

## Chapter VI Conclusion and Recommendations

### 6.1 Conclusion

Indian Railways (IR) is the third largest network in the world transporting about 40 *per cent* of the freight traffic in the country. IR, however, experienced continuous and precipitous erosion in the share of railway freight traffic. The market share of IR in freight sector has declined substantially though the freight traffic of IR witnessed encouraging growth during the last two decades.

The market share of IR in freight sector has declined substantially from 53 to 35 *per cent* during the last two decades. The operation of goods train depends largely on

- Availability of locos, wagons, crews and appropriate paths for movement of goods trains
- Timely repair and maintenance and optimum utilization of the rolling stock to achieve the better turn-round time

Procurement of locos and wagons did not commensurate with the assessment of requirement of wagons and locomotives. This indicates that the requirement assessed was overstated. Railway sector PSUs and Railway's own production unit could not supply the ordered quantity in full. Similarly, 2639 locomotives were acquired during this period against the projected requirement of 5568 numbers. This Imbalance in availability of rolling stock vis-à-vis the requirements warranted assessment of requirement on realistic basis and improved management. Further, delays in supply and induction of the allotted wagons in the Railway system led to loss of opportunity for IR to enhance its earning capacity.

Deterioration in the various efficiency parameters was hindrance in smooth and efficient freight train operations. More than 50 per cent of the trains run were observed at below 20 kmph. Percentage of empty wagon kms to total wagon kms ranged between 33 to 47 per cent during the period under review. Wagons suffered detentions at loading /unloading points as well at terminal yards and the stations enroute. The average detention was more than 24 hours in several cases. Further, wagon suffered detentions exceeding 15 hours at various terminal yards. Loading/unloading points at sidings and goods sheds were found deficient in required basic infrastructure which led to detention to the wagon stock during loading/unloading operations. In six zones goods trains started late mainly due to want of locos.

Wagons found unfit for operational activities during the examination of wagons in the sick line attached to the terminal yards were detained for abnormally longer periods. Further, 5481 wagons were found unfit within 90 days of POH which is a clear indication of the improper maintenance depriving the Railways of potential earnings.

Delays were observed in repairs in sick lines in 86 per cent of the wagons sent to sick lines after being declared unfit for operational activities. No permissible norms of detention for all activities at terminal yards/sick lines existed either at Railway Board or Zonal Railway level. Wagons given repairs in sick lines suffered detentions in yard before being put to traffic use resulting in underutilization of wagons. Non availability of the infrastructure facility as well as required machinery and plant at all examination points in terminal yards and in POH workshops adversely affected the timely maintenance of wagons causing detention to wagons.

As many as eight Zonal Railways could not achieve the target set for conducting POH of wagons. Several wagons not-due for POH were erroneously received in the workshops for POH during 2008-13. Of these many wagons were turned out by the workshop authorities with delays ranging between three months to one year.

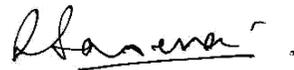
The review of the arrangements for sending the wagons for periodical overhauling, time taken by workshops in overhauling and removal of wagons turned out after overhauling revealed that wagons suffered detention at all these stages. Cases of wagons remaining overdue for POH is indicative of improper and ineffective monitoring of maintenance activities and posing safety risks while these wagons run beyond the schedule date of POH.

Examination of the position at selected examination points and workshops revealed that rejected wagons were passed locally without being certified as fit by NCO and put in to service. This was irregular and in contravention of rules and a compromise with the safe running of freight trains.

A sizeable number of wagons were found unloadable during examination and Railway administration could not keep these wagons fit for freight services. The incidence of wagons becoming unloadable is avoidable to a large extent provided a proper monitoring is there at loading/unloading points and punitive action is taken against the private siding owners responsible for the wagons become unloadable due to improper handling during loading/unloading operations

## 6.2 Recommendations

- IR needs to ensure that acquisition of wagons/locomotives is commensurate with the requirement assessed. Production of the wagons by the firms should be monitored on monthly basis and suitable action should be taken for non-adherence of production targets.
- IR also needs to address, on priority, the shortfall in the availability of basic infrastructure facilities at the goods sheds/sidings which will certainly help in keeping check on the un-necessary detention to wagons.
- IR should consider fixing norms for detention to wagons at each of the activity centre so that the rolling stock can be effectively utilized. IR should also consider devising mechanism for improving the efficiency parameters.
- IR needs to expeditiously provide all infrastructure facility as well as required machinery and plant at all examination points in terminal yards and in POH workshops and fix a reasonable time frame for repairs to wagon in sick line as well for POH of wagon in the workshop in order to minimise detentions of rolling stock at examination points as well as in workshops during POH.
- A suitable monitoring mechanism need to be devised to ensure that wagons not due for POH are not erroneously sent to workshop. IR needs to institute an effective deterrence on defaulting parties so that the incidences of wagons becoming unloadable due to mishandling of wagons by the parties during loading/unloading operations are avoided.
- IR needs to strengthen its monitoring mechanism during loading/unloading and maintenance operations so that the wagons are not detained un-necessarily for longer periods affecting the availability of wagons.



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