

ALL INDIA LOCO RUNNING STAFF ASSOCIATION

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DRAFT RESOLUTION BEFORE SEMINAR ON WORK- REST IMBALANCE OF LOCO RUNNING STAFF & RAILWAY SAFETY

A series of accidents took place in Indian Railways in the recent past. One of which occurred at Bahanaga Bazar was the severest killing 292 innocent people and involving three trains. Had the collision of Coromandel Express occurred few seconds earlier, the people travelled in the entire bogies of Hamsafar express too have become victims. The other accidents too were equally hazardous, but were fortunate enough that those were good trains.

It is true Railways had made commendable advancement in increasing the maximum permissible speed, length and trailing load. Almost all routes are oversaturated in traffic and no time could be spared for maintenance. At the same time the work force had almost become half while number of trains, number of passengers and goods transshipped have increased many fold. The CAG report too indicate that the fund allocation for renewal of assets are being reduced and whatever allocated could not be spent. CRS enquiries into Bahanaga bazar accident, Singhpur accident, etc. point out systemic failure while departmental enquiries into Sulthanpur



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accident, Ondagram accident and many others conclude the failure of a single employee leading to mishaps. The above situation in railways, is the result of the policies adopted for the past many decades of reduction of staff, matching surrender, contractarisation and ultimately converting the railway industry from a service institution to a commercial entity guided by the principle of profit alone.

So, this seminar conclude that, these accidents indicate the urgent need of a thorough review of the standard of safety in the changed circumstances and hence demand appointment of a judicial commission to review the safety standards and procedures in Railways to regain the pride as the safest mode of transport.

It is true that the best safety equipment is a vigilant man/woman. It is equally true that none will willfully cause an accident. The way Railways dismissed the Loco Pilot and Asst. Loco Pilot involved in Ondagram accident without giving them a chance to explain their part, clearly prove that no improvement is possible with the so called stringent punishments. CRS himself had once recorded in his report that “why things go wrong with normal people doing normal job under a normal situation needs to be deeply pondered”

This seminar finds that, the work – rest imbalance persisting in running cadre is the most important reason for things to go wrong. Every technological advancement such as increase in speed, length, load & brake power of trains, modification of signal, conversion of single line to double or multiple lines, introduction of modern locomotives along with the old fleet of locomotives, coaches and wagons etc. has its effect on increasing the stress level of Loco Pilots. Inadequate sanction of posts and non filling up of vacancies leads to over



work, denial of social life. Robotic treatment and inhuman penalties multiply the work related stress. The promise given by Govt of India on 20th February 2006 for a “judicial review on Hours of employment Rules” is not yet honoured. Even the intervention of Labour Ministry is prevented with hook and crook. The recommendations of the departmental committees too are being discarded. An independent and impartial review of the duty hours, daily rest, weekly rest, limit for continuous night duty and stay away from home are most inevitable.

The seminar is of the opinion that the recommendations of the High power committee given below, should be implemented immediately.

Maximum duty hours should be limited to 10 hours from sign On to OFF.

Weekly rest should given independent of daily rest.

Consecutive night duties should be limited to two.

Maximum Stay away from home should be limited to 48 hours.

This seminar appeal the entire Railway employees, travelling public and the people of India to strive hard to regain the fame of Indian Railways- the safe, fast, cheap and profitable mode of transport for ordinary people. The participants of this seminar pledge to unify all sections of people to achieve the goal.

Comradely yours,



Chennai,
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K. C. James
Secretary General



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