

# Railway Convention Committee Report Summary

## Cleanliness and Hygiene in Coaches and Stations

- The Railways Convention Committee (Chair: Mr. Bhartruhari Mahtab) submitted its report on ‘Cleanliness and Hygiene in Coaches and Stations’ on December 31, 2018. Key observations and recommendations of the Committee include:
  - **Steps for the cleanliness of coaches and stations:** The Committee observed that Indian Railways has taken several steps for the cleanliness of coaches and stations. These include: (i) mechanised cleaning of coaches in more than 145 coaching depots, (ii) Clean My Coach scheme, (iii) rag picking contracts and garbage disposal contracts at more than 730 stations, (iv) Clean Train Station scheme at 40 stations, and (v) a pilot project for disposal of municipal solid waste being generated at major railway terminals. However, these cleaning facilities and schemes have been implemented at few select stations, and in broad gauge coaches with on-board housekeeping facility. The Committee recommended that these facilities and schemes should be extended to all stations and broad gauge coaches. It also suggested that more stations should be brought under the purview of Railways’ audit-cum-survey assessment, to foster competition among stations in maintenance of cleanliness.
  - **Cleanliness survey:** The Committee observed that as per the station cleanliness survey, the stations which are located on the south side of Vindhya are better maintained. This is despite the station cleaning contracts awarded being the same across Railways. The Committee recommended that the best management practices that are being followed by the railway officers and the station cleaning contractors, south of Vindhya, should be studied and codified, so that these can be emulated by other divisions.
  - **Cleanliness in train coaches:** The Committee observed that currently, cleaning of coaches during the run of the trains is carried out through the on-board housekeeping facilities in 30% of the mail/express trains. The Committee recommended that the facility of on-board housekeeping should be progressively extended to all mail/express trains within a time bound period of two to three years.
  - The Committee also noted that in order to ensure quality of services related to housekeeping, a standard bid document for housekeeping contracts has been developed by the Railways which would be followed for all future contracts. It suggested that to ensure proper servicing by the contractor, stringent qualifications should be prescribed for bidding for the housekeeping contracts. Further, Railways should conduct frequent inspections and surprise checks on all trains to ensure that the contractors are adhering to the specifications mentioned in the contracts.
  - **Fund utilisation:** The Committee noted that fund allocation is no longer a constraint for cleanliness and hygiene in the Railways. However, it observed that there is a gap between the revised estimates and actual expenditure with regard to fund utilisation. It recommended that such gaps in fund utilisation should be addressed. Further, with an increase in the number of mail/ express trains and footfall, the budgetary allocation to coach and station sanitation should be increased.
  - **Bio-toilets:** The Committee noted that so far 1,58,000 bio-toilets have been fitted in around 43,400 coaches. During 2018-19, about 32,000 bio-toilets have been fitted in around 8,600 coaches. The Committee noted that while bio-toilets are environment friendly, they face issues regarding drainage and sanitation. It recommended that Railways should ensure safe disposal of waste water collected in the waste retention tanks of the bio-toilets, at the designated locations/dump yards, without causing environment pollution. Further, Railways should also put in place a fool-proof mechanism for the effective use and management of bacteria meant to be used in bio-toilets.
  - **Other constraints and issues:** The Committee noted that Railways faces several constraints in the maintenance of cleanliness in coaches and stations. These include use of station facilities by unauthorised public, trespassing on railway track and railway land in approaches of major stations. The Committee suggested that the Zonal General Managers and Divisional Railway Managers must take up these issues at the state level with appropriate authority of respective state governments. Further, Railways must seek cooperation from the local governments to ensure maintenance of cleanliness, prevention of encroachment and trespassing in the station surroundings, and solid waste management.

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