

Research Paper

General Management



Infrastructure Creation And Utilisation In Railways

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ABSTRACT

Infrastructure means the entire facilities available to the society as a whole. Though India today is one of the fastest developing countries in the world, the infrastructure available is very limited in all aspects of our life. Infrastructure includes transportation facilities, road, rail, water, electricity and drainage sewerage toilet facilities. The economic development of a country can also be measured with the infrastructure facilities available in that country. In India both the central and state governments normally provide these infrastructure facilities. The situation prevailing at present throughout the country is far better than the condition at the time of independence. During last two decades the governments, in order to develop the infrastructures facilities have allocated large amount of funds. The governments try to provide all types of infrastructures like electricity, roads, and drainage, transport facilities in all possible places of the country. Infrastructure helps to increase the productivity of the country. Without infrastructure nowadays it is difficult to survive in this society because we are all brought up in such conditions. If there are no proper roads and transport facilities, development of business, industry and the nation are questionable. In urban areas people avail considerable infrastructure facilities. But in many rural and semi-urban areas the infrastructure facilities are limited. In many villages the people have to suffer a lot even for drainage, water and toilet facilities. Rail transport is considered as the main means to carry the goods and passengers quickly and in bulk. But in many parts of the country there is no railway facility. Even in urban areas where extension is going on there is no drainage facilities. Through this article the researchers wish to analyze the issues in providing the infrastructures, problems due to lack of infrastructure facilities, reason for the problems and suggest the remedial measures to solve the problems. By keeping this above in mind the researchers write an article on "INFRASTRUCTURE CREATION AND UTILISATION IN RAILWAYS".

Keywords :

INTRODUCTION

Infrastructure means the entire facilities available to the society as a whole. Though India today is one of the fastest developing countries in the world, the infrastructure available is very limited in all aspects of our life. Infrastructure includes transportation facilities, road, rail, water, electricity and drainage including sewerage facilities. The economic development of a country can also be measured with the infrastructure facilities available in that country. In India both the central and state governments normally provide these infrastructure facilities. The situation prevailing at present throughout the country is far better than the condition at the time of independence. During last two decades the governments, in order to develop the infrastructures facilities have allocated large amount of funds. The governments try to provide all types of infrastructures like electricity, roads, and drainage, transport facilities in all possible places of the country. Infrastructure helps to increase the productivity of the country. Without infrastructure nowadays it is difficult to survive in this society because we are all brought up in such conditions. If there are no proper roads and transport facilities, development of business, industry and the nation are questionable. In urban areas people avail considerable infrastructure facilities. But in many rural and semi-urban areas the infrastructure facilities are limited. In many villages the people have to suffer a lot even for drainage, water and toilet facilities. Rail transport is considered as the main means to carry the goods and passengers quickly and in bulk. But in many parts of the country there is no railway facility. Even in urban areas where extension is going on there is no drainage facilities.

RAILWAY TRANSPORT

The railway system in India with a 64,457 kilometers of route,

is the largest in Asia and second largest in the world. It is also the biggest public undertaking in the country. The railways run 14,000 trains a day, operate over 8,000 stations covering a distance of 12.5 lakh kilometers every day. More than 1.3 crore passengers i.e., more than the total population of Switzerland, board the trains and about 14,00,000 tonnes of freight is carried daily. The railways have a fleet of over 7,800 locomotives of which diesel 4,170 are diesel locomotives and 2120 electric engines and the rest steam engines, and Wagons 3,13,000 and passenger coaches 36,000. They employ nearly 20,00,000 persons. The total investment in the railway exceeds Rs.25,000 crores.

BENEFICIAL EFFECTS OF RAILWAYS

1. Railways have provided cheap means of transport for carrying raw materials and coal and helped mobility of labour, which helped the industrial development in India.
2. Railways have helped Indian agriculture. The cultivators of India have been linked with world markets. Cotton, Jute, Oil seeds and Food grains are extensively grown and hugely transported by using railways.
3. Railways have greatly helped in the expansion of trade in the country.
4. Socially they have completely broken the geographical and economic isolation in the country creating a sense of national unity, discarding time honoured caste and communal prejudices and narrow outlook.
5. The political and administrative advantages have resulted due to railway system in our country. Quick movement of

army, police, munitions and materials has helped in maintaining peace and security in the country.

FINANCE OF RAILWAYS

The financial conditions of the railways continuously and considerably improved in the post independence period. This improvement was brought about by the increase in the number of passengers and goods transported; increase in railway fares and freights and the increase in industrial tempo. The following table 1 gives particulars of total earnings and expenses and also other particulars since 1950 – 1951 for a few selected parameters.

TABLE 1
FINANCES OF INDIAN RAILWAYS (Rs. in Crores)

YEAR	TOTAL EARNINGS	TOTAL WORKING EXPENSES	NET EARNINGS	DIVIDEND TO GENERAL REVENUE	SURPLUS (+) DEFICIT (-)
1950-51	291	229	62	33	+ 29
1955-56	316	258	58	36	+ 22
1960-61	457	369	88	56	+ 32
1965-66	746	583	163	116	+ 47
1970-71	1,009	847	162	165	- 3
1974-75	1,401	1,340	61	189	- 128
1980-81	2,626	2,500	120	320	- 200
1996-97	24,625	21,000	3,625	1,507	+ 2,118
2003-04	43,490	39,960	3,530	2,930	+ 600

Source: Railway Budgets

THE STATE OF PASSENGERS

All criticize the position of passenger transport in railways at present. The facilities provided by the railways in railway stations are not up to the requirement. In many railway stations even the waiting halls for the passengers are not maintained well. There is no facility for knowing the arrival time and departure time of various trains in different routes. Normally this problem is not experienced in urban area stations. But in many rural areas there is no facility for knowing required information by the passengers. The passengers even in main junctions have to wait for long time to fetch the reservation tickets for their proposed journey. There are no adequate counters for ticket booking. Sometime there may be more than one counter for reservation but majority of the time that particular counter is closed by the administrator. The reason for the closure of one counter is very simple i.e. lack of adequate staff. But there may be some genuine cases. But in some stations the railway employees do not consider the queue for reservation.

TOILET FACILITIES

In many railway stations minimum toilet facilities are available for the public. This is not in accordance with the requirement. There is no proper maintenance of toilet in majority of the railway stations, which creates many diseases to the human beings. Further it will create environmental problems too.

CLEALINESS

Almost in all stations this is a serious problem faced by all the passengers in the case of railways. Though there is no immediate remedy for solving this problem, the administrators may take arrangements to clean such waste in the railway track in the junction and frequently which can be a great help to the passengers.

DORMITORY

Even in main junction there is no provision of dormitory and rest room for the passengers in the railway stations. For example, Tirupur is familiar for textile and hosiery items throughout the world. Approximately about Rs.5,600 crores turnover is effected every year through which large amount of revenue is raised both by Central and State Governments including railway department. Thousands of passengers come from various places in India regularly but there is no rest room and dormitory system in Tirupur railway station.

INADEQUATE TRAIN FACILITIES

As stated above nearly 30,000 trains are operated throughout India during holidays, still passengers have to suffer a lot for getting accommodation in trains on almost all routes. Though the Union Government allocates considerable fund to railway department, the number of trains available in different routes are inadequate. Frequency also is not sufficient in many routes. Though it is convenient to travel by train, due to limited frequency of train in weekly days, even for long route a passenger has to select other modes of transport.

METRE GAUGE

Coverage of metre gauge in railways are floated in many area throughout the country. Nowadays, railway authorities undertake conversion of metre gauge into broad gauge gradually but in many routes no step is taken to convert the metre gauge into broad gauge. Due to this reason in many routes the metre gauge train only is operated even though there is all possible ways to convert the metre gauge into broad gauge. Normally the public do not prefer metre gauge due to slow speed when compared with broad gauge train.

ACCIDENT

In olden days rail transport was considered as a safe means of transport when compared with other modes of transport. But nowadays frequently the public as well as the Government criticizes railway authorities. It is the fate of Indian railways to meet accidents frequently mainly in level crossings due to lack of gate keeper in level crossing as well as the carelessness of communication system operator.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVING FINANCE

The Ministry of Railways, Railway Board, had constituted an Expert Group on December 31, 1998 to study the railway sector in order to estimate the financing requirements of an expansion and upgrading programme for Indian Railways and to identify sources of funding of estimated investments over 15 years period. The Report of the study Group is under examination. The following are some of the key recommendations of the Expert Group.

1. The root cause of financial problem confronting the Indian Railways is found in lack of adequate productivity increases that are commensurate with real wages over time.
2. Indian Railways has to modernize and expand its capacity to serve the emerging needs of the growing economy.
3. Indian Railways has to adopt 'Strategic perspectives' to achieve high growth in both passenger and freight segments.
4. Along with this, every avenue of reduction in costs should be explored.
5. There should be appropriate tariff balancing between lower class and higher class passengers.
6. There should be an Indian Rail Regulatory Authority (IRRA)
7. Eventually, it should be corporatized into 'Indian Railways Corporation' (IRC).
8. Apart from the above if possible the railway authorities should try to provide one gate keeper in all level crossing to avoid accident which will help to safeguard the life of human beings.
9. More trains should be operated during holidays.
10. More number of toilets should be constructed and they should be maintained well to avoid sanitary problems.
11. If possible both the Government and railway authorities

should find a technology to avoid human wastage in the track itself.

12. Adequate booking counter for reservation should be established in all possible stations to save the time of passengers waiting in long queues.
13. The railway police should be increased, to curb the criminal practices and theft by militants and thieves.

CONCLUSION

Since the inception of railways, railway department has showed a deficit budget i.e., more expenses than the income. Every year railways faced losses. But due to the sincere efforts taken by the present union railway minister honourable Sri Lallu Prasad, the railway department has started getting a surplus. Further many new technology and systems have been introduced in the railways, which are beneficial to the society. The authorities in the railways have to create and provide more infrastructure facilities to increase the revenue of the railways and serve the public in a satisfactory manner.