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# All India Railwaymen's Federation

(Estd, 1924)

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No.AIRF/24(C)

Dated: August 21, 2020

**Shri Piyush Goyal Ji,**  
Hon'ble Minister for Railways,  
Ministry of Railways,  
Rail Bhawan,  
New Delhi

Respected Sir,

**Sub: Suggestions in regard to improvement of financial health and enhancement of productivity and efficiency of Indian Railways – Reg.**

You may very kindly recall that, **All India Railwaymen's Federation** has repeatedly put-forward various important suggestions, both informally and through communications, for overall improvement of Indian Railways.

You may also appreciate that the Railwaymen are exerting a lot and making their best efforts to serve the Rail users to their utmost satisfaction. Railwaymen have also produced locomotives, coaches and other rolling stock with latest *state-of-art* technology. They are operating and maintaining these stocks/assets quite satisfactorily. Over the years a lot of improvement has taken place in track parameters and signalling system that has facilitated enhancement in hauling load and increase in average speed of the trains. Railwaymen have also proved their worth by manufacturing "**Vande Bharat**" Train sets in ICF, which are running at the speed of 160 kmph between **New Delhi and Varanasi** and **New Delhi-Katra** respectively to fulfill the dream of Hon'ble Prime Minister of India. Apart from this, another superfast train, named "**Gatimaan Express**" is also running between **Hazrat Nizamuddin(Delhi) and Jhansi** at the same speed quite successfully.

It would not be out of context to mention here that, Hon'ble Prime Minister's vision, in regard to "**Make in India**", is being fulfilled by the Railwaymen by manufacturing all kinds of rolling stock and other assets in the country. During the present COVID-19 situation they have also converted more than 5,000 coaches into **Isolation Wards** as also manufactured **Sanitizers, Face Masks, PPE Kits, Ventilators etc.** apart from their own work. They are also ready to accept the challenges to manufacture and operate Train sets even at the higher speed, provided Government of India is willing to provide necessary financial and other desired inputs for this purpose.

AIRF has, therefore, repeatedly expressed its reservations regarding outsourcing, any kind of privatization/ corporatization in Indian Railways, as the same would prove to be counter-productive for this Transport

System, i.e. Indian Railways, which is the backbone of country's development and most convenient and cheap mode of transport for common man of India. We, however, would like to again communicate certain important suggestions, which, if implemented, would definitely prove to be beneficial and help a lot in improving upon financial health as well as productivity and efficiency of Indian Railways.

Some of the important suggestions are being given as under:-

## 1. **Operational Efficiency**

### **(A) Making taking over of Freight Trains as an Efficiency Index of Divisions/Zones**

Now, the performance of the Division/Zone is indicative through the number of freight trains handed over to other/adjacent Divisions/Zones within odd hours(00:00 hrs.)/day. Normally, during the last hour of the day freight trains are being detained at the adjacent stations of the interchange points for want of line clear from taking over the Division/Zone. To overcome this detention and also to improve the efficiency of the Goods Traffic, it is suggested that the operational efficiency of the Division/Zone should be measured on the basis of number of freight trains received within 00:00 hrs. by each Division/Zone, thereby in which all the Divisions/Zones will grant line clear to receive the freight trains due to which detention at the interchange point will be avoided and also the WTR will increase and rakes will be in movement always than getting idle and this will increase the fluidity decongesting Divisions/ Zones.

### **(B) Round-the-clock working of the Goods Sheds to avoid detention of the rakes**

Working hours of most of the Goods Sheds are from 08:00 hrs. to 18:00 hrs., as such, in case any goods load arrives beyond these timings, the same is required to wait for loading/release during the period when the Goods Shed is closed. This is causing idling/detention of the rakes and avoidable revenue loss to Indian Railways, therefore, if working of the Goods Sheds is extended to round-the-clock, it will result in easy movement of the rakes, avoiding idling/ detention of the rakes till opening of the Goods Sheds, resulting in better WTR of whole Indian Railways duly decongesting the Yards/Divisions, and thus it will increase the fluidity of the freight train operations.

### **(C) Provision of the IBS in longer block sections**

There are a large number of long block sections over Indian Railways. Next train departs from the previous station when the first train reaches the next station, covering long block section, which takes longer time. Therefore, to improve operational efficiency, IBS should be installed in all the block sections which are more than 5 kms. length.

### **(D) Locomotive maintenance**

It is often observed that, if any locomotive is away from its homing shed, the same is booked idle/dead to the same homing shed for its repair/maintenance. This results in avoidable wastage of the locomotive, therefore, in such cases; the locomotive failed on line should be sent to nearest loco shed for its repair and maintenance and not to its homing shed. This will improve the POL.

### **(E) Integrated operation of points and signalling**

There are still end-cabins at certain stations over Indian Railways to operate the points and signalling, which causes avoidable wastage of time in train movement. It would, therefore, be better

to provide integrate operation of points and signalling with the Station Master to avoid unnecessary wastage of operational time.

## 2. **Improvement in financial condition of the Indian Railway by increasing revenue earning**

(i) Operation of time-tabled parcel trains – during the COVID-19 Pandemic Indian Railways have operated Time-tabled parcel trains to timely transport essential commodities throughout the country. This has been a very successful planning and may be further utilized to increase railway earnings, as substantial share of transporting essential commodities is with the Road Transport at present, which can be shifted to Indian Railways in case the same are transported to destination in time.

### (ii) **Restoration of piecemeal booking in freight operation**

There used to be provision of piecemeal booking on a large number of stations in freight trains, by virtue of which merchant belonging lower or middle capital groups, desirous of booking one or more wagon load, had been utilizing this facility. Indian Railways has discontinued this provision, as a result of which, this major share of Goods Traffic has shifted to Road Transport, thereby substantial decreasing railway earnings

It is, therefore, suggested that, provision of piecemeal freight booking may be restored back and the small good sheds which were closed after discontinuing piecemeal booking should be made operational, so that, local merchants of the area could utilize this facility. For this purpose, coaching stock which has completed its codal life can be converted into Parcel Van which should run as freight train on the freight tariff, but at the specified timing, so as to avoid unnecessary detention and late arrival at the destination. This could certainly help in increasing railway earnings.

### (iii) **Elimination of end-on Generator Car in LHB Rakes of Mail/Express Trains**

At present, LHB Coach Passenger Rakes are operating with two end-on Generator Cars, wherein there is no scope for passenger or parcel booking. In case at least one Generator Car is replaced by passenger coach, this will help in increasing the earning of 64/72 reserved accommodation passengers.

### (iv) **Replacement of Pantry Car from Mail/Express Trains**

A number of Mail/Express Trains are presently running with one Pantry Car. This Pantry Car can be replaced by one ACCN Coach, and catering requirement of the passengers can be met on the major stations where these trains stop en-route. The requirement of meals etc. can be facilitated through e-booking and preparation of the same can be done in the Base Kitchens located at major stations, with even less number of catering staff, which are presently manning the Pantry Car. This will not only safe expenditure but also correspondingly increase railway earnings.

### (v) **Provision of Integrated Blocks**

Presently, there is practice of separate maintenance blocks for different departments, i.e. Signalling, Civil Engineering, OHE, which causes undue detention of trains en-route. It would be quite appropriate and time saving measure if **Integrated Blocks** are planned for

maintenance of Signalling Gear, Track and OHE etc. simultaneously. This would result in smooth train operation without any time loss and would also save railway revenue.

(vi) **Rationalization of Suburban Tickets**

Fare of the MST/QST is very-very low. This causes substantial subsidized passenger earnings which adds to major quantum in total subsidy of around Rs.40,000 crore per annum. Nowadays, even daily commuters are ready to pay more fare, provided proper traveling facilities are made available for them. Therefore, MST/QST fare and small distance ordinary passenger fare needs to be rationalized and Suburban Trains, operating all over Indian Railways, should be converted to EMU/MEMU Coach Rakes with cushioned sitting arrangements and the number of such trains, particularly in the morning and evening hours, can be increased to attract the share of Road Traffic to increase railway earnings.

(vii) **Elimination of Conventional Rakes in Local/Intercity Trains**

All Local/Intercity Trains presently being run with the Conventional Rakes can be replaced with EMU/MEMU/DEMU/LHB Rakes. This will reduce running time to permit more train operations on busy routes, thereby increasing railway earnings.

(viii) **Provision of Cabins in Non-AC/AC Sleeper Coaches**

Earlier, there used to be provision of Cabins in Non-AC Sleeper Class for ladies travelling alone, which has been discontinued over the year. It is suggested that, at least two/three cabins can be provided in Non-AC/AC Sleeper Coaches, for which extra charges can be realized from the passengers desirous of travelling in the cabins in these coaches. This would also result in substantial increase in passenger revenue.

(ix) **Provision of Integrated Platform Ticket with the Reserved Ticket**

There is normal practice that, at one/two persons of the family or friend come to platform to see-off or assist in boarding in case of passengers travelling in the Reserved Accommodation. It is, however, observed that, some of them come to platform without purchasing Platform Ticket because they have to stand in queue for purchasing Platform Ticket, and due to shortage of time they avoid doing so. If Platform Tickets are integrated with the Reserved Ticket, this will improve railway earnings.

(x) **Proper checking of ticketless travel**

Earlier used to be practice of regular checking of ticketless travel by Ticket Checking Staff, sometimes supported by Security Staff, on account of which, ticketless travel was minimum, particularly in the Unreserved Coaches of Ordinary Passenger/Mail/Express Trains. On account of acute shortage of Ticket Checking Staff, this practice has been discontinued, giving rise to increase in ticketless travel. This reflects in lower passenger earnings despite increase in the number of passengers traveling in the trains. The practice of regular checking of ticketless travelling therefore needs to be restored to increase window earnings.

(xi) **Improvement in freight earnings**

Indian Railways can attract more freight traffic by operating time-tabled freight trains, which can increase at least 5% more share in freight traffic by diverting Road Traffic to Railway Traffic.

(xii) **Closure of unviable Railway Projects**

There are large number of Railway Projects which are not commercially viable and have been planned due to one reason or the others. These may be discontinued to save unnecessary expenditure on such projects.

(xiii) **Utilization of one organization for one kind of activities in Indian Railways**

There is well established Construction Organisation in Indian Railway, which is successfully undertaking works of Civil Engineering, S&T, Electrical Construction for the last so many decades. Construction Organisation is having sufficient strength of officers at the managerial level to plan and execute construction works of the above mentioned departments with marginal supporting staff at Not-Gazetted level. Construction Organisation also gets the works executed by the private agencies and supervision and checking is undertaken by the Departmental Staff. Therefore, formation of the agencies like RVNL etc. is a wasteful expenditure as the said organization is also execute similar works, but at a very slow pace. This will result in saving of wasteful expenditure.

(xiv) **Utilization of Railway Buildings for accommodating various Railway PSUs**

Presently, a large-number of PSU offices are located in private accommodations, for which a huge amount is paid as rent every year, which is sheer wastage of money. These PSUs may be accommodated in Railway Buildings, either in the offices or in Railway Quarters, to save wasteful money and rent.

(xv) **Proper utilization of Railway Land**

Indian Railways is having crores of acre land, which is either unutilized or under utilization. Indian Railways should plan to make use of this land to increase the earnings.

(xvi) **Unnecessary outsourcing of the works**

The practice of outsourcing of departmental works is increasing day-by-day, even in case of works for which Railway Staff and infrastructure, including Machine and Plants etc., are available. As a matter of fact, there are numerous malpractices in outsourcing of departmental works, and it is virtually costs even more than what it will cost if done departmentally. This needs to be thoroughly examined and restricted to only those works for which neither staff nor facilities are departmentally available.

(xvii) **Attachment of Parcel Van in all Mail/Express Trains**

On account of non-availability of Parcel Van, particularly in LHB Rakes, Indian Railways is unable to transport substantial quantity of parcel goods. This results in avoidable revenue loss. Parcel Van should, therefore, be attached with all Mail/Express Trains, including

those running with LHB Rakes, to transport essential commodities, to increase parcel earnings.

(xviii) **Provision of small shops at the roadside stations**

Indian Railways is having large number of roadside stations where a number of trains stop. Due to non-availability of any small shop, passengers are unable to procure food items or other small requirements. Small shops may therefore, be constructed at the roadside stations where these items are sold by the contractors/private shopkeepers and railway can realize monthly/annual rent/license fee.

(xix) **Running extra trains**

It is often observed that, a number of passenger remain wait-listed in some of the trains running on busy routes. Indian Railways should plan to keep some rakes available to run another train after 10-15 minutes on the same route with similar stoppages and facilities, so as to increase railway earnings.

AIRF is of considered view that, if the aforementioned suggestions are thoroughly and actively considered as well as implemented in a time-framed manner, this will definitely help a lot in improving the financial health of Indian Railways to meet the aspirations of the rail users.

Yours faithfully,



**(Shiva Gopal Mishra)**  
**General Secretary**

Copy to: Chairman Railway Board – for necessary action please.

Copy to: Financial Commissioner(Railways), Railway Board – for necessary action please.

Copy to: D.G.(H.R.), Railway Board for necessary action please.

Copy to: E.D.E.(I.R.), Railway Board – for necessary action please.

Copy to: General Secretaries, All Affiliated Unions – for information.