# Standing Committee Report Summary

## The Railways (Amendment) Bill, 2014

- The Standing Committee on Railways (Chair: Mr. Dinesh Trivedi) submitted its report on the Railways (Amendment) Bill, 2014 on May 5, 2015. The Bill was introduced in Lok Sabha on August 7, 2014. It was referred to the Standing Committee on September 16, 2014. The Bill amends the Railways Act, 1989 and seeks to prevent people from filing multiple claims from the Railways in case of accidents.

- The Committee observed that shifting the burden of proof in these cases, from the Railways to the claimant, will lead to victims being denied compensation in such cases. The Committee has declined to accept the proposal to shift the burden of proof to the victim.

- Under the Bill the railways administration where the accident occurred will be made a party before the Claims Tribunal for all cases. The Committee recommended that the railways zone where the accident occurred should not be a party to the case. The Centre for Railway Information Systems should improve its software to register accidents and make it fool-proof. The software can mandatorily require the Accidental Death Report Number in the claims application to avoid such duplication.

- Duplicate claims constitute about 0.5% of the total number of cases of compensation claims filed over the last 10 years. However, till date, no loss to the government exchequer has been reported by the Railways on account of compensation given in duplicate/fraudulent cases.

- Though the proposed amendments involve public interest, they have been proposed without any consultation with important stakeholders. If this Bill is passed by Parliament, the Railway users alone will be the most affected at the ground level. The Committee recommended that various stakeholders should be consulted before major policy changes are affected by the Railway administration.

- The Committee also observed that as on January 31, 2015, as many as 38,637 compensation claims are pending. The primary reason for the rising number of compensation claims is the non-filling of vacant posts of both the judicial and technical members in the Railways Claims Tribunal Benches. The Committee recommended that the government should re-work their priorities and focus on filling up these vacant posts.

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