



Role Of Railway Transport And Railways In India

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ABSTRACT

Railway Transport is also known as Train Transport. It is a type of transport on which vehicle runs on tracks (called rails or railroads). It carries people and goods in large number from one place to another in a fixed route. It is one of the most important transport commonly used and very economical mode of transport to carry huge number of men and material over a long as well as short distances. It is the most believable and dependable mode of transport in terms of safety. Railways are the track routes on which the train passes to reach the destination fixed.

Key Words: Railway Transport, Railways, Train, Track, Ministry, Board

Introduction

Railways transport heavily carries people and goods from one place to another place in the Country on a fixed route to reach the destination. It runs as per the time schedule to reach the pointed place. It is the cheapest and most beneficial pleasurable journey on a fixed route. Present railway tracks are built by using advanced technology which does not affect by natural calamities like floods and other incidents. They are strong and durable. Rails are manufactured by using sophisticated advanced technology to suit to the present needs of the people. It is most suited to carry heavy and bulky goods easily which is not possible by other modes of transport. Indian Railways are owned, managed and controlled by Ministry of Railways, Government of India.

Features of Railway Transport

1. It is the most dependable mode of transport.
2. It is least affected by weather conditions like rains, fog etc.
3. It is better explained by the Government Authorities with timely maintenance.
4. It is most suitable for bulky and heavy goods to be transported.
5. It is the high speed transport over a long distance.
6. It is cheaper transport than all other modes of transports.
7. It is most suitable, safe and secure transport.

8. It has larger capacity to carry men and materials easily.
9. It is operated by the Ministry of Railways in India.
10. It requires huge capital to be invested for both construction and maintenance.
11. It is purely a public utility service.

Benefits of Railway Transport

1. It is the most reliable and dependable means of transport.
2. The rail transport is better organised than any other forms of transport.
3. It has fixed routes and schedules to run.
4. Its speed over long distances is more than any other forms of transport, except airways.
5. It is economically quicker and best suited for carrying heavy and bulky goods over long distances.
6. It is economically a cheaper mode of transport as compared to other modes of transport.
7. Railways is the safest form of transport; there are less chances of accidents and breakdowns.
8. The carrying capacity of the railways is extremely larger in size.
9. It is the largest public undertaking in the Country; railways perform many public utility services.
10. Railways are run and maintained by the Ministry of Railways, Government of India.
11. Railways provide greater employment opportunities such as unskilled, semiskilled and skilled labour to the people of India.

Limitations of Railway Transport

1. The railways require large investment of capital; the cost of construction, maintenance and overhead expenses are very high as compared to other modes of transport.
2. It is not flexible because it runs on the routes fixed and as per the timings scheduled.
3. It cannot provide door to door delivery service as it is stick to a particular track.
4. It is not suitable for short distances and small loads.
5. It involves much time and labour in booking and taking delivery of goods through railways.
6. It cannot be operated economically in rural areas; thus large rural areas have no railway service.
7. Railway transport is owned, managed and controlled by Government of India.
8. Monopoly will develop by other modes of transport because large heavy loads are carried by railways without there-being work to the other transport.
9. Ownership is in the hands of Government.
10. It needs more area to build tracks and railway stations by which there is a reduction of agricultural and forest lands.

Types of Trains

The types of trains may be classified as-

1. **Rajadhani Express:** It is started from the year 1969. It is a luxury express passenger train which connects capital of the Country to the various State Capitals. It is a high speed train of 140 kmph with an average speed of 72 kilometres. Air conditioned first class (1A), air conditioned 2nd class (2A) and air conditioned third class (3A) facilities.
2. **Shatabdi Express:** It is started from the year 1988. It has a maximum speed of 155 kmph. It is the fastest luxury train with air condition and standard. It runs in the day time only. No sleeper carriages. Only ordinary chair carriages. Meals are provided.
3. **Jan Shatabdi Express:** It is started from the year 2003. It has a speed of 110 kmph. Air conditioned (CC), second class car without AC (2S). It is more economical version of Shatabdi Express. Both air conditioned and non-air conditioned. Food is provided with extra charges.
4. **Garib Rath Express:** It is started from the year 2005. It has a speed of 130 kmph. Air conditioned (3A) and CC. It is cheaper than other air conditioned trains. Perfect choice. It has chair carriages and third class sleeper carriages. No free food is provided.
5. **Duronto Express:** It is started from the year 2009. It has a speed of 145 kmph with an average speed of 60 to 70 kmph. It is a long distance non-stop train connecting cities like New Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai and Howrah. It is comfortable and convenient. Meals are included in the ticket itself.
6. **Monorail:** It is started from the year 2014. It has a speed of 180 kmph. Latest train running on a single track operated in Mumbai. The purpose of this train is to reduce congestion in the cities by facilitating faster travel to reach.
7. **Gatimaan Express:** It is started from the year 2016. It is a fastest train having a high speed of 160 kmph. Executive class (EC). Medium speed running between New Delhi and Agra touching Tajmahal.
8. **Tejas Express:** It is started from the year 2017. It is a high speed train having 180 kmph with an average speed of 130 kmph. It is fully air conditioned fastest train, automatic doors, LED screens on the seat-backs and other facilities. It has regular and executive carriages. Meals are provided free of charge, including coffee-tea, snacks etc. It runs only between Mumbai and Goa taking around 11 hours to reach.
9. **Double-Decker Express:** They are air conditioned and non-air conditioned fastest trains.
10. **Local Trains:** These are slow passenger trains running for a short distance which stops at almost all the stops. Non-air conditioned. No doors. Passengers can easily get on and off. They run daily.
11. **Suburban Railways:** They are called local trains connected commercial Districts with suburbs in large cities. Currently run in Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai, Pune, Kanpur, Lucknow, Hyderabad, Karwar, Coimbatore and Ahmedabad. They are more crowded and noisy. Tickets can be bought even a few minutes before departure. Seats are not reserved.

12. **Metro:** Now-a-days it is the most important and popular railway transport to reduce congestion in the cities in India, wherein lines are drawn along the roadways. These trains run in New Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, Kolkata, Bengaluru and Lucknow. It is more beneficial in thickly populated cities.
13. **Luxury trains:** These are meant for tourist spots and historical sight-seeing. It is a happy experience. There are eight luxury trains. They are Palace on Wheels, Mahaparinirvan, Royal Orient, Fairy Queen, Deccan Odyssey, Golden Chariot, Maharaja Express, and Royal Rajasthan.
14. **Toy Trains:** They are also called as mountain railways date back to the British colonial period. They run in mountains, on high bridges and long tunnels. Three famous trains are Nilgiri Mountain, Darjeeling Himalayan and Kalka-Shimla.

15. **Vande Bharath Express:** It is the recently introduced fastest train which covers a speed of 180 kmph. It is started from 15th February 2019. The first Vande Bharath between New Delhi and Varanasi was introduced and it was flagged by Prime Minister Sri Narendra Modi. At present 130 Vande Bharath trains runs across India. Sudhanshu Mani is the fastest train among Vande Bharath trains.

Types of Railway Lines

These are the types of railway lines -

1. **Broad Gauge:** This is a broader gauge which is the most common used type of line in India. The distance of the track is around 5 feet 6 inches. 1676 mm between two track. It is suitable for variety of terrains. By this gauge there are less chances of breakdowns and failures.
2. **Meter Gauge:** It is less expensive when compared to broad gauge. The distance of the track is 3 feet to 3 3/8 inches.
3. **Narrow Gauge:** This type of line is most suitable for hilly areas. The track distance is around 2 feet 6 inches to 2 feet.
4. **Standard Gauge:** This type of line is used for urban rails like Metro, Monorail trains. The distance between the track is around 4 feet 8.5 inches.

The distance between the two tracks on railway route is known as the railway gauge. The cost of a railway track is directly proportionate to the width of its gauge.

Why the Railway Transport is Important?

Train Transport is important for the following reasons-

1. It is the most efficient and clean transport for the movement of people and goods from one place to another for a longer distance.
2. One freight train can have the capacity of 52 trucks and reduces the emission.
3. It is most important for national integrity and sovereignty.
4. It is economically a cheaper mode of transport.
5. It is important for business connection between many States in the Country.

6. As it is a straight fixed route, it reduces the time limit to reach directly instead of cut journey by roads.
7. Indian Railway transport is playing a prominent role for the development of the Country by generating good revenue to the Government.
8. It is a free and frank, friendly, most believable transport.
9. It is important for safe movement of goods and men without exposing to heavy rains.
10. It is important for equal distribution of natural resources between the States.
11. It is least affected by weather conditions of all seasons.
12. It is important for saving money of economical weaker sections of the Society.
13. It is important for avoiding language barrier between the States and to understand with each other.
14. There are so many electronic devices installed to track and monitor all the trains to avoid accidents.

What are the measures needs to be taken still more to improve Railway Transport?

1. Improving safety is more important; monitoring and maintenance of railway tracks correctly, servicing of all the engines, breaking systems with a thorough mechanism is more important by some technically qualified personnel.
2. A thorough alert is very important at all the railway crossings, railway bridges and underpass ways have to be maintained properly.
3. Some more advanced technology needs to be adopted in manufacturing of railway engines and other spares and they must be qualitative.
4. A well-qualified skilful technical staff needs to be appointed to supervise and take immediate action to rectify the mistake.
5. Upgrading the existing lines, construction of new railway lines based on the requirement and extension is important.
6. Steps have to be taken for 100% electrification of all the railway lines so that pollution can be avoided.
7. Using fuel like petrol and diesel has to be minimised as much as possible.
8. Bandwidth of internet i.e., server capacity has to be enhanced so that ticket booking will be fast and easy.
9. Software has to be developed in such a way that there is no ambiguity in ticket booking, cancellation and monitoring the running trains.
10. Railways stations based on the number of passengers have to be upgraded and all the facilities while boarding in and boarding out have to be provided.
11. All the vacancies have to be filled as and when they are vacant and the employees have to be given reasonable salaries to lead their life peacefully and to concentrate on the work.

12. For a longer journey, food facilities, pure drinking water, coffee-tea, snacks, medical facilities, bio-toilets etc. have to be provided to the passengers at an economical rates including in the ticket itself.
13. Based on the increase in the number of passengers extra bogeys have to be added.
14. Pilots/drivers appointed must be trained properly to avoid accidents and to use tricks to save the life of the people who attempted to commit suicide on the railway tracks when the train passes.
15. It is better to convert all the lines from meter gauge to broad gauge.
16. Timely maintenance of tracks and railway bridges is very important.
17. A separate Railway Budget has to be present every year by the Railway Ministry.

The Authority to manage Railways in India

Railway Transport system in India is owned, managed and controlled by Ministry of Railways, Government of India. It has a separate Ministers One Cabinet Rank and two State Ministers to look after and supervise all the works done by the Railway Managers, Sub-ordinate Officers and other semi-skilled and skilled workers. Railway transport is divided into 68 Divisions mainly Northern Railways, Southern Railways, Eastern Railways, Western Railways etc. each being headed by Divisional Railway Manager responsible for operation and maintenance of each division with other subordinate officers for smooth running. Under the Ministry, there is a Board called Railway Board which is an administrative body headed by Chairperson and Chief Executive Officer to control the administration and report to the Ministry of Railways.

Appointing Authority

The Ministry of Labour appoints railway labourers, supervisors of labourers and fix their educational qualification and other requirements to be fulfilled for the post. Railway Board appoints Managers, technical and other officers and employees fixing their educational qualification and other requirements for the type of post. All the vacancies either on permanent basis or just on temporary filled by the Ministry of Labour and Railway Board. Appointments are made by conducting different skill tests which are both objective and descriptive type and finally with viva. A right person is selected after a rigours tests. After appointment, all of them will be given a proper training by expert trainers in the related field and placement will be given.

There are expert Railway Engineers (Civil, Mechanical, Electrical, Electronic etc.) appointed to look after and solve all the technical issues as fast as possible for the smooth running of the trains.

There is also a separate Railway Police to monitor different situations, to receive complaints and to solve the problems as quickly as possible. Police squad monitors all the trains 24x7 hours and the victims will be punished as the per rules of the Railway Act.

Conclusion

Indian Railway Transport is the most essential transport for carrying large number of people and bulky goods from one place to another place over a long distance. It is the most economical and safest mode of transport than other modes of transports. Indian Railways are working towards socio-economic development of the Nation. It is one which plays a major role in generation of major revenue to the Government of India. It is the most believable and dependable transport irrespective of the weather conditions prevailing in the Country season-wise. An advanced technology adopted is helpful for the successful running of the Indian Railway Transport. The only transport which satisfies the needs of different class of people to travel to the place they like and get the goods they are in need on time.

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