

passenger locomotives with General Motors Technology was also placed on them in January 1999 at a cost of US\$ 23.99 million. These locomotives are expected to arrive during 2001-2002.

(e) The likely expenditure on purchase of these locomotives and coaches during next two years is as under:

2000-2001: Rs. 164 crore (for procurement of coaches)

2001-2002 Rs. 198 crore (for procurement of locos)

Punctuality of Trains

*295. SHRI JIBON ROY: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the comment reported in the Hindustan Times dated 25th June, 2000, that "intellectual capacity aur aukaad dekhni chahiye ab Railway Ministry ko hi le lijiye, trains kabhi time per nahi aati"; and

(b) how the Ministry propose to tackle the problem of late running of trains, which has become a perpetual problem?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The punctuality performance of Mail/Express trains has been improved from 82.3% on Broad Gauge and 96.0% on the Metre Gauge in 1998-99 to 82.6% on Broad Gauge & 97.9% on the Metre Gauge in 1999-2000.

The reasons for late running of trains include factors which are beyond the control of railways such as miscreant activities, agitations, Law and Order problems, in the context of the Railways becoming soft targets for terrorist attack, bad weather, e.g. fog, breaches, etc., alarm chain pulling, accidents, cattle run over, Electricity grid failure and saturated trunk routes. Punctuality of trains also gets adversely affected due to proliferation of number of stoppages provided to long distance trains.

The following steps are being taken to improve the punctuality performance of trains:

1. Intensive, round the clock monitoring of trains at all the

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three levels viz. Divisional, Zonal Head Quarters and Railways Board.

2. Punctuality drives are being conducted by nominating officials to monitor trains.

3. Running of trains at maximum permissible speed subject to observance of safety limits and speed restrictions.

4. Improvement in Time tabling to provide a clear path.

5. Improvement in standard of maintenance to reduce equipment failures.

6. Counseling and motivating staff to ensure punctual running.

7. Liaison with State Government to tackle the Law and Order problems and miscreant activities.

Lesser Degree Colleges for Girls

†*296. SHRIMATI SAROJ DUBEY: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the number of colleges / degree colleges for women in rural areas is very low, as a result of which a large number of girls drop out;

(b) if so, whether Government are going to take any steps, keeping in view the education of girls;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI): (a) to (d) No, Sir. According to the information furnished by UGC, the enrolment of women in higher educational institutions has been increasing over the last few years. The percentage of women's enrolment in universities and colleges was 35% in 1998-99. The number of women's college's which was 851 in 1989-90, increased to 1359 in 1998-99.

†Original notice of the Question was received in Hindi.