

CAG Report Summary

Suburban Train Services in Indian Railways

- The Comptroller and Auditor General of India submitted a report on the suburban train services in Indian Railways, between 2010-11 and 2014-15, on July 26, 2016. Suburban trains are passenger trains that cover short distances of up to 150 km. These trains help in facilitating movement of passengers within cities and suburbs. Suburban train services are provided in seven zonal Railways and spread over 1,763 km., providing services to the cities of Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai, and Secunderabad. Key findings and recommendations of the audit report include:
 - **Suburban passenger traffic:** While suburban passengers comprised about 73% of the total passengers carried by seven zonal Railways between 2010-11 and 2014-15, their earnings constituted 14% of the total passenger earnings. In 2014-15, Eastern and Southern Railways, and Kolkata Metro Rail fell short of their traffic targets. Further, the number of passengers carried during 2014-15 was 1% less than the previous year.
 - **Accidents:** Between January 2010 and December 2014, the number of deaths registered was 33,445. Of these, (i) 19,868 (59%) were due to trespassing, (ii) 4,885 (15%) were due to falling from trains. About 53% of the deaths (17,638) occurred in the Mumbai suburban section. Further, about 82% of the deaths due to falling from trains (4,002) occurred in the Mumbai section. It was also observed that the medical facilities for accident victims at several of these stations were inadequate. To reduce accidental deaths, CAG recommended: (i) increasing the carrying capacity of trains, (ii) increasing the frequency of trains, and (iii) running trains on schedule. It also recommended Railways to ensure safety measures such as raising platform height, and fencing between tracks to prevent deaths.
 - **Speed restrictions:** Train speeds get restricted due to (i) weak condition of tracks, points and crossings, (ii) encroachment along tracks, and (iii) weak bridges. CAG also found that Indian Railways did not initiate effective measures to remove these speed restrictions. It recommended that capacity augmentation works
- such as: (i) withdrawal of speed restrictions, (ii) removal of encroachments, and (iii) replacement of over-aged rolling stock (wagons, locomotives) should be expedited.
- **Non-achievement of targets:** The audit reported that Railways has not been monitoring on-going projects related to track maintenance. This has led to deficiencies in track maintenance affecting the punctuality and safe operations of suburban services. As on March 2015, about 743 works were in progress in five zonal Railways (central, eastern, southern, western, and Kolkata metro). The audit observed that: (i) in 106 works, time overrun of projects ranged between one to 69 months, and (ii) in another 54 works cost over-runs were at Rs 56 crore. In addition, Railways could not achieve their target of eliminating level crossings. It recommended that Railways should expedite works related to elimination of level crossings.
- **Amenities at stations:** The audit reported a: (i) shortfall in booking counters, (ii) lack of toilets, and (iii) lack of foot-over bridges of the prescribed size, at suburban stations. It recommended that such passenger amenities should be prioritised in a time-bound manner. The audit also recommended expediting implementation of integrated security systems at all identified sensitive stations and providing other essential security measures such as preventing unauthorised entry at important stations. Integrated security systems include Close Circuit Televisions, Door Frame Metal Detectors.
- **Operational costs:** The audit found that none of the zonal railways reported a reduction in losses between 2010 and 2015. It recommended that the areas for minimising operational costs of suburban trains should be identified. Further, revenue can be generated by rationalising suburban fares. It also recommended establishing a separate organisational set-up for suburban train services to increase organisational efficiencies in the concerned zones.

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