

## Railways

33. At present, the Indian Railways have a network of 62,725 km. comprising Broad Gauge (41,971 km.), Metre Gauge (17,044 km.) and Narrow Gauge (3,710 km.). Electrified networks of 13,517 km. length account for 21.5 per cent of the total route kilometer. Gauge conversion of 1,364 km. was completed during 1996-97.

34. During 1996-97, revenue earning freight traffic moved by Railways was a little over 409 million tonnes, registering an increase of 4.7 per cent over 1995-96. While there was a growth in traffic for coal, foodgrains, cement, iron ore for exports and 'other goods', there was a decline in carriage of fertilisers, pig iron and finished steel from steel plants, petroleum and its products and raw materials for steel plants (excluding coal). During April-February 1997-98, the total revenue earning freight traffic was 387.4 million tonnes vis-a-vis

367.6 million tonnes in April-February 1996-97, registering an increase of 5.4 per cent (Table 9.6). The slowdown in industrial production and economic activity in general has to some extent, affected freight demand for the railways.

35. The Railways at present have around 16 lakh employees. Several measures have been initiated for enhancing manpower productivity which include focussed attention on qualitative aspects of training and changes in work practice through use of better technology. These initiatives have, inter alia, resulted in improved manpower productivity which is reflected in higher traffic units being moved per employee over the years. The Railways have been discharging a unique and difficult role as both a commercial undertaking and public utility service. The latter implies a measure of cross-subsidisation of passenger traffic by freight revenues as well as operating certain uneconomic services, like those in certain suburban sectors and branch lines, in order to

**TABLE 9.6**  
**Performance of the Railways**

	1995-96	1996-97*	April-February*		Change over previous year	
			1996-97	1997-98	1996-97	1997-98@
					<i>(per cent)</i>	
Total revenue earning freight traffic (million tonnes)	390.7	409.0	367.6	387.4	4.7	5.4
(i) Coal	184.4	198.2	178.3	188.4	7.5	5.7
(ii) Raw Materials for steel plants (excl.coal)	38.9	38.6	35.0	34.6	-1.0	-1.0
(iii) Pig iron & finished steel from steel plants	12.1	11.8	10.7	10.5	-2.0	-1.9
(iv) Iron ore for export	10.2	10.3	9.3	10.9	1.7	17.2
(v) Cement	32.1	34.1	30.9	32.4	6.2	4.9
(vi) Foodgrains	24.9	29.8	27.3	24.1	19.7	-11.7
(vii) Fertilizers	23.7	21.2	18.7	24.3	-10.6	29.9
(viii) P.O.L	28.9	28.5	25.9	27.8	-1.3	7.3
(ix) Balance (other goods)	35.5	36.5	31.5	34.4	2.9	9.2
2 Net tonne kilometers (billion)	270.5	277.6	252.1	256.7	2.6	1.8
3 Net tonne kilometers per wagon per day (broad gauge)	1792.0	1840.0	1806.0	1832.0	2.7	1.4
4 Passenger traffic originating (million)	4018.0	4153.0	3113#	3276#	3.4	5.2#
5 Passenger kilometers (billion)	342.0	357.0	260.6#	277.0#	4.4	6.3#

\* Provisional.

@ April-February

# April-December.

provide cheap and affordable transport for the public good. Overall resource stringency has led to a decline in capital from the General Exchequer to the Railways from 42 per cent of the outlay in the Seventh Plan to 23 per cent during the Eighth Plan. These have tended to restrict the Railways' ability to expand the system and augment the capacity, inducing the Railways to reprioritise some of their ongoing schemes.

36. Over the years, the Railways have increased their reliance on extra-budgetary resources. The pressure on resources has, however, increased due to higher expenditure on account of implementation of the Fifth Pay Commission's recommendations, growing lease rentals, etc. Besides market borrowings, private sector participation through schemes like Build-Own-Lease-Transfer (BOLT) and Own-Your-Wagon-Scheme (OYWS) is also being encouraged.