing through two villages which was not considered a desirable feature. The effect of this modification was that the length of the alignment increased on one Kilometre, entailing increase in estimated cost by Rs. 5.35 lakhs. While explaining the reasons why this change in alignment became necessary, the Ministry of Railways have stated that due to severely limited time available for field work several essential items of field work were omitted for the time being. The Committee have not been apprised of the reasons for the utmost urgency displayed in the execution of the project even without a proper survey of the alignment. The Committee cannot but express their displeasure at the casual manner in which this project seems to have been executed.

[Sl. No. 10 (Para 2.39) of Appendix 125th Report of PAC  
(1978-79) (Sixth Lok Sabha)]

### **Action Taken**

It is correct that the length of the projected line was fixed as 42.3 kms. during the Final Location Survey but in view of the requirement for the future development of Andhra and Andhrathari villages, and the proposed Andhra Thari Railway Station, the alignment had to be slightly diverted during the actual execution of the project, resulting in an increase of one kilometre in the total length of the alignment, resulting in increase in the cost of about Rs. 5.35 lakhs.

While forwarding the final location survey report to the Railway Board, the Railway had mentioned that the survey team had actually located the alignment in the field and "collected details necessary for preparing the construction estimate." They had also stated that certain items of work, such as fixing of permanent alignment pillars, plain tabling etc. could not be done in the short time available but these would be carried out before the actual construction was taken up.

The Ministry of Railways, therefore, submit that a survey of alignment was conducted and the Survey Team actually pointed out what they could not complete in time. The survey team, experienced shortage of time in carrying out certain formal activities,

expected of it, in terms of the Codal provisions. As the performance of these activities are obligatory in terms of the Engineering Code, a special reference to this aspect was made by the survey team in their report. Necessary corrections were carried out during the execution of the project. Changes in the alignment of a railway line, in a new project are not an abnormal feature, even when a detailed location survey is carried out after observing all the necessary formalities. If, during the execution of the project, it is considered that diversion of the alignment would be mutually beneficial to both the railway and the local people, such changes are normally carried out during the execution of the project.

During the relevant period the public demand for provision of transport facilities by the Railway was vehement keeping in view the requirements of expansion of irrigation schemes, provision of good seeds, flood protection, soil conservation, supply of fertilizer etc. to activate the economy of the area. This public demand was strongly supported by the local leaders and Ministers of the State Government of Bihar, stressing that no dent would be made on the poverty of the area without a railway line. It was in such a climate that the railway administration had to plan and execute the construction of this railway line.

The Ministry of Railways would, therefore, request the Committee to reconsider their observations that they cannot but express their displeasure at the casual manner in which the project had been executed.

[Ministry of Railways (Railway Board) O.M. No. 79—BC—  
PAC/VI/125 (9—15), dated 25 January, 1980.]

### **Recommendation**

What has perturbed the Committee most is the fact that the line which was targeted for opening latest by the end of June 1975 was actually opened for passenger traffic from November 1976, even though a portion of the line had been ready in all respects since January 1976 but due to paucity of funds and other factors it was not possible to push through the works to open this portion of the line. Ironically the delay in opening of this section entailed an avoidable expenditure of Rs. 2.50 lakhs on field establishment during January to October 1976. The net result has been that the actual total expenditure on the project came to Rs. 2.62 crores against the sanctioned estimates of Rs. 1.97 crores only. The Committee feel that the execution of this project has not been handled in a business like fashion. In their anxiety to keep up the targets, no care had

been taken to follow the laid down procedures with the result that there had been lot of infructuous expenditure in commensurate with any tangible benefits. This is yet another instance in which there has been misuse of authority and when the rules and procedures have been given a go-bye thereby resulting in avoidable infructuous expenditure.

[Sl. No. 16 (Para 2.45) of Appendix to 125th Report of PAC (1978-79) (Sixth Lok Sabha)]

### **Action Taken**

In accordance with the then policy of the Central Government for the construction of new unremunerative projects in under-developed areas, the State Govt. was required to bear the initial cost of the land, on the project line. Although the target for opening the new MG line up to Laukaha Bazar, was originally fixed as June, 1975, the same could not be adhered to, due to delay by the State Govt. in disbursing the compensation to various landowners. The landowners resisting the opening of the line, without the necessary compensation having been paid to them. This aspect, together with the non-availability of sufficient funds during 1975-76, resulted in postponement of the target date for opening of the entire line.

The conclusion that the delay in opening the section entailed an avoidable expenditure of Rs. 2.5 lakhs on field establishment, during January to October 1976 is, however, not correct. The staff, which was available in the field, was just enough to complete the works required to be done for opening the balance section, which had not been completed by January, 1976. The staff and labour had actually been reduced from January 1976 onwards, depending on the actual needs, and only bare minimum staff was kept till the opening of the entire line. No avoidable expenditure was thus incurred on this project.

As has already been pointed out in reply to para 2.38 above, the increase in cost of the project has been due to various factors, most of which were beyond the control of the Railway Administration.

The Ministry of Railways submit that these aspects may kindly be taken into account by the Committee in the context of the observations made by them.

[Ministry of Railways (Railway Board) O.M. No. 79—BC—  
PAC/VI/125 (9—15), dated 25 January, 1980.]

**CHAPTER V**

**RECOMMENDATIONS OR OBSERVATIONS IN RESPECT OF  
WHICH GOVERNMENT HAVE FURNISHED INTERIM REPLIES**

**--NIL--**

**NEW DELHI;  
10 December, 1980**  

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**19 Agrahayana, 1902 (S)**

**CHANDRAJIT YADAV,  
Chairman,  
Public Accounts Committee.**

## APPENDIX

### CONCLUSIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

Sl. No.	Para No.	Ministry/Department Concerned	Recommendations
1	2	3	4
1	1.6	Ministry of Railways (Railway Board)	<p>The Committee had not contested the Ministry of Railway's decision to take up the Project to restore the railway line from Chhitauni to Bagaha in terms of the new policy announced by the then Railway Minister in 1973-74. However, they are not convinced with the argument adduced by the Ministry of Railways for the undue haste and unusual promptitude with which the project was processed and pushed through in the Ministry of Railways dis-regarding not only the views of Planning Commission but also the lack of enthusiasm on the part of the State Governments of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. The Ministry of Railways have sought to justify their action on the ground of technical feasibility as envisaged by the Gandak High Level Committee and in view of the keenness of State Governments concerned. The Committee are of the view that alonewith technical feasibility, the Ministry of Railways should have also determined the relative importance of the scheme. Unfortunately, the advice of the Planning Commission in this direction that the scheme had to be considered alonewith other schemes</p>

for construction of new lines or restoration of dismantled lines for determining the *inter se* priorities of all such schemes was totally disregarded by the Ministry of Railways. Further, even in terms of the recommendations made by the Gandak High Level Committee the cost of river training works was to be shared by the Governments of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. The very fact that those State Governments expressed their inability at that time to bear the financial burden of the initial cost and maintenance of all river training works were evident enough to show that they were not so enthusiastic in the project. As such, the Committee cannot agree with the contention of the Ministry of Railways that the State Governments were keen on the project.

The Committee note that whereas the Uttar Pradesh Government have communicated their willingness to bear their share towards river training works, the matter still remains to be settled with the Bihar Government. Further, the Committee have been informed that the work on the bridge has not been taken in hand so far pending the finalisation of the design of the bridge and the guide bunds in the light of the recent radical changes in the course of the river. In this connection, it is pertinent to note that as a consequence of the delay in the construction of the bridge, the restoration of the rail link between Chhitauni and Bagaha will be further delayed. The Committee are greatly concerned at the present plight of the Project which was processed and pushed through in very unusual manner and whose inauguration was got done

in October, 1973, but which has not made any headway even after lapse of more than 7 years. This only fortifies the apprehension of the Committee that the idea of the project itself was not adequately conceived. The Committee desire that the issue of sharing the cost of river training works with Bihar Government and other pending issues be resolved expeditiously so that the execution of the project is speeded up.

Ministry of Railway  
(Railway Board)

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The Committee also recommend that in future all relevant matters like the relative priorities of each scheme, resources position and the response of the parties concerned should be taken into account before taking final decision and commencing work on the scheme.

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The Committee had desired to know the reasons for the utmost urgency displayed in the execution of the project to construct a new metre gauge branch line from Jhanjharpur to Laukahabazar in Samastipur Division even without a proper survey of alignment. The Ministry of Railways have now put forth the plea that they were responding to a vehement public demand for the provision of transport facilities. The Ministry of Railways have further pleaded that the Survey Team had experienced shortage of time in carrying out certain formal activities in terms of the Codal provisions and that the Team had brought to the notice of the Railway Board what they could not complete in time. In support of this, it has been stated that changes in the alignment of a railway line



in a new project are not an abnormal feature, even when a detailed location survey is carried out after observing all the necessary formalities. The Committee appreciate the consideration of public demand but they would like to emphasize that in the process the observance of important factors such as location survey and proper alignment should not be overlooked.

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The Committee do not agree with the contention of the Ministry of Railways that most of the factors which necessitated an increase in the cost of the project to construct a metre gauge branch line from Jhanjharpur to Laukahabazar were beyond the control of the Railway Administration. On the other hand, most of the factors other than normal escalation in the cost of labour and materials were due to the unrealistic and hurried manner in which detailed estimates were drawn up. Further, adducing the reasons for the delay in the opening of the new line, the Ministry of Railways have apportioned the blame on the Bihar Government for its failure in disbursing the compensation timely to various land owners consequent to which the land owners resisted the opening of the line. The Committee are of the view that the Ministry of Railways cannot exonerate themselves completely from this because physical possession of the land was taken in July, 1974 itself on grounds of urgency when finalisation of acquisition proceedings and payment circumstances which led to the delay in the opening of the railway should have pursued from the very beginning with the Bihar Government to expedite the disbursement of compensation so that the circumstances which led to the delay in the opening of the railway line could have been avoided.