

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS**

**LOK SABHA
STARRED QUESTION NO.18
TO BE ANSWERED ON 02.02.2022**

SABARI RAIL PROJECT

***18. ADV. A. M. ARIFF:**

ADV. DEAN KURIAKOSE:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

- (a) the present status of the Sabari rail project along with the year of approval, funds sanctioned/utilized and works completed;**
- (b) whether the Union Government has received assurance from the State Government of Kerala regarding cost sharing for the Sabari rail project;**
- (c) if so, whether the Union Government will consider reviving the Sabari rail project on a cost sharing basis; and**
- (d) the details of elaborate action taken/proposed to be taken thereon and the expected time frame to complete the project?**

ANSWER

**MINISTER OF RAILWAYS, COMMUNICATIONS AND
ELECTRONICS & INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

(SHRI ASHWINI VAISHNAW)

(a) to (d): A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) TO (d) OF STARRED QUESTION NO. 18 BY ADV. A. M. ARIFF AND ADV. DEAN KURIAKOSE TO BE ANSWERED IN LOK SABHA ON 02.02.2022 REGARDING SABARI RAIL PROJECT

(a) to (d): Angamali-Sabarimala new rail line was sanctioned in 1997-98 at a cost of ₹550 crore. Total length of the project is 116 Km. Anticipated cost of the project at 2017-18 rates is ₹2815 crore.

5 km section of this project was passing through Periyar Tiger Reserve Forest. On the request of State Government, the project was terminated at Erumeli due to reserve forest area. Alignment of the project passes through three Districts i.e. Ernakulam, Idukki and Kottayam districts. Final location survey (FLS) for Angamali-Kaladi-Ramapuram section (70 Km) was completed in 2002 and further survey in the Kottayam district was stopped by local people in 2007 due to objections on alignment. The final project report can be prepared only after Final Location Survey is completed.

Consequently, in this project, work on Angamali-Kaladi (7 Km) and long lead works on Kaladi-Perumbavoor (10 Km) have been taken up. However, further works on this project could not be taken forward due to protests by local people against land acquisition and fixing of alignment of the line, court cases filed against the project and inadequate response from the State Government of Kerala.

This has delayed the execution of the above project and as a result, project cost has increased from ₹550 crore in 1997 to ₹1566 crore (including land cost of ₹719 crore) in 2011 and further to ₹2,815 crore (including land cost of ₹965 crore) in 2017. As taking forward of this project showing 512% increase in project cost solely with Railway Funds was not possible, Railway had requested Government of Kerala vide letters dated 06.09.2011, 22.12.2011, and 08.10.2012 to share at least 50% cost of the project.

Government of Kerala vide their letter dated 27.11.2015 agreed to share 50% cost of the project. Government of Kerala had also identified this project for execution under Joint Venture Scheme with Ministry of Railways and therefore, an MoU was also signed on 01.09.2016. Unfortunately, within a year, the State Government vide letter dated 15.11.2016 withdrew their own consent to share 50% cost of the project.

However, given the public demand, Railways again conducted detailed deliberations on the feasibility of taking forward this project vis-à-vis the availability of funds. Due to significant deficit, it was again decided by Railways in December, 2017 that the project should be undertaken on cost sharing basis.

Government of Kerala was again requested vide letters dated 06.02.2018 and 01.03.2018 for their consent to share at least 50% cost of the project for the benefit of the State. There has been no positive response to this offer. As the State Government has withdrawn its own previously sanctioned consent to share 50% cost of the project and is not cooperating in resolving the various obstructions, Railways has decided to freeze further expenditure on this project temporarily, and keep execution of works in abeyance, in September, 2019.

Ministry of Railways vide letter dated 11.01.2020 advised Government of Kerala that it is not feasible for Railways to take the project forward solely with Railway funds, and State Government of Kerala was again requested to share the cost of development of Railway network in the State. This will help Railways to provide the much required rail link for the travelling needs of local people and pilgrims to the Holy Shrine.

After long persuasion, recently Government of Kerala vide letter dated 07.01.2021 has conveyed their decision to share 50% of the total project cost (₹2815 crore) of Angamali - Sabarimala Railway project through Kerala Infrastructure Investment Fund Board (KIIFB), subject to the condition that operation and maintenance of the track shall be done by Ministry of Railways while the stations along the route will be developed by a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) (through public private partnership route) and the net revenue realized by the SPV will be shared on a 50:50 basis between State Government and Ministry of Railways, after offsetting the cost of Operation & Maintenance (O&M) as agreed to by Railways. M/S KRDCCL has been advised to complete Final Location Survey and to update the project cost.

KRDCCL had updated estimate for 69.63 km length of project only and Lidar Survey for balance length is yet to be done, it is worth mention here that earlier Railway also couldn't take up final location survey (FLS) in the area due to stiff public resistance and no support from Government of Kerala for resolving Law and order issues. Zonal Railway has been advised to get the estimate revised for the balance project length and M/S KRDCCL has to submit updated estimate of the complete project. Final decision on project will be taken only after receipt of updated estimate for the complete project.
