Rail Safety - II

Click here to read "Rail Safety" article.

\n\n

What the CRS report says?

\n\n

\n
- The preliminary finding of the **Commission of Railway Safety** (CRS) that the derailment of the Indore-Rajendranagar Express near Kanpur that killed over 140 people was primarily caused by carriage and wagon defects should serve as a reality check for the Railway Ministry.
\n
- While sabotage is indeed a factor in some derailments, **bad railway performance** is responsible for the majority.
\n
- The CRS report has specifically identified a variation in the wheel gauges of two coaches, and found carriages being run beyond their useful life.
\n
- This is not a rare instance where inquiries have found the Railways seriously deficient.
\n
- In fact, the annual report of the CRS Lucknow for 2012-13 cites **failure of railway equipment, derelict staff, rail fractures and, on some occasions, non-railway factors to be responsible for fatal accidents.**
\n
- The collision of the Hubli-Bengaluru City Hampi Express with a goods train that left 25 people dead, for instance, was caused by failure of staff.
\n

\n\n

What does Kakodkar committe says?

\n\n

\n
- The Kakodkar committee on railway safety found that out of 441 derailments it analysed, only about 15% were the result of sabotage, while the **majority were caused by factors completely under the control of the railway**

administration.
\n

\n\n

What measures are to be taken to promote safety?

\n\n

\n
- India’s Railways serves the vital function of providing travel access to millions and have the responsibility of making it equitable and comfortable. It must also be safe.
\n
- The Railway Ministry is pursuing a major safety initiative, the **Rashtriya Rail Sanraksha Kosh**, with a non-lapsable corpus of Rs.1,19,183 crore.
\n
- The Finance Ministry says the Fund should rely mainly on internal resources, but there is a strong case for higher gross budgetary support to raise safety in a government-run transport network that has a universal service obligation.
\n
- Replacing ageing and unsafe carriages with modern Linke Hofmann Busch coaches is the recommendation of Kakodkar panel, but supply has not kept pace with requirement.
\n

\n\n

Way ahead:

\n\n

\n
- The dedicated safety funds to rail track renewal and safety should be governed by a transparent framework with **public reporting requirements.**
\n
- Travel demand has continued to leap as economic growth both needs and encourages greater mobility.
\n
- Raising the performance of the Indian Railways needs a clear vision for both service and financing, with **zero tolerance for accidents.**
\n
- Along with technologies such as ultrasonic flaw detection to keep tracks safe, the Railways must look at ways to carry more passengers safely.
\n

\n\n

\n\n

Category: Prelims and Mains | GS – III | Infrastructure

\n\n

Source: The Hindu

\n