



Date: 24.07.2023

**DEPARTMENT-RELATED PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON  
TRANSPORT, TOURISM AND CULTURE**

**PRESS RELEASE**

The Department-related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Transport, Tourism and Culture headed by Shri V. Vijayasai Reddy, M.P., Rajya Sabha, presented/ laid its following Reports, in both the Houses of Parliament **today i.e., the 24<sup>th</sup> July, 2023:-**

- (i) Three Hundred Forty Eighth Report on the subject 'Heritage Theft – The Illegal Trade in Indian Antiquities and the Challenges of Retrieving and Safeguarding Our Tangible Cultural Heritage';
  - (ii) Three Hundred Forty Ninth Report on the Action Taken by the Government on the recommendations/ observations of the Committee contained in its Three Hundred Twenty Seventh Report on the subject 'Connectivity and Tourist Terminal Facilities at Ports';
  - (iii) Three Hundred Fiftieth Report on the subject 'Development of Greenfield and Brownfield Airports and Issues pertaining to Civil Enclave in Defence Airports'; and
  - (iv) Three Hundred Fifty First Report on the subject 'Functioning of National Akademis and other Cultural Institutions'.
2. The 348<sup>th</sup> Report was adopted by the Committee on 8<sup>th</sup> May, 2023 and 349<sup>th</sup>, 350<sup>th</sup> & 351<sup>st</sup> Reports were adopted by the Committee on 19<sup>th</sup> July, 2023. The Recommendations/ Observations made by the Committee in these Reports are enclosed.

*The full Reports are available on the website of Rajya Sabha <http://rajyasabha.nic.in> →Committees→Department related RS→Committee on Transport, Tourism and Culture→Reports*

**Three Hundred Forty Eighth Report on the subject ‘Heritage Theft – The Illegal Trade in Indian Antiquities and the Challenges of Retrieving and Safeguarding Our Tangible Cultural Heritage’**

**RECOMMENDATIONS/OBSERVATIONS – AT A GLANCE**

**Documentation of Tangible Cultural Heritage**

**National Mission on Monuments and Antiquities**

The Committee notes that in the 15 years since its inception, only about 16.8 lakh antiquities out of a total estimated 58 lakh antiquities *i.e.* about 30% have been documented as on date. Further, the Committee was informed by DG, ASI in the deposition that the figure of 58 lakh antiquities is only an estimate and there may well be many more antiquities existing in India. If so, it makes the slow pace of documentation under NMMA all the more alarming.

(Para 9)

The Committee would like to know the reasons behind the concerning observations made by CAG even after nine years having passed since the publication of its original Report in 2013. The Committee feels that documentation and maintenance of database of the country’s antiquities is urgently needed and recommends that all out efforts should be made to complete the documentation process on a mission mode.

(Para 12)

The Committee has been informed by the ASI that documentation in the 55 Site Museums of ASI all over the country has been initiated and is likely to be completed by the end of 2023. The Committee feels that the documentation in ‘ASI owned sites’ should have been accomplished much before. The Committee has learned from media reports that ASI Sites such as Chandraketurgarh in West Bengal are sources of numerous artefacts which are sold worldwide in illegal antiquities markets while such sites itself lie abandoned. The Committee finds it perplexing that with all the emphasis on documentation as one of the major preventive measures against theft of antiquities, the ASI has not documented the antiquities in its own Site Museums. The Committee notes that the Ministry of Culture has been in existence since 1961 and the ASI predates the Ministry by a century. The Committee also notes the observation of the Public Accounts Committee in its report regarding the huge amount of public money spent over the years on preservation and conservation. Despite the antiquity of these two organisations, the years of efforts made towards conservation of our heritage, and the funds allocated, the documentation work which is the preliminary step in conservation has not shown satisfactory progress.

(Para 13)

The Committee recommends that the ASI may ensure that the documentation process for all its Site Museums may be completed by the target timeline *i.e.*, by end of 2023. The Committee may be updated on the progress and also upon the completion of documentation. The Committee also urges the Ministry/ASI to expedite the documentation work on priority basis in its National Musuems and other Centrally Protected sites.

(Para 14)

**The Central Antiquity Collection (CAC)**

The Committee feels that an important repository of antiquities like the CAC should have a permanent and sufficient staff strength for the management, physical verification and conservation of the antiquities. The Committee recommends that the sanctioned strength of the CAC may be assessed and sufficient staff may be posted there for its proper

management. The Committee also recommends that the physical verification of antiquities in the CAC may also be taken up as soon as possible.

(Para 16)

The Committee observes that the CAG Report, 2013 had mentioned that the ASI had no policy/standard for transfer/shifting/acquisition/custody of antiquities and that at the time of transfer of antiquities, neither any agreement with the associated firm nor any insurance is being done. The Committee directs that the ASI may give the updates on the policies and standards for shifting of antiquities.

(Para 17)

#### **National Museum, New Delhi**

The Committee notes that digitization process in the National Museum is long overdue and recommends the Ministry to expedite the process and ensure completion of the digitization process on mission mode.

(Para 21)

The Committee notes that as per the CAG Reports of 2013 and 2022 physical verification of artefacts has not been done regularly in the seven National Museums under the control of the Ministry. Further, given that the documentation of antiquities in Site Museums of ASI and the digitization in the National Museums are still in progress with majority of the objects kept in the Reserve Collections yet to be digitized, the Committee feels that there is a huge possibility that in majority of the cases, the discovery of theft is made long after the antiquity has vanished from its place of origin. The Ministry and ASI are two organisations which must be most aware of the difficulties in bringing back stolen antiquities without proper documentation. Yet the Committee does not see any urgency in the activities of the Ministry and ASI to conclude the documentation of monuments and antiquities. Proper documentation also constitutes provenance for consumers wishing to purchase antiquities legally.

(Para 22)

The Committee recommends the Ministry to initiate physical verification and digitization processes at all the National Museums and Site Museums under the purview of ASI, set targets for the processes and ensure that the entire process is completed within a reasonable period of time.

(Para 23)

The Committee notes that the CAG Reports had commented on the lack of Rotation Policy in the Museum stating that over 90% of artefacts lay in the Reserve Collection without ever being on display. While the Ministry in its written submissions has stated that a Rotation Policy is in place in the Museums, it was acknowledged during the deposition that only a small fraction of artefacts were on display and the Museum was considering the digitization of the objects kept in the Reserve Collection.

(Para 24)

The Committee, therefore, recommends that the Ministry may ensure that all the Museums under its control may strictly follow the Rotation policy since display of all objects on rotation basis not only enhances the appeal of the museum, it also ensures that artefacts are not forgotten or misplaced.

(Para 25)

The Committee notes that India has put forth the agenda of “Technological Transformation and Digital Public Infrastructure” as one of the six priorities for the G-20 dialogue in 2023. The Committee is of the opinion that India has to lead by example. The Ministry should strive to prioritize the documentation of antiquities at those locations/sites

which have been identified for the ensuing G-20 Summit, scheduled to be held in September, 2023. Having a digital record of India's Tangible Cultural Heritage will further attract the international tourists and result in promoting tourism at these locations  
(Para 26)

### **Challenges in Documentation of Antiquities**

The Committee notes that the budget for NMMA is continuously being reduced in successive financial years. The Committee would like to know the reasons for such reduced allocation and utilization thereof and whether the Ministry had approached the Ministry of Finance for more funds. The Committee observes that apart from the financial reasons, lack of manpower is a major barrier in the documentation process. The Committee notes that against the requirement of 54, only 11 staff members are working under NMMA. The Committee would like to know the reasons for the shortage of staff under NMMA and Ministry's plans to fill the requisite vacancies at the earliest.  
(Para 30)

The Committee notes that several key positions are also lying vacant in various cadres of ASI and the National Museums and Site Museums for a long time (Annexure-I). The Committee has been informed by the Ministry that direct recruitment has been initiated for some of the vacancies (Annexure-II). The Committee is of the view that the Museums can function properly if they have key personnel in position to manage them. The Committee, recommends the Ministry to take urgent steps to fill the existing vacancies under the various cadres of ASI and the Museums at the earliest.  
(Para 31)

The Committee does not accept the plea of the ASI that no time limit can be fixed for documentation due to the ever growing volume of antiquities. The Committee recommends that the ASI should strive towards setting achievable annual targets for documentation and make all efforts to achieve the same.  
(Para 32)

The Committee further recommends that the Ministry should formulate fixed timelines for the completion of the documentation process and conduct regular checks to ensure adherence to such timelines. At the same time Ministry should initiate a plan to recalculate the actual number of antiquities in the country while documenting the said antiquities.  
(Para 33)

### **Coordination with other Agencies**

The Committee opines that the documentation of all the antiquities in a vast country like India, is a gigantic task. The Committee appreciates the initiatives of the Ministry for signing various MoUs with local bodies, heritage organizations, State Archaeology Departments, Universities, Colleges and NGOs for documentation of antiquities and would like to know the details regarding the proposals received for the identification of Documentation Resource Centres (DRCs) and the current status of these proposals.  
(Para 36)

The Committee also recommends that the Ministry/ ASI may explore the possibility of involving State Governments and relevant bodies viz., Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH); Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR); IGNCA, National Culture Fund (NCF) as well as the French Institute of Pondicherry amongst others, in this process of documentation of India's antiquities. The Committee also recommends that a dedicated team may be constituted in ASI for better collaboration with such civil society organizations to enhance the documentation and recovery.  
(Para 37)

The Committee also recommends the Ministry to examine the proposal for creating a Central Sector Scheme to ensure handholding and encouragement of the State Governments for creation of a master database of antiquities in the country. The Ministry may also formulate an incentivization scheme for the involvement of interested and relevant agencies/ stakeholders for record keeping of our Tangible Cultural Heritage.

(Para 38)

The Committee observes that there is a general lack of understanding among the public regarding the intrinsic historical value of such antiquities especially in old and abandoned temples in rural areas. ASI officials have informed that they organize activities to create awareness among general public/school /college students in the form of heritage awareness weeks, antiquity- registration drive, World Heritage Day/Week, Museum Day, etc. The Committee would like to know if ASI has held any such heritage awareness schemes in rural areas. The Committee recommends that ASI interact with Village Panchayat Members and enlist their support in ensuring that the temples and artefacts in their villages are well protected.

(Para 39)

The Committee has been informed that a heritage portal app is presently being created in which reporting of thefts of antiquities can be considered under crowd sourcing. The Committee desires to know if the Ministry has any plans to develop a heritage portal which can also be used for documentation of antiquities.

(Para 40)

#### **Technological Advancements for Documentation and Verification of Antiquities**

The Committee recommends that the Ministry may enlist the help of the French Institute of Pondicherry to build a database of photo archives of temple art and the best practices of this Institute may be adopted by the ASI.

(Para 44)

The Committee notes the present process being followed for verification and maintenance of documentary evidence of antiquities. The Committee recommends that modern technology such as photogrammetry and 3D laser scanning should be employed to provide extremely accurate documentation of antiquities. Also, a systematic photo documentation of all antiquities should be done which should also be accessible online.

(Para 45)

The Committee is also aware that it may not be possible to maintain a photographic evidence of certain antiquities/ idols due to traditional practices and beliefs. In this regard, the Committee recommends that the Ministry should lay its focus on research and development techniques to figure out ways and methods to maintain record without hurting people's sentiments.

(Para 46)

The Committee also urges the Ministry to take help of technological advancements to develop a mechanism for scanning of antiquities in order to ascertain their authenticity, composition and dimensions in a contactless manner.

(Para 47)

The Committee also recommends identification and unique tagging of antiquities on the lines of Radio-Frequency Identification (RFID) and Geographical Indication (GI) tags.

(Para 48)

### **Registration of Antiquities**

The Committee feels that registration of antiquities is an essential step to record all the privately owned antiquities in the country. Sufficient awareness should be created for the public to understand the importance of the cultural heritage and its registration.

(Para 52)

The Committee appreciates the registration drive initiated by the Ministry in September, 2019. However, the Committee feels that the window of 15 days for registration of antiquities is too short. The Act itself provides three months for registration for the person who owns the antique on the date of such notification. The Committee recommends that the registration windows should be at least six months and the Ministry may include this amendment also at the time of amendment of the AAT Act.

(Para 53)

The Committee also recommends that the Ministry should initiate more such drives and take the help of social media and other electronic mediums to popularize the same. The Committee recommends that the process may be simplified in order to encourage the concerned parties to come forward in large numbers for registration of antiquities.

(Para 54)

The Committee reiterates that the Ministry should further explore the possibility of devising an online portal/ app for virtual verification and registration of antiquities on the lines of the Heritage Portal App being developed for reporting thefts.

(Para 55)

### **Valuation of Antiquities**

The Committee notes the reply of the Directorate of Enforcement as regards valuation of antiquities. The Committee feels that the valuation of antiquities is essential as it will attach a monetary figure to the antiquities being stolen/ smuggled and retrieved/ claimed. Also, the Indian Tangible Cultural Heritage is the national wealth and it is important to ascertain the value of it. The Committee reiterates the proposal of Directorate of Enforcement and recommends the Ministry to establish an independent body/ Committee consisting of members from ASI, ED, law enforcement agencies and heritage experts which can carry out the task of valuation of antiquities.

(Para 57)

### **Acquisition and Purchase of Antiquities by ASI**

The Committee notes the reply of the Government of India on both acquisition and purchase of antiquities. In this context, the Committee recommends two changes in the relevant Acts/ Rules. First, is to enable a private antiquity owner to display their antiquity by lending/ selling it to a museum, in return for revenue. Secondly, in case a private antiquity owner wants to sell it, the Government of India should have a preemptive overriding right to buy before private persons. The said recommendations will ensure that the Indian heritage gets displayed in museums and the interests of the private owners are also protected.

(Para 59)

### **Safeguarding of Antiquities at Museums and Centrally Protected Monuments**

The Committee notes that as per the data furnished by ASI, there have been 210 cases of antiquity theft, since independence. In these cases, 486 stolen antiquities have been reported from Centrally Protected Monuments/ Sites/ Museums located in 19 States/ UTs out of which only 91 antiquities have been recovered till date, which is around 18.8% of the total antiquities stolen.

(Para 70)

The Committee is not convinced by the assurances of the Ministry and ASI that the theft in CPMs has gone down considerably in the last few years. As per media reports, many Indian antiquities surface in museums display and catalogues around the world or in global markets. As reported, the Metropolitan Museum in New York has 77 antiquities with links to Subhash Kapoor, the high profile smuggler who is now in prison in India. The MET Museum's Asia Collection is also reported to contain more than 90 pieces from Jammu & Kashmir with no provenance details. The Committee further observes that as per the NCRB data for 2017-2021, a total of 175 Special and Local Laws (SLL) Crimes have been reported under the Antiquities and Art Treasures Act, 1972 (Annexure-IV). The Committee believes it is impossible to state the number of thefts with any accuracy unless all the antiquities in a museum have been documented and digitized. In the absence of a centralized database of antiquities, theft can be detected only by random checks and it is possible that some thefts may go undetected for many years. A case in point is, as reported by the media, the Saraswati painting from J&K which has been found in the US but has still not been brought back due to the lack of any missing report.

(Para 71)

The Committee underlines the need of security of antiquities deployed at the different National Museums/ CPMs across the country. The Committee notes that out of 3695 Centrally Protected Monuments (CPMs)/sites under ASI, only a paltry 83 CPMs have been provided with CCTV cameras. The Committee further observes that due to the shortage of staff, the ASI is unable to provide Monument Attendants in every monument. CCTV cameras provide real time 24X7 surveillance in the remotest areas and are commonly used nowadays even in residences and offices for security purposes. The Committee feels that the ASI is not making use of available technology for protection of our priceless antiquities and monuments. The Committee recommends that the ASI and the Ministry may make every effort to ensure that all the Centrally Protected Monuments and Site Museum under ASI have CCTV cameras for protection.

(Para 72)

The Committee would also like to know the present status of the Comprehensive Security Policy being drafted by the IIT, Delhi, envisaging various security and surveillance systems to combat various threats. The Committee recommends that the Security Policy may be expedited and formulated at the earliest.

(Para 73)

The Committee appreciates the steps being taken by the CISF personnel at various Museums/ CPMs to ensure safeguarding of valuable antiquities. The Committee recommends the Ministry to implement similar security measures in consultation with the CISF, MHA, at all the remaining Museums/CPMs/Sites of ASI. The Committee feels that there is a grave need to establish a robust security system in coordination with CISF; State Police Departments; and private security services to have a foolproof system in place.

(Para 74)

The Committee, also recommends that the Ministry may come up with a set of rules to ensure certain level of safety and security across all the National Museums and CPMs. Needless to mention, installation of CCTV systems, armed personnel, burglar alarm systems, etc. in the museums are a must and therefore the budgetary requirements, alongwith provisions thereof within strict timeline be made for compliance of security requirements.

(Para 75)

The Committee recommends the Ministry to explore the usage of strong storage facilities for antiquities which are both at display and are in the reserve collection The Committee

hopes that this would also deter the possible connivance of the Museum staff with organized art smuggling groups.

(Para 76)

The Committee appreciates the documentation of the idols in the Tiruvarur Icon Centre by X-RF analyser (X-ray Florescence Analyser) with the help of IIT, Chennai and IGCAR, Kalpakkam. The Committee recommends that the same exercise may be done in other ICON centres in Tamil Nadu also. The Committee further recommends the Ministry of Culture may take note of the security measures being taken by the Idol wing CID, Tamil Nadu Police including provision of Temple Protection Force and implement such practices, wherever feasible.

(Para 77)

The Committee also recommends that the Ministry may take urgent measures to ensure that an effective disaster management plan is in place across all the museums to ensure the physical safety of the precious antiquities in times of natural calamities.

(Para 78)

### Illegal Export of Antiquities

#### Non-Antiquity Certificate

The Committee observes that the Non-Antiquity Certificate issued by the ASI circle offices has only a photo of the object stamped on it and its validity is for six months. With this certificate in hand, the smugglers manufacture numerous fakes and slip in the original antiquity amidst the fakes at the time of export. On the advisability of reducing the validity period, the ASI stated that it is a continuing practice and provides adequate time-gap for smooth processing of procedural work. The Committee feels that the six months validity period gives much leeway for the smugglers to arrange for the manufacture of fakes and substitute it for the original antique. The Committee, therefore, recommends that the Ministry may consider reducing the validity period of the Non-Antiquity Certificate.

(Para 83)

The Committee also recommends the Ministry that the details regarding issued NACs should be digitized on an online portal along with clear pictures describing the measurements and composition of the handicraft. The portal may be accessed by the Custom authorities at various Seaports/Airports/ Land.

(Para 84)

The Committee recommends that the Ministry may consider banning any artefact that is mutilated or damaged as often antiques are damaged while being stolen or due to the ravages of time whereas fakes would not show any such wear and tear. The Committee also desires to know the action presently being taken against any exporter who has violated the Customs Act or the AAT Act.

(Para 85)

The Committee recommends that at the time of issue of licence, the background of exporters may be scrutinized thoroughly. Renewal of licence should not be done as a matter of routine but only after a thorough scrutiny of the exporter's past record.

(Para 86)

The Committee recommends that the Ministry should ensure strong background checks of all the personnel posted in the Centrally Protected Monuments (CPMs); Museums; Sites etc.

(Para 87)

### Risk Management System (RMS)

The Committee desires to know if the Customs authorities have devised ways to apply ICES to prevent theft of antiquities. The Committee also desires to know whether Indian



Customs is using Block Chain and Distributed Ledger Technology as such technologies are increasingly being used to increase information accessibility in the global art market.

(Para 93)

The Committee recommends the Ministry to work in close coordination with the concerned agencies including CBIC, Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) and the Directorate of Enforcement (ED) to protect the illegal trade of India's Tangible Cultural Heritage.

(Para 94)

The Committee notes that only the consignments deemed risky are sent to the field officers for Assessment or Examination purposes. The Committee is of the opinion that certain antiquities such as coins and small art objects are more prone to be smuggled as it is difficult to trace them and their identification in huge consignments is like looking for a needle in a haystack. To avoid such situations, the documentation and tagging of antiquities becomes inevitable. The Committee, therefore, recommends the Ministry to expedite the antiquities documentation/ tagging process.

(Para 95)

The Committee acknowledges the submission of the Customs Department regarding the near impossibility of checking every container leaving every port but feels that heritage theft can only be prevented if every container is thoroughly scrutinized. The Committee feels that adoption of the latest technology would help in overcoming such problems and recommends that the Ministry in consultation with CBIC, may utilize the latest and best technology with respect to RMS which can aid in tracking of antiquities in large consignments/ containers.

(Para 96)

#### **Investigation of Cases - Illegal Trade of Antiquities**

The Committee believes that the Subhash Kapoor case should be an eye-opener for Indian government agencies to the enormous scale of looting of India's temples and archaeological sites and the complex network of common thieves, art thieves, exporters, businessmen and museum curators involved in the process. The Committee recommends that the different government agencies of India- Customs Department, ASI, Deptt of Revenue Intelligence and Police forces work together in close collaboration to save Indian heritage from unscrupulous elements.

(Para 101)

The Committee notes the process being followed by different Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs) to investigate the cases of illegal trade of antiquities. The Committee would like to know the present status and details of the 3 Look Out Notices issued by ASI from 2018 till date. The Committee also desires to know the investigation status of those 4 cases being dealt with by ED along with the estimated valuation of the antiquities involved.

(Para 102)

The Committee feels that the involvement of various LEAs viz., Customs, CBI, ED, DRI and Police is extremely crucial to ensure prevention, detection and investigation of incidents related to the smuggling of antiquities. The Committee recommends the Ministry of Culture to have regular follow-ups with all these LEAs and develop a common portal for quicker dissemination of information related to theft and probable export of antiquities.

(Para 103)

The Committee is of the opinion that even the slightest delay in reporting an antiquity theft or issuance of look out notice could be detrimental to the Tangible Cultural Heritage of the country. The Committee feels that if the information of theft is not passed to the concerned agencies within a time bound manner, there may be a situation where the antiquity has already been smuggled out of the country even before it is reported missing. The

Committee recommends the Ministry to identify any shortcomings in tracking of theft and passing on the information to the concerned LEAs and make all out efforts to remove any such bottlenecks.

(Para 104)

#### **Early Detection and Prevention of Illegal Trade of Antiquities**

The Committee opines that to ensure early detection and prevention of illegal trade of antiquities, seamless coordination between agencies is inevitable. Also, the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) plays a crucial role in interdiction of suspect consignments and identification of the already smuggled out antiques/antiquities, by its overseas intelligence network, in coordination with foreign customs administrations.

(Para 111)

The Committee recommends the Ministry to examine the export policies of other countries and explore the possibility of banning export of handicrafts of certain antiquity items such as Chola Bronzes which are among the most sought after antiquities. The complete banning of exports of non-antiquity copies of such objects will prevent their smuggling in the disguise of handicraft items.

(Para 112)

#### **Challenges in assessment and examination by Customs**

The Committee takes into cognizance the challenges *viz.*, non-feasibility to physically examine all the export consignments; differentiation between genuine & fake antiques; and under reporting of antique theft cases in INTERPOL's Stolen Works of Arts (WOA) database, being faced by different agencies in preventing theft and export of antiquities. The Committee feels that the only way to tackle these challenges is by researching and developing technologically competent measures.

(Para 115)

The Committee recommends the Ministry to expedite the process of documentation of all Indian antiques and digitizing their record on a common web portal which can be accessed by all the concerned Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs).

(Para 116)

The Committee also recommends the Ministry to take up the matter of physical examination of all export consignments, with the Customs authorities to ensure that all the export consignments are at least electronically scanned for detection of any antiques.

(Para 117)

The Committee also recommends the Ministry to ensure that with the help of Indian Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs), all the antiquity theft cases are invariably reported to the INTERPOL's Stolen Works of Arts (WOA) database enabling the international LEAs to take appropriate actions.

(Para 118)

#### **Co-ordination amongst all the Agencies**

The Committee feels that coordination amongst different Agencies/ Ministries for prevention of cross-border smuggling of stolen antiquities as well as the recovery of stolen antiquities is of utmost importance. The Committee opines that all the concerned Ministries/Agencies *viz.*, Ministry of Culture; Archaeological Survey of India; Ministry of Home Affairs; Ministry of External Affairs; State Governments Directorate of Enforcement; Central Board of Indirect Taxes & Customs; and Directorate of Revenue Intelligence should be on the same page and take appropriate actions to safeguard/retrieve our Tangible Cultural Heritage. The Committee, therefore, recommends the Ministry of Culture to explore the possibility of establishing a dedicated Cultural Heritage Division in consultation with all the aforesaid Agencies/Ministries.

(Para 125)

The Committee also feels that prompt and accurate information sharing is the key to smooth coordination amongst various Agencies/ Ministries. The Committee recommends the Ministry of Culture to lay its focus on technological advancements and work towards the creation of an information sharing portal. The Committee also recommends the Ministry to devise a mechanism to have real-time information on the said information sharing portal which can be accessed by all the concerned Agencies and help in tracking the movement of antiquities.

(Para 126)

### **Valuation of Smuggled Antiquities**

The Committee notes the reply furnished by ED as regards the valuation of antiquities that have been smuggled. The Committee opines that the valuation of antiquities is essential to determine the exact quantum of value of property stolen and recovered. In this regard, the Committee reiterates its recommendation that valuation of antiquities shall be carried out at the documentation stage itself, so that it would be easier to ascertain the monetary value of the items which have been stolen/ smuggled. For this purpose, the Ministry may form a Committee consisting of experts, historians and officers from the ASI

(Para 129)

### **Capacity Building and Training**

The Committee is of the opinion that the tracking and retrieval of stolen artefacts is a complex endeavour requiring a wide range of skills, ranging from antiquities preservation to forensic examinations. The authorities involved in the tracking and retrieval of stolen artefacts need to be well-versed with the latest and modern techniques. Further, it is important to be familiar with investigation methods followed in other countries in case of cross-border transfer of stolen antiquities. The Committee, therefore, recommends that the Ministry of Culture should develop varied training modules for its officers alongwith the personnel of other concerned Agencies and conduct regular sessions to empower them with skills required for identification, tracking and retrieval of stolen artefacts.

(Para 133)

### **Auction of Indian Antiquities in International Markets**

The Committee is aware that there are numerous instances of Indian Antiquities being auctioned in international markets in recent years. The Committee recommends that Ministry of Culture and ASI may ensure to follow all such international auctions and strongly take up this matter with the Indian Missions in other countries to keep a tab on such auctions and share such information.

(Para 136)

The Committee also reiterates its recommendation and urges the Ministry to ensure that, in consultation with Indian Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs), all the antiquity theft cases should be reported to the INTERPOL's Stolen Works of Arts (WOA) database without any delay. The real-time reporting of cases will enable the Indian Missions and International LEAs to access the information and take appropriate actions.

(Para 137)

### **Amendments Required in Relevant Laws**

#### **Amendments to the Antiquities and Art Treasures Act, 1972**

The Committee noted that as per the CAG Report of 2013, the Ministry of Culture had started an exercise in 1997 and a draft Cabinet note had been approved by the Cabinet in 2003. However, the Ministry had accorded no priority for the work and no timeframe had

been fixed for this purpose and consequently no amendments to the Act have been carried out so far. A decade later, the issue is still in the discussion/draft stage.

(Para 147)

The Committee observes that the AAT Act seems to have major shortcomings like excessively broad definition of ‘antiquities’ complex formalities for registration, and lack of strict punishment, among others and recommends that the Ministry may make all efforts to ensure that the required amendments to the Act are carried out to make it effective and to iron out the problems pointed out by various law enforcement Agencies.

(Para 148)

The Committee further notes that regarding the fixation of the 100 year criteria for categorizing an object as antique, the ASI has submitted that it is reasonable keeping in view the long historical timeline of Indian history and archaeology. However, less than 100 years old objects can also be notified under Art Treasures category.

(Para 149)

The Committee accordingly recommends that the Ministry take up the matter with the Ministry of Home Affairs to make it mandatory for State Governments and State Police to share information and FIRs pertaining to theft of State Protected Antiquities and Art Treasures with the ASI and the Ministry of Culture. Suitable amendments to the Act may be made at the time of amendment of the Act as a whole.

(Para 152)

The Committee observes that the present provisions of Section 25 of the AAT Act are not stringent enough which makes it relatively easy for criminals to escape the law or get away with light punishments for the crime of stealing centuries old and glorious treasures of India. Keeping in view the increasing trend of illicit trafficking of the antiquities, the Committee recommends that severe punishment upto seven years and penalty upto fifty lakh may be provided to deter the illegal trade of exporting or attempting to export antiquities. The Committee also recommends that enhanced due-diligence & KYC requirements in respect of big Art Galleries, Antique and Artifacts Sellers/Dealers be made.

(Para 153)

The Committee further recommends that the Ministry of Culture may appoint a Nodal Officer & establish an Anti-Money Laundering Cell for sharing of potential money laundering cases related to Arts and Antiquities on monthly basis to the Directorate of Enforcement for taking further necessary action under the provisions of PMLA, 2002.

(Para 154)

The Committee also recommends that the Ministry may re-examine certain procedural aspects of investigation of theft of antiquities like the mandatory permission from the Magistrate to be taken by the police based on a report of the ASI before they can take cognisance of an offence under the AAT Act. The Committee also recommends that the ASI may make the conditions for grant and renewal of licences more stringent.

(Para 155)

The Committee notes the suggestions given by the ED in respect of inclusion of other offences as mentioned in Section 25(2) of the Antiquities and Art Treasures Act, 1972 under Para 10 of the Schedule of Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002, to enhance the scope of domestic cases of Arts and Antiquities related transactions such as Sale of Antiquities without License (Section 5); Sale of Antiquities by a person whose License has been revoked to another Licensee (Section 12); and Business of sale of Antiquities by unauthorized person (Section 13). The Committee recommends the Ministry to examine the feasibility of inclusion of the aforesaid changes, in consultation with the

Department of Legal Affairs, Ministry of Law & Justice and take appropriate actions accordingly.

(Para 156)

The Committee notes that the ASI had been declared as a Scientific and Technological Institution *w.e.f.* 1<sup>st</sup> May, 1989 by a Gazette Notification but it was never implemented. The Committee observes that three decades after the issue of the notification, the ASI still functions as an attached office of the Ministry of Culture. The Committee observes that in its Ninety-First Report on “Functioning of the Archaeological Survey of India” of 2005, the Committee had recommended that the ASI needs to reinvent itself, not merely as an administrative wing of the Government but as an agency for protecting and safeguarding our national heritage which involves much scientific and technical work. The Committee reiterates its earlier recommendation that unless the ASI converts itself into a Scientific and Technical Institution, the basic role and function of the organisation would be defeated. The Committee recommends that the Ministry of Culture should take necessary legislative actions to make the ASI, a Scientific and Technical Department and avail all the benefits which accrue to such Departments.

(Para 157)

### Retrieval of Antiquities

#### Legal/ Constitutional Position of Retrieval of Antiquities taken out of the Country prior to Independence

The Committee observes that as per the opinion of the Ministry of Law and Justice and the provisions of Article 15 of the UNESCO Convention, nothing prevents the Government of India from making special agreements for restitution of cultural property taken from its place of origin whatever the reason before the coming into force of the Convention.

(Para 169)

The Committee notes that as per the UNESCO website<sup>1</sup>, there are three ways in which restoration and exchange of cultural property is facilitated. The first is under the 1970 Convention itself which provides for retrieval and reparations of cultural property between signatory nations. There is also an UNESCO Intergovernmental Committee for Promoting the Return of Cultural Property (ICPRCP) which seeks ways and means of facilitating bilateral negotiations, promoting multilateral and bilateral cooperation for the restitution and return of cultural property, encouraging public information campaigns on this issue, and promoting exchanges of cultural property. This intergovernmental body has an advisory role and its recommendations concern disputes between States, but are not legally binding.

(Para 170)

The Committee notes that the UNESCO Website also records a third category of cases, where the 1970 Convention does not formally apply due to reasons like non-ratification by the States concerned or non-fulfilment of one of the conditions for its application such as non-retroactivity. Other solutions are then sought so that the parties concerned can reach a mutually acceptable agreement. Even if they do not reflect a strict application of the provisions of the Convention, these solutions are often adopted in accordance with the spirit and principles of the Convention.

(Para 171)

### Global Practice in Retrieving Ancient Cultural Property

The Committee notes that the UNESCO website lists a number of cases where other countries like Turkey and Thailand have brought back their ancient cultural property,

stolen much prior to the 1970 Convention. The Committee also notes that in December, 2016, two valuable paintings of former Dutch masters, despoiled by the Nazis in the late 1930s, were returned to the beneficiaries of a German Jewish art dealer.

(Para 173)

The Committee also notes the reply of Department of Legal Affairs wherein it has been stated that the combined reading of Articles 7 and 15 of the 1970 UNESCO Convention indicates that the Convention shall not prevent State Parties from entering into special agreements among themselves for restitution of removed cultural property. The Committee also notes that the Law Secretary during his deposition had stated that “*legislative competence exists*” for formulating legislation for restitution of Kohinoor, as it rightly belongs to the people of India. There are also precedents of other countries getting back their ancient treasures which were stolen before 1970, as detailed in above paras. The Committee is of the view that there is nothing to prevent India from seeking the restitution of the Kohinoor and other antiquities stolen, taken or removed in whatsoever way prior to independence or prior to the 1970 Convention. The Committee recommends that the Ministry of Culture may adopt the global precedents in this regard and make all efforts to ensure that the Kohinoor and other precious historical artefacts are returned to India.

(Para 174)

#### Retrieval after 1976

The Committee notes that from the year 1976 to 2013, only 13 antiquities were retrieved, however, from the year 2014, 229 antiquities have been retrieved till date. The Committee observes that despite the ASI’s claims that the number of antiquities retrieved have gone up considerably in the last decade, the number has increased only due to the arrest of one smuggler, Shri Subhash Kapoor in the USA from whom an approximate number of 300 antiquities have been recovered, as per the media Reports and not due to the efforts of the ASI. The Committee recommends that a dedicated cultural heritage squad may be established for the recovery of stolen antiquities with trained officers. The team may be trained on various aspects as per requirement of set procedures of retrieval, followed by different countries. The Committee however appreciates the efforts of the Government of India under the leadership of our Prime Minister to bring back our lost heritage and urges the ASI to maintain the momentum in this exercise.

(Para 190)

The Committee observes that many countries and law enforcement agencies have established a centralised database for stolen artefacts. Examples include the National Stolen Art File (NSAF) maintained by FBI in USA and the Stolen Works of Art Database by INTERPOL. These databases provide comprehensive descriptions and pictures of millions of stolen artefacts. Such a database of stolen Indian antiquities can be integrated into the database under NMMA. This database can be made, to the extent possible, available in the public domain to disseminate relevant information and generate greater awareness. The Committee recommends that the ASI follow the global practice in this regard.

(Para 191)

The Committee has been informed that ASI interacts with CBI, INTERPOL Unit of India and also utilizes the Interpol app called ID – Art and has circulated it with all field offices. The Committee understands that the ID-Art App of Interpol can be utilized by anyone after creating an account. The Committee recommends that the ASI may create awareness about this app among scholars, universities and cultural institutions for wide spread usage.

(Para 192)

The Committee has been informed that UNIDROIT Convention on Stolen or Illegally Exported Cultural Objects (Rome, 1995) is the international treaty on the subject of cultural property protection. It attempts to strengthen the main weaknesses of the 1970 UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property. The UNIDROIT Convention seeks to fight the illicit trafficking of cultural property by modifying the buyer's behavior, obliging him/her to check the legitimacy of their purchase. The UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property (1970 UNESCO Convention) and the UNIDROIT Convention are compatible and complementary. The Committee has also been informed that India is not a signatory to this treaty and would therefore like to know the reasons for the same. The Committee recommends that the Ministry may take up the matter with MEA to explore the possibility of India being a signatory to the UNIDROIT Convention.

(Para 193)

#### **Leverage of G20 for facilitation of restitution of cultural property**

The Committee feels that the reply furnished by the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) is generic in nature and urges the Ministry of Culture to strongly take up the matter with MEA, as their role in retrieval of stolen antiquities through bilateral talks and using India's diplomatic channels, is of utmost importance. The Committee recommends that the Ministry of Culture to formulate a plan to raise these issues on global platforms including the G-20, so as to generate wider awareness and build pressure on non-cooperating countries.

(Para 200)

#### **Procedure after Retrieval**

The Committee feels that the considerable amount of tax hinders the process of bringing back antiquities to India. The Committee, therefore, recommends that the Ministry may take up the matter with the Central Board of Indirect Taxes & Customs and if possible, completely waive off the customs duty being levied on antiquities brought back to the country.

(Para 206)

The Committee observes that though legal provisions require case property to be in the custody of state enforcing agencies, allowing precious antiquities to gather dust for decades in police custody and suffering irreversible damage defeats the very purpose of the judicial proceedings which is to preserve our cultural property and restore it to its rightful place of origin. Different departments of the Government are working for the same aim though with different procedures.

(Para 207)

The Committee notes that the Odisha High Court *vide* judgement dated 10<sup>th</sup> April, 1998 allowed the storage of stolen antiques which were case property in a museum till the resolution of the case. The Committee has also been informed by INTACH that the organization has, with the intervention of the Hon'ble Chief Minister of U.P., reinstalled some idols, which were lying in a police station as case property, in a village temple in Gorakhpur.

(Para 208)

The Committee lauds the initiatives by INTACH in the matter. The Committee recommends that the ASI may take up this matter with the Ministry of Law & Justice and work out a solution so that antiquities could either be stored in a gallery of the CAC until the resolution of the dispute or the ASI personnel would have access to the antiquities

stored in the *thanas* so as to maintain them. The Committee also recommends that ASI may obtain a lists of the antiquities stored in different *thanas* in the country.

(Para 209)

### **Procedure of Temporary Loan**

The Committee is not satisfied with the reply of the Ministry. The Committee is well aware that since the objects of the Collection were taken out of the country prior to independence, the Temporary Export Permit did not apply to them. However, as per the findings of the CAG as per records these antiquities were still “owned by the ASI” and were on loan but there was no evidence of any efforts of ASI to retrieve them. The position of the Ministry contradicts the CAG report as per which records do show that these antiquities are still owned by the ASI. Moreover the website of the V&A Museum London itself acknowledges that the objects are “on loan from the Government of India.” In such context, it is noted that the ASI has not even taken the basic steps to try and ascertain the background in which these objects were loaned to the Museum and make efforts for their retrieval. The Committee notes that the collection of Aural Stein is perhaps the biggest collection of Central Asian Art including Chinese, Tibetan and Tangut manuscripts, paintings, textile fragments, ceramic, Buddhist art objects, Prakrit wooden tables and thousands of other art objects and documents. Such a collection if viewed in its entirety would greatly benefit research scholars and historians. The Committee recommends that the ASI may contact the V&A Museum, London and initiate the process of bringing back the objects of the Aural Stein collection. The Committee also recommends that the Ministry and ASI may make efforts to find out any other cultural objects which are on loan to foreign museums or collections prior independence or pre-1972 and take action for their retrieval.

(Para 213)

Regarding the comments of the CAG about some objects of the Aural Stein Collection lying in the Conservation Lab for more than 50 years, the Ministry submitted that “the Conservation Lab received 09 pieces which were handed over by the ASI in 1958 and it was not part of Stein expedition as per Stein and Andrew’s catalogue in badly deteriorated condition. Due to different climate condition in Central Asia and Delhi and material used in these 09 stuccos which were given to the Laboratory by Central Asian Antiquities Section for conservation but it is learnt that Laboratory was undecided with regard to their course of conservation treatment and are still lying in the conservation laboratory in a very bad condition & deteriorating day by day.”

(Para 214)

The Committee observe that despite the lack of clarity in the Ministry’s reply, it is clear that the 9 pieces received by the Conservation Lab which may or may not belong to the Aural Stein collection have been lying in the Laboratory for the past 50 years in very bad condition since the Laboratory is undecided with regard to the course of their conservation treatment. The Committee notes the inaction and lack of urgency towards conservation of precious artefacts and that the Conservation Laboratory could not find a solution to the course of treatment in five decades. The Committee recommends that the Ministry look into this issue and find a solution for conservation for these 9 objects.

(Para 215)

The Committee notes the observations in the CAG report that the laboratory was conserving only 0.25% of the total antiquities of the Museum annually. The Committee also requires that the Ministry may submit details of the number of antiquities that have been sent to the Conservation Laboratory in the last ten years, the amount of time taken by the Laboratory and the number of antiquities which have been received after treatment.

(Para 216)



**The Committee notes that besides undertaking archaeological research and conservation, ASI is tasked with the huge responsibility of recovering stolen antiquities. Many countries like Italy, Canada, Netherlands, USA, Scotland, Spain and France have established dedicated cultural heritage squads with a team of experts that focus their efforts singularly on tracking and recovering stolen antiquities. The Committee recommends that establishing a dedicated cultural heritage squad for the recovery of stolen antiquities with trained officers shall prove to be highly advantageous for ASI. The team may be trained on various aspects as per requirement of set procedures of retrieval, followed by different countries.**

**(Para 217)**

**The Committee also recommends that to speed up the process of retrieval, it is suggested that the Government of India should set up a multi-departmental task force which should include senior officials from the Ministry of Home Affairs (police and investigation), the Ministry of External Affairs (for co-ordination with foreign governments), ASI and senior scholars/experts.**

**(Para 218)**

**The Committee notes that ASI has noted that the recovery of stolen antiquities is a costly affair due to the complex and lengthy formalities entailing numerous expenses. Given the limited resources of the Ministry and ASI, other sources of funding can help in supporting the government's efforts towards the recovery of antiquities. Upon enquiry by the Committee on the benefit of CSR and attracting private funding for the government's efforts towards tracking and retrieval of stolen antiquities, the ASI replied that funding for retrieval is from their regular allotment. The Committee suggests that in case extra funding is required, the National Culture Fund may be approached to obtain funds for retrieval of historical treasures.**

**(Para 219)**

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**Three Hundred Forty Ninth Report on the Action Taken by the Government on the recommendations/ observations of the Committee contained in its Three Hundred Twenty Seventh Report on the subject ‘Connectivity and Tourist Terminal Facilities at Ports’**

**RECOMMENDATIONS/ OBSERVATIONS - AT A GLANCE**

**CHAPTER-III**

**RECOMMENDATIONS/OBSERVATIONS IN RESPECT OF WHICH REPLIES OF THE MINISTRY HAVE NOT BEEN ACCEPTED BY THE COMMITTEE**

**SAGARMALA PROGRAMME**

The Committee reiterates that that the Ministry should furnish the port wise list of projects under Sagarmala experiencing time overrun/cost escalations and the precise reasons for the same. The Committee also desires to know the status of the 231 projects presently under implementation.

(Para 1.8)

**INITIATIVES UNDERTAKEN BY MOPS&W TO EXPEDITE IMPLEMENTATION OF PORT CONNECTIVITY PROJECTS**

The Committee desires to know whether the Ministry has launched a Dashboard to monitor the progress of the 61 port road connectivity projects and whether the Committee can be given access to the same for appraisal of project status.

(Para 2.3)

The Committee also reiterates its desire to be apprised of the status of the sanction surveys to be conducted by the MoR to determine the feasibility of rail connectivity to ports which have sizeable freight traffic but are still not connected by rail.

(Para 2.4)

**CRUISE TOURIST TERMINAL FACILITIES AT PORTS**

The Committee notes that out of the overall potential of the country in generating cruise traffic, Mumbai, with the projected 3.2 Million share is the only emerging cruise destination. The Committee feels that the cruise potential of other states like Kerala, Gujarat, West Bengal, Goa etc. should also be explored. The Committee recommends that the Ministry may furnish details as to the steps being taken to understand and explore the potential of cruise tourism across other ports in the country.

(Para 3.5)

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**Three Hundred Fiftieth Report on the subject ‘Development of Greenfield and Brownfield Airports and Issues pertaining to Civil Enclave in Defence Airports’**

**RECOMMENDATIONS/ OBSERVATIONS - AT A GLANCE**

**Development of Greenfield and Brownfield Airports and the Challenges thereof**

The Committee observes that the Government has granted in-principle approval for 21 Greenfield Airport projects since 2008, which is a crucial step towards meeting the growing air traffic demand in the country. However, more Greenfield airports need to be developed to cater to the increasing demand and to achieve the vision laid out in the National Civil Aviation Policy, 2016 to enable 30 crore domestic ticketing by 2022 and 50 crore by 2027. The Committee, therefore, recommends that the Ministry should encourage more State Governments and private airport developers to propose Greenfield airport projects and to streamline its approval process to expedite the development of airports.

(Para 11)

The Committee notes that the Airports Authority of India (AAI) has embarked upon a capital expenditure plan of Rs. 25,000 crores during the period 2019-2024 for the development/upgradation/modernization of various airports in the country. This is a welcome move to improve the existing airport infrastructure in order to cater to the ever-growing air traffic demand. The Committee recommends that the Ministry/AAI may ensure that traffic projections of the long-term future are factored in the planning and execution of these projects.

(Para 12)

The list of airports for which new terminal buildings are under planning or in progress includes several airports in Tier II and III cities. This is a positive move towards improving regional connectivity and providing access to air travel to a wider population. The Committee recommends that the Ministry should ensure that these airports are well-connected to major nearby cities and have adequate transportation infrastructure to facilitate passenger traffic.

(Para 13)

The Committee observes that the list of airports under planning or expansion includes several airports that are being developed under PPP mode. PPPs can bring in private sector expertise and investment, which can help in accelerating the airport development process and improving operational efficiency. Therefore, the government should encourage more PPPs for airport development, especially for Greenfield airports.

(Para 14)

The Committee desires to know the number of airports with throughput above 1.5 mppa which have an ASQ rating of less than 4.5 and number of airports with throughput less than 1.5 mppa which have an ASQ rating of less than 4.0 as on date. The Committee may be apprised of the steps being taken by AAI to upgrade the quality of services provided at each such airport with low ASQ ratings.

(Para 17)

**Observations of the Committee**

The Committee notes that the following issues need wider consultations and deeper analysis:-

i) Various issues relating to Greenfield Airports Policy, 2008 and National Civil Aviation Policy, 2016 such as review of the said Policies, grant of ‘In-Principle Approval’ and ‘Site Clearance’ for new Greenfield projects; and

ii)Development of Greenfield Airports under the Greenfield Airports Policy, 2008, across the country especially in the States where there are no Greenfield Airports, presently.

(Para 18)

#### **Need for a comprehensive policy on brownfield airports**

The Committee notes that the NCAP, 2016 gives the guiding principles for the upgradation and expansion of existing airports. The Committee feels that the Ministry may come up with a clear policy as regards the criteria to be followed in terms of the decision to be made regarding the type of airport project to be taken up *i.e.*, the parameters that should decide whether the Ministry/ AAI should opt for a greenfield project instead of a brownfield or civil enclave project. The Committee feels that this clarity would permit AAI to work towards improving air connectivity and result in economic growth.

(Para 23)

#### **Challenges Faced in Co-ordination between different Agencies and Departments**

The Committee notes the issues being faced by the Ministry in coordinating with the State Governments/ Airport Operators and other stakeholders for setting up and operationalisation of airports in the country. The Committee feels that having a robust mechanism for coordination between the multitude of stakeholders involved in this process is crucial in order to avoid cost and time overruns in airport projects. The Ministry should evolve a mechanism to coordinate with the stakeholders at the highest level to tackle bottlenecks and enable the timely completion of projects.

(Para 26)

The Committee feels that land acquisition is a prominent issue that needs consistent oversight of the Ministry/ AAI as well as the State Government. Hence, a mechanism should be evolved to track the progress and delays in the process of land acquisition of airports.

(Para 27)

The Committee further recommends that the Ministry may work with all the stakeholders to prescribe target deadlines, where possible, which may be scrupulously followed to ensure smooth progress of airport projects.

(Para 28)

The Committee opines that strong road, rail and metro connectivity to various airports is essential for the efficient operation of any airport, both for passenger as well as cargo operations. The Committee, therefore, recommends that the Ministry may coordinate with the Ministries/ Departments/ State Governments concerned to work towards improving connectivity to the airports.

(Para 29)

#### **Delayed Greenfield and Brownfield Projects**

The Committee notes the various factors such as land acquisitions, availability of clearances, financial closure and so on, on which the progress of an airport project depends. The Committee appreciates the efforts made by the Ministry which enabled the operationalisation of the Mopa airport and good progress in other projects like Navi Mumbai and Jewar. On-time completion of airport projects has a multiplier effect on the regional economy and directly contributes to the fast-paced growth of the nation, besides helping avoid huge cost overruns. The Committee, therefore, recommends that the Ministry may try to emulate its achievements at the Mopa, Navi Mumbai and Jewar airports, in case of airport projects for which in-principle approval had been granted many years ago.

(Para 36)

The Committee agrees with the observation of the Ministry that legal issues become inevitable as it may involve stakeholder conflicts. The Committee, however, notes that the timely completion of airport projects is of acute importance to the region in question, as well as the nation as a whole. The Committee, therefore, recommends that the Ministry should evolve a suitable mechanism in co-ordination with all stakeholders to remove such bottlenecks.

(Para 41)

The Committee observes that stakeholder conflicts and legal disputes can cause significant delays in the completion of greenfield airport projects. Therefore, it is important for the Ministry to take proactive steps to address stakeholder grievances in a timely and adequate manner to prevent disputes from escalating to legal disputes.

(Para 42)

The Committee may be apprised of the status of Greenfield/Brownfield/Civil Enclave Airports at Bihta, Darbhanga, Thanjavur, Sabarimala, Calicut, Nagpur, Kannur, Parandur, Kothkasim, Navi Mumbai, Jhalawar, Neemuch, Gaucher, Dehradun, Pantnagar, Dimapur, Mopa, Kadapa, Thanjavur and Begumpet.

(Para 43)

### Improving connectivity to airports

The Committee is of the view that provision for multi-modal connectivity should be made at the proposal stage itself for greenfield airports, in consultation with the airport developer and State Government. This will ensure that the necessary infrastructure is in place before the airport becomes operational. The Ministry should coordinate with the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, Ministry of Railways and State Government Departments concerned to request them to come up with robust connectivity to the airports under development, to enable good access from the date of their operationalisation.

(Para 47)

### Financing of Airport Projects and Foreign Direct Investment in Civil Aviation Sector

The Committee is aware that as per the Consolidated Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) Policy, 2020 issued by Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Ministry of Commerce, the Government has permitted FDI in the Civil Aviation Sector as follows:-

#### A. Airports

Sector/Activity	% of Equity/FDI Cap	Entry Route
(a) Greenfield Projects	100 %	Automatic
(b) Existing Projects	100 %	Automatic

#### B. Air Transport Services

Sector/Activity	% of Equity/FDI Cap	Entry Route
(1) (a) Scheduled Air Transport Service/ Domestic Scheduled Passenger Airline (b) Regional Air Transport Service	100 %	Automatic up to 49% (Automatic up to 100% for NRIs) Government route beyond 49%
(2) Non-Scheduled Air Transport Services	100 %	Automatic
(3) Helicopter	100 %	Automatic

services/seaplane services requiring DGCA approval		
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### C. Other Services under Civil Aviation Sector

Sector/Activity	% of Equity/FDI Cap	Entry Route
(1) Ground Handling Services subject to sectoral regulations and security clearance	100 %	Automatic
(2) Maintenance and Repair organizations; flying training institutes; and technical training institutions.	100 %	Automatic

(Para 51)

The Committee notes the changes in FDI Policy, 2020 and would like to know the improvements that had happened as a result of the changes in the FDI Policy since 2020. It also feels that the changes in the FDI Policy would help drive the level of investment needed in order to achieve the desired growth rate in the aviation sector in the country. The Committee, therefore, recommends that the Ministry should make efforts to attract more foreign investment in the Indian aviation sector, which can lead to the development of better infrastructure, more job opportunities, and improved economic growth.

(Para 52)

### Land Value Capture Mechanism

The Committee notes that land acquisition is one of the biggest expenditures incurred on the development of an airport. Given the consistently rising land acquisition costs for public infrastructure projects, the present sources for financing of the same *i.e.*, budgetary allocation of the Ministry, Public-Private-Partnership and AAI revenue, might not be sufficient. The Committee feels that the Value Capture Mechanism can augment the financial requirements of the airport sector in the country. The Committee recommends that the Ministry may conduct a detailed analysis of the possible implementation of the Value Capture Mechanism to generate revenue for investment in further development, maintenance and expansion of airports across the country.

(Para 55)

### Implementation of PM Gati Shakti National Master Plan for Multi-modal Connectivity

The Committee takes note of the plans and programmes made by the Ministry for implementation of the PM Gati Shakti National Master Plan. The Committee recommends that the Ministry may utilise the PM Gati Shakti platform to coordinate with other infrastructure Ministries/ Departments and to ensure excellent connectivity to all airports across the country. The Ministry may work with the relevant Ministries/ Departments towards rapid development of the necessary supporting infrastructure in the vicinity of airports, especially greenfield airport projects

(Para 57)

The Committee appreciates the initiation of creation of a Data Analytics Platform by AAI to identify infrastructure requirements around airports. The Committee recommends that AAI may explore the possibility of feeding the data pertaining to other infrastructure Ministries/ Departments available through the Gati Shakti National Master Plan, to its upcoming Data Analytics Platform for better outputs.

(Para 59)

### **Manohar International Airport (MIA), Mopa, Goa**

The Committee notes the various steps taken by the Ministry to develop the Manohar International Airport at Mopa, Goa as one of the 11 Greenfield airports which have been operationalized since 2008. The Committee appreciates that the airport has been planned and constructed after diligent planning and taking various aspects into consideration. The configuration of the airport as regards the Passenger Terminal Building; Runways; Taxiway; Passenger Boarding Bridges; Air Traffic Control Tower; and Multi-Modal Connectivity has been developed keeping in mind the present and future requirements. Further, the Committee notes that sustainability initiatives and technological advancements implemented in the development of Mopa International airport can be applied to future Greenfield projects. Accordingly, the Committee recommends the Ministry to adopt the best practices which have been followed at Mopa and if found feasible, it may be implemented at other ongoing/future Greenfield projects after due consideration, to ensure that both environmental and commercial aspects of development are catered to.

(Para 61)

### **Issues pertaining to Civil Enclaves in Defence Airports Modernisation of Airfield Infrastructure (MAFI) scheme**

The Committee notes the details of the planned or proposed projects under the MAFI project of the IAF at 20 Civil Enclaves in the country. It notes that as per the details of Radio Navigational Aids (RNAs) which have been replaced or planned to be replaced under project MAFI at the Civil Enclaves as on 1<sup>st</sup> October, 2022, are as follows:-

- RNAs replaced: 26
- RNAs planned to be replaced: 23
- RNAs for which no replacement plan has been received: 22

(Para 66)

The Committee appreciates the timely replacement of RNAs at various Civil Enclaves. However, it also observes that due to various operational and administrative reasons, PDCs given earlier could not be adhered to and wherever PDCs have elapsed, IAF has been approached to get revised PDC. The Committee notes that unlike Greenfield/Brownfield airports which are managed by a single operator, the Civil Enclave Airports are managed by two operators, *i.e.*, the AAI/ State Government/ Private enterprises and the IAF. Hence, the Committee feels that there has to be perfect coordination between both the aforesaid agencies for smooth functioning of Civil Enclaves. It hopes that the operational/ administrative reasons for lapse of PDCs, if any, may be examined and sorted out with IAF in future, so as to avoid delays. The Committee recommends that the proposed installation of navigational aids at various Civil Enclaves may be expedited to facilitate air operations of civilian aircrafts, even in poor visibility and adverse weather conditions, enhancing safety of air travel.

(Para 67)

The Committee notes the advantages, the disadvantages and the challenges faced for the Civil Enclaves at Defence airports. While the Committee fully understands the requirement of these Enclaves for Defence needs, it is however of the opinion that the requirements of the commercial aircraft operations has to be addressed as well. Keeping in view the development of the region and increased business and employment potential, feasibility of development of full-fledged airport may be considered on a case-to-case basis to avoid the tough balance between defence and commercial operations at Civil Enclaves. The Committee therefore recommends that issues such as expediting swapping of land

under land Barter Matrix formula, delinking of working permissions for lease rentals, extension of watch hours for civilian/ commercial flights, restrictions/ constraints for round the clock operations, expansion of existing airport, and duality of security agencies for providing security, are areas which can be jointly addressed by the Ministries of Civil Aviation and Defence. A mechanism beneficial for both commercial and defence operations should be evolved therefor.

(Para 69)

The Committee is aware that 'Land Barter Matrix' formula was used to solve the issues between the Ministries of Civil Aviation and Defence at the Bagdogra Airport, which is a Civil Enclave in Defence Airport. The Committee desires to know from the Ministry, whether it is being used to sort out issues at other Civil Enclaves in Defence Airports also.

(Para 70)

The Committee notes the challenges faced by the MoCA during construction and operations of Civil Enclaves at Defence Airports. Besides, the main challenges relate to airports catering to fast growing civilian traffic hubs. The Committee appreciates that both the Ministries of Civil Aviation and Defence have developed mechanism such as the 'Land Barter Matrix' formula to resolve issues. The Committee also appreciates that meetings are held at the highest levels involving concerned Cabinet Ministries and Secretaries, to remove the stumbling blocks in operations of Civil Enclaves.

(Para 71)

The Committee notes that it takes around two years for the construction of Civil Enclave after permission is granted by Defence Authority. The committee recommends that the feasibility of reducing the time frame may be considered, keeping in view the cost escalation of construction of airports.

(Para 73)

The Committee also notes that the Air Traffic Controllers are overworked, handling both fighter and civilian aircrafts at Civil Enclaves which are emerging hubs. The Committee is of the opinion that the smooth and efficient working of the ATCs is a must to ensure safety of Defence and Civilian aircrafts. The Committee therefore, recommends that the Ministry may devise a mechanism to ensure proper workload for ATCs and also increase the number of ATCs at such Civil Enclaves.

(Para 74)

The Committee observes that the adoption of the FUA policy has led to substantial fuel savings for the airlines and also a consequent reduction of carbon footprint. The Committee is of the opinion that this environment friendly initiative should be fully encouraged as it would decrease the impact on the environment and also ensure savings for the Airlines on account of fuel. The Committee, therefore, recommends that the Ministries of Civil Aviation and Defence should proactively co-ordinate among themselves, to ensure success of the FUA policy.

(Para 79)

### Other Issues common to Greenfield Airports, Brownfield Airports and Civil Enclaves Security at airports

The Committee notes that the CISF plays a pivotal role in providing security at airports, which is brought out by the fact that out of a total of 353 units deployed by CISF, 66 units or 18.7 % is deployed at the airports only. The Committee also notes that the responsibility of the CISF to provide security is spread across a wide spectrum of establishments, as it provides security to 353 installations across the country including airports. It is also aware that the Civil Aviation Sector has seen an exponential growth and is expected to grow at a faster space in near future, which will enhance the need for



manpower engaged in providing security for airports. The Committee, therefore, recommends that the Ministry of Civil Aviation may examine the feasibility of setting up a specialized security agency for airports only, in consultation with the Ministry of Home Affairs.

(Para 82)

The Committee notes that the total outstanding dues of COD for CISF from the NASFT is more than Rs. 4707 crores. Further, the 16 JV airports account for more than 64% of the total outstanding COD dues. The Committee notes the huge amount of outstanding dues which are payable to CISF by the NASFT, especially the dues of the 16 JV airports and desires to know the reasons for the same. The Committee hopes that the dues will be cleared at the earliest by NASFT to enable the CISF to provide foolproof security at airports through deployment of enough manpower and the latest security gadgets at airports.

(Para 84)

The Committee recommends that the Ministry may look into the suggestions made by APAO and ensure that latest technologies are employed at all airports for security as well as convenience of air passengers.

(Para 86)

### **Increasing the number of domestic and international airports Increasing airport density and availability in the country**

The Committee appreciates the various measures being undertaken by the Ministry to improve air connectivity across the country. The Committee notes that to make air travel accessible to more people across the country, it is necessary to have operational airports in more cities. Providing air connectivity to more cities in an aspirational developing country like India stimulates economic growth by creation of new opportunities in terms of trade & tourism. It also facilitates access to better healthcare, education and other services for people across the country. The Committee, therefore, recommends that the Ministry may ensure that a robust mechanism is in place to achieve the operationalization of the airports/ heliports/ water aerodromes targeted during the years 2022-23 and 2023-24.

(Para 93)

The Committee notes that India's ranking has decreased from 118 in 2009 to 121 in 2019, in 'Air Connectivity / GDP score' as per IATA's 2020 'Air Connectivity' Report. This could indicate that India's air connectivity gains have not been able to keep up with its GDP growth. The Committee recommends that the Ministry may ensure that effective measures are taken to strengthen air connectivity at a rapid pace to further push India on its path of economic growth.

(Para 94)

The Committee opines that the development of airports/ heliports is a capital-intensive process involving funds to the tune of hundreds of crore rupees. It is essential to ensure that the capacities of already developed airports are optimally utilised to enable a good return on the invested capital as well as to stimulate regional economic growth. The Committee feels that the Ministry should devise an effective strategy to start scheduled operations at these airports to ensure that their capacities are optimally utilised. The Ministry may explore the feasibility of viability gap funding to help fuel the demand needed to support scheduled operations at these airports. The Ministry may also consider incentivising the airlines for a limited period of time to help sustain scheduled commercial operations.

(Para 96)

### **Increasing the number of international airports**

The Committee observes that international air connectivity in tier 2 cities can help improve trade, increase tourism and attract foreign investment in the region. The Committee, therefore, recommends that the Ministry may actively analyse the potential for international traffic at the presently operational non-international airports as well as upcoming greenfield airports.

(Para 101)

### **Public Private Partnership in construction and expansion of airports**

The Committee acknowledges the Ministry's efforts to privatize 25 airports between 2022 and 2025, in line with the global trend of privatization in the aviation sector. The revenue generated through Tier-I PPP airports will permit the Ministry to make investments for the development of airports in Tier-II and Tier-III cities, where capital investment is the need of the hour. The Committee believes that such a plan will ultimately lead to much-improved air connectivity across the country and contribute to more evenly distributed regional economic growth.

(Para 105)

The Committee, therefore, recommends that the Ministry may continue to seek Public Private Partnership (PPP) to achieve the goal of rapid development of the Indian civil aviation sector and to make air travel accessible for all.

(Para 106)

### **Accommodating future growth**

The Committee notes that Site Clearance has been granted for Singrauli and Kotkasim Greenfield airports in 2017 and 2022 respectively. The Committee may be apprised of the present status of these airports, along with reasons for delays, if any.

(Para 109)

The Committee observes that brownfield airports have a limited scope for expansion which results in high costs of land acquisition for expansion and rehabilitation. Civil enclaves, on the other hand, face constraints in terms of accessibility of air space, land and operational watch hours. The Committee feels that greenfield airports, despite the initial requirement of huge capital, are best suited to meet the demands of air traffic growth in the nearby region for several coming decades. It is often noted that airport infrastructure projects run into delays, sometimes for several years. The Committee, therefore, recommends that the Ministry/ AAI may consider alternate greenfield options in the vicinity of a brownfield/ civil enclave project before granting permission for the development/ expansion of the same. Extensive cost-benefit analysis may be done on a case-to-case basis in terms of long-term costs to the Government and benefits accrued to the public at large over several coming decades.

(Para 111)

The Committee takes note of the extensive list of challenges to be faced by the aviation sector in the next 20 years, as per APAO. The Committee agrees with the observation that land acquisition delays often cause time and cost overruns. The Committee recommends that the Ministry may look into such issues before awarding a project.

(Para 113)

The Committee desires that the Ministry may work towards creation of a single window clearance system for all statutory compliances to minimise delays in the execution of airport projects.

(Para 114)

The Committee recommends that the Ministry may examine the various other suggestions made by APAO such as creation of skill development centres for aviation, periodic audits, strengthening AERA and so on. The Ministry may ensure that the feedback received from APAO and other stakeholders, both public and private, are duly heard and acted upon to ensure fast-paced growth of the Indian aviation sector.

(Para 115)

#### **Establishing global transit hubs for international flights**

The Committee notes that the erstwhile bilateral policy resulted in a serious imbalance in the number of points of call in favour of foreign carriers. The Committee may be apprised of the steps being taken by the Ministry in order to correct this imbalance and to develop its major airports as a global transit hub for international flights.

(Para 119)

The Committee acknowledges the various challenges being faced in establishing a global transit hub for international flights. The Committee feels that the Ministry should work on obtaining points of call for Indian carriers in more countries. Effective steps may be taken to address the slot constraints at major airports like Delhi and Mumbai. Potential of airports close to Delhi and Mumbai i.e., Jewar Airport and Navi Mumbai Airport, may be explored for their development as a global transit hub.

(Para 120)

#### **Profitability of airports**

The Committee agrees with the fact that an airport in general becomes profitable when adequate traffic flows from the airport. The Committee feels that the Ministry should work towards increasing the share of air transport for cargo movement as the same would help generate revenue for the airports. AAI should also work with airlines to attract new routes and increase frequency on existing routes to attract maximum passengers. More stress should be laid on non-aeronautical revenue sources such as lounges, shopping areas etc. within the airports which would also provide a rich experience to the passengers.

(Para 123)

The Committee further recommends that the Airports Authority of India may focus on improving the operational efficiency of all its airports. This can be done by streamlining the processes involved in airport operations, such as passenger check-in, baggage handling, security and ground handling services. Efforts may also be made to implement cost-cutting measures such as optimizing energy consumption and outsourcing non-core functions of the airport.

(Para 124)

#### **Challenges faced by Private Airports Operators in the operation of airports across the country and possible solutions thereto**

The Committee takes note of the unduly long time of 3 to 6 years taken in the dispute resolution process for the airport sector matters, whereas AERA Act, 2008 stipulates a time period of 90 days only. The Committee recommends that the Ministry may seek the comments of the Ministry of Law & Justice, as regards formation of airport sector specific appellate tribunal or a dedicated bench under TDSAT, to expedite dispute resolution process

(Para 127)

The Committee is aware that construction of airport projects are highly capital intensive and therefore recommends that the Ministry may examine the feasibility of funding by Insurance Companies, Development Financial Institutions etc., in consultation with the Ministry of Finance.

(Para 129)

The Committee notes the suggestions of the GMR representative regarding a Common Security Hold Area (SHA) and recommends that the suggestion may be discussed with the Ministry of Home Affairs and other security agencies involved, and if feasible, a plan may be worked out to benefit the passengers. It also recommends that the support infrastructure constructed and maintained by Government agencies should be planned well in advance at the planning stage and periodically reviewed to ensure smooth operation at the airports.

(Para 131)

The Committee is of the opinion that to develop India, as a trans-shipment hub for cargo, seamless trans-shipment, which will reduce time and costs is imperative. It therefore recommends that the need for re-screening of cargo may be examined in consultation with the Ministry of Home Affairs, to reduce the timelines for trans-shipment.

(Para 133)

The Committee suggests that the issue of ITC on GST paid on works contract services for setting up / expansion activity at airport and inclusion of all ancillary airport services for enhanced amounts under the ECLGS may be examined in consultation with the Ministry of Finance, and a mechanism may be worked out so as to benefit the passengers in the long term.

(Para 135)

The Committee is of the opinion that all out efforts are required to formulate policies and legislations, which encourage and attract private investments in Airport projects. In this regard the Committee notes that SEZ Act, 2005, has been successful in setting up SEZs across the country, which have business-friendly trade laws and have increased investments, trade and generated employment. The Committee notes the suggestion of the Private Airport Operator (PAO) and recommends that the feasibility of having a separate law PPP law to attract PPP investments in airports may be examined in consultation with the Ministry of Law & Justice.

(Para 137)

The Committee notes the suggestions of the Private Airport Operators (PAO) regarding amendments/enactments of legal provisions for calling upon financial bids for airport projects only upon completion of LA and R&R processes, enhancement of baggage allowance and legal provisions for handling of stray dogs. The Committee recommends that the suggestions may be examined by the Ministry of Civil Aviation in consultation with the concerned Ministries, so as to expedite the process of development of airports and also to benefit the nation at large.

(Para 141)

#### **Feasibility of creating multiple entry routes to tackle congestion in major airports**

The Committee recommends that AAI should conduct feasibility studies to assess whether creating an arm on the right side of Terminal-3 of the Indira Gandhi International Airport, Delhi would help tackle the congestion issues being faced by passengers. If found feasible, the same principle may be followed at other airports across the country to ensure minimal waiting time for passengers. Airport terminals should prioritise passenger accessibility to boarding gates. Multiple entry gates should be designed and built to ensure optimal throughput at airports.

(Para 147)

The Committee recommends that future planning at major airports should include capacity planning for passengers, in addition to peak hour capacities of domestic as well as international passengers. This would ensure that airports are equipped to handle increased passenger traffic and avoid congestion. The Ministry should ensure that future projections

of the number of passengers to be serviced, are duly factored at the planning stage of the airport development/ expansion projects in the country.

(Para 148)

### **Night landing facilities at Airports and Civil Enclaves**

The Committee notes that 23 airports in the country have scheduled flight operations but do not have night landing facility. The Committee feels that night landing facility is a basic prerequisite to permitting an airport to operate at its full capacity. Besides, having night landing facilities at airports can also help authorities in the speedy deployment of emergency response teams and evacuations in case of emergency situations in nearby regions. The Committee, therefore, recommends that the Ministry may thoroughly consider the benefits of installation/ upgradation of night landing facilities at all its airports/ heliports to make sure that the huge capital invested in the development of airports is optimally utilised.

(Para 151)

### **Cargo facilities at airports and civil enclaves**

The Committee takes note of the steps taken by the Ministry to ensure that greenfield and brownfield airports are equipped with specialised infrastructure to handle time-sensitive, perishables, high-value cargos and regional express facilities. The Committee feels that the aviation sector will play a defining role in increasing India's cargo capacity to bring it at par with other top performing countries. The Ministry should ensure that its rules and guidelines enable a conducive environment for major growth in air cargo operations in India. AAI should ensure that all its airports increase their air cargo capacities in line with the demands of the air cargo sector.

(Para 155)

The Committee notes that it is the vision of the National Civil Aviation Policy, 2016 that cargo volumes should increase to 10 million tonnes by 2027. The Committee notes that the Coronavirus-pandemic affected years showed a considerable decline in timers of air cargo handled in India. From the data available for the Financial Year 2021-22, it is evident that both domestic and international air cargo figures are nearing the pre-pandemic levels. To meet the target of 10 million tonnes air cargo volume envisaged in NCAP, 2016, the cargo volume would have to increase at a compounded annual growth rate of well over 20 percent. The Ministry should ensure well-equipped infrastructure across crucial greenfield and brownfield airports to capitalise on the expanding global air freight market and meet its revised targets.

(Para 156)

### **Global Scenario of Air Transport/ Freight**

The Committee notes that India grew at a good pace till 2018, in terms of freight transported via air. However, air cargo operations in India have been hit very badly by the Coronavirus pandemic as compared to many other major economies. The Committee recommends that the Ministry may take suitable remedial measures to ensure that India is back on track for a rapid growth trajectory in the air cargo sector in the coming years.

(Para 158)

The Committee is of the view that air cargo operations provide an economic boost to the regional economy, by permitting quick transport of perishable items such as fruits and vegetables. The Committee therefore recommends that AAI Cargo Logistics and Allied Services Company Ltd. (AAICLAS) should consider investing capital in the airports where cargo operations have discontinued for lack of compliance with the BCAS requirements so as to permit the operationalisation of air cargo operations thereat. The Committee further

recommends that BCAS may grant some more time to AAICLAS to meet its requirements and enable the airports to immediately resume the air cargo operations thereat

(Para 160)

The Committee recommends that the Ministry may analyse the various challenges listed and suggestions made by APAO regarding operating cargo facilities, and take suitable action to ensure that the air cargo capacity of our country is boosted. The Ministry may ensure proper infrastructure across crucial greenfield and brownfield airports so that India can capitalise on the expansion of the global air freight market.

(Para 164)

### **Green and sustainable initiatives at airports and civil enclaves**

The Committee appreciates the multitude of steps being taken by the Ministry/AAI to promote the use of green energy in Indian airports. The Committee recommends that the Ministry should continue to incentivize airports to adopt green and sustainable models. This can be done by offering tax breaks and other incentives to airports that achieve carbon neutrality and net-zero emissions.

(Para 166)

The Committee recommends that the Airports Authority of India may closely monitor the progress made by different airports regarding their target for achieving 100% use of green energy by 2024. AAI may take necessary measures to help the airports lagging behind in the achievement of these targets.

(Para 167)

The Committee further recommends that the Ministry should incentivise the use of electric vehicles at airports for ground transportation. The Ministry should also work with industry associations and other stakeholders to develop infrastructure for charging electric vehicles at airports.

(Para 168)

### **Development of Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul (MRO) Facilities**

The Committee notes that MRO demand in India is also anticipated to grow, thereby entailing attractive investment opportunities for domestic as well as foreign investors, OEMs and leading MROs across the world. The Committee recommends that the Ministry should make all out efforts through changes in regulations, to create a conducive ecosystem for foreign aircraft manufactures like Boeing, Airbus and other OEMs to establish their MRO in India.

(Para 180)

The Committee commends the policy initiatives such as the MRO Policy 2021, National Civil Aviation Policy 2016, and fiscal policies such as rationalisation of GST, which reflect the vision of the Government to develop India as a global MRO hub. The Committee also notes that presently only repairs of noncore activities other than engine repairs etc. are being carried out in India. It hopes that the aforesaid policy would enable the India MRO to take up major technical repairs as well. Aircraft manufacturers (OEMs) may be encouraged to open MRO facilities in India.

(Para 181)

The Committee also observes that most of the foreign Aircraft Manufacturers & OEMs prefer to utilize their own MROs established abroad despite reduced labour, shipping, Turnaround Time and finance cost of replacements & inventory in India. The Committee recommends that the Ministry may focus on highlighting these aspects to prospective MROs who want to set up establishments in the country. The Committee is of the view that the growth of the MRO sector will also depend on how efficiently it can address and remove the key challenges faced by MRO players in India. It hopes that the

Ministry will make all out efforts to implement the various fiscal measures at the ground level and also ensure proactive interaction with MRO industry to remove any bottlenecks that may arise.

(Para 182)

The Committee is of the opinion that since MRO services constitute a significant portion of overall expenditure of any airlines operator, setting up MRO services in the country would reduce the expenditure on MRO services and subsequently reduce the airfares in the domestic routes, which will consequently reduce the cost of air travel and benefit the passengers.

(Para 183)

#### **Ease of doing business in the aviation sector**

The Committee commends the various steps being taken by the Ministry to improve ease of business in the aviation sector in India and hopes that concerted efforts would be made in this direction in future as well.

(Para 186)

The Committee recommends that the Ministry should examine streamlining the regulatory procedures related to aviation, making them more transparent and efficient. The Ministry may work on simplifying the process of obtaining financing to boost private investment in the aviation sector.

(Para 187)

The Committee recommends that the Ministry may hold periodic consultations with industry players and investors to understand the regulatory challenges faced by them. The eGovernance initiative of DGCA should be expanded to cover more stakeholder interactions and internal processes.

(Para 188)

The Committee takes note of the National Mission on Design & Development of Regional Transport Aircraft being undertaken by CSIR. The Committee feels that the design and development of indigenous regional transport aircraft would be in line with the vision of *Atmanirbhar Bharat* and would contribute towards improving air connectivity while creating employment opportunities. The Committee recommends that the Ministry may ensure that sufficient budgetary allocation is provided for this effort.

(Para 189)

The Committee observes that the Ministry is responsible for the administration of the Aircraft Act, 1934, Aircraft Rules, 1937 and various other legislations pertaining to the aviation sector in the country. While the Ministry has made amendments to the Aircraft Act and Aircraft Rules from time to time, the mother legislation/ rules are about 90 years old as on date. The Committee recommends that the Ministry may examine the feasibility of undertaking a thorough review of the existing legislations/ rules that better reflect the modern day realities and requirements of the Indian aviation sector.

(Para 190)

Given the important role played by AERA in the Indian aviation sector, the Committee recommends that the Ministry may ensure that AERA is staffed with personnel with suitable domain expertise.

(Para 193)

The Committee recommends that the Ministry may look into possible delays in security clearance from BCAS for concessionaires in the aviation sector. If possible, fixed timelines may be prescribed for such clearances.

(Para 194)

The Committee recommends that the Ministry may examine the various regulatory challenges listed by APAO and work on resolving the same so as to boost Public Private Partnership in the country.

(Para 195)

### **Facilities for passengers**

The Committee notes that sufficient passenger facilities have been provided at major airports across the country. The Committee, however, notes that no mention has been made regarding the facilities provided at non-major airports. The Committee recommends that AAI may come up with guidelines to prescribe a certain minimum set of passenger facilities to be provided at all airports across the country. This may include facilities for drinking water, toilets, ‘May I Help You’ counters, and so on.

(Para 200)

The Committee appreciates the finalisation of the ‘Accessibility Standards and Guidelines for Civil Aviation’ and believes that the implementation of these standards and guidelines would help all passengers have a safe and convenient air travel experience. The Committee hopes that these accessibility standards and guidelines are up to international standards to ensure a world-class experience for domestic and international passengers alike. The Committee recommends that the Ministry may put a mechanism in place to ensure that these standards and guidelines are strictly followed across all airports in the country.

(Para 203)

### **Airport-specific Issues**

#### **Greenfield Airport in Bihar**

The Committee recommends that all efforts should be made to iron out the difficulties faced in the development of a Greenfield airport in Bihar with close cooperation of the State Government, which will help create optimum results for the public. Further, the Committee recommends that in the meanwhile, various options may be explored for modernisation of the existing Patna Airport to cater to the growing demand for aviation in the State.

(Para 208)

#### **Bihta, Darbhanga and Sitamarhi Airports**

The Committee may be apprised of the present status of land acquisition by the State Government for the Bihta Airport along with reasons for delay, if any. The Committee recommends that the Ministry may ensure that the investment envisaged for the Bihta Civil Enclave is utilised in an optimum manner to ensure decongestion of the Patna airport. The Ministry may examine the avenues for future expansion of the Bihta airport and to ensure that the best possible site is chosen to share the load of the Patna airport in the future.

(Para 214)

The Committee recommends that the Ministry may request the State Government to take up the land acquisition for the Darbhanga Airport on priority so as to enable AAI to develop a permanent Civil Enclave there at. The Committee further recommends that the Ministry may ensure necessary infrastructure for comfortable seating of passengers at the Darbhanga airport.

(Para 215)

Proactive efforts should be made by AAI to ensure that all States reap benefits of enhanced regional air connectivity under the RCS UDAN Scheme. The Committee recommends that the Ministry may seek the willingness of the State Government of Bihar for inclusion of the Sitamarhi airstrip under the UDAN scheme.



(Para 216)

### **Purnea Civil Enclave**

The Committee notes that the 52 acre land acquired by the State Government for development of a new Civil Enclave at Purnea, is not as per AAI's proposal in terms of location and shape as required. It also notes that this land which was not as per proposal was handed over by the State after more than 6 years of approval from the Ministry of Defence. The Committee recommends that the Ministry may look into the reasons behind this lapse and ensure that incidents like these do not recur to avoid huge delays in the project.

(Para 218)

### **Gaya Airport**

The Committee notes that AAI has been handed over only 23.84 acre of land out of its requirement of more than 200 acres of land for expansion of the Gaya Airport. The Committee feels that Gaya airport is one of the most important airports in Bihar. The Committee recommends that the matter may be taken up with the State Government of Bihar at the highest level to facilitate handing over of the remaining part of the required land.

(Para 220)

The Committee further recommends that AAI may undertake a fresh assessment of the requirement of land for expansion of the Gaya Airport keeping future air traffic estimates of several decades in mind, given the original assessment was made in 2009.

(Para 221)

### **Sabarimala airport**

The Committee is of the view that the Sabarimala airport will be a major boon to the visitors of the Sabarimala Temple and give a boost to the regional economy. The Committee recommends that the Ministry may ensure that the Sabarimala airport project stays on track and any bottlenecks causing delays in its completion are proactively tackled.

(Para 225)

### **Calicut Airport**

The Committee notes that AAI has agreed to share the cost of levelling and stabilizing the land up to Rs. 100 crores with a condition that any cost beyond Rs. 100 crores should be borne by the State Government of Kerala. The Committee recommends that AAI may consider meeting the entire cost of land acquisition for the expansion of the Calicut airport.

(Para 227)

### **Bhiwadi Airport**

The Committee recommends that the Ministry may take up the matter with DMICDC to know the reasons behind not seeking "In-Principle" approval for the Greenfield Airport near Bhiwadi, Alwar, Rajasthan despite receiving site clearance for the same.

(Para 229)

### **Bhogapuram Airport**

The Committee desires to be apprised of the reasons for the long delay in signing the MoU between AAI and Government of Andhra Pradesh, after grant of in-principle approval to the project by the Government of India in 2016. The Committee may also be briefed about how the existing infrastructure for civil flight operations at the Visakhapatnam airport will be utilised and maintained during the closure of scheduled commercial operations for 30 years thereat.

(Para 234)

### **Chandigarh Airport**

The Committee notes that the Automatic-Visual Docking Guidance System is presently installed at 5 parking stands of the New Civil Enclave at Chandigarh airport and provision for VDGS is planned for 10 more parking stands. As of now, Marshalls are being used for other parking stands. The Committee recommends that the Ministry may plan the installation of VDGS on the remaining parking stands in a time-bound manner to permit efficient parking of aircrafts on the parking stands.

(Para 238)

### **Miscellaneous Civil Aviation Sector Issues**

#### **Shortage of ATCOs**

The Committee notes that the Government has approved creation of addition 340 posts of ATCOs in AAI in May, 2022. The Committee recommends that AAI may ensure that sufficient ATCOs are posted at all times to ensure smooth functioning of airports across the country. AAI may analyse the demand for ATCOs keeping in mind the projected growth of the Indian aviation sector and take proactive action for timely recruitment of ATCOs based on the same.

(Para 241)

#### **Training of pilots**

The Committee notes that the Government has allowed for the opening of ATOs to provide simulator training within the country. The Committee may be apprised as to whether the capacity of the ATOs presently functioning in the country suffice the requirements for pilots in the Indian aviation sector.

(Para 243)

#### **Increasing incidents of in-flight altercations**

The Committee appreciates that DGCA has issued CAR, Section 3- Air Transport, Series M, and Part VI titled “Handling of unruly / disruptive passengers”, specifying detailed procedures for the airlines to follow in case of incidents of unruly behavior by passengers during flights. The Committee recommends that DGCA may enforce a zero tolerance policy for incidents of unruly behaviour by passengers and strict implementation of the No-Fly List may be ensured. DGCA may periodically review the SOPs and Emergency Procedures Manuals framed by the airline companies in this regard, to ensure the compliance of DGCA norms.

(Para 250)

The Committee recommends that a special Airline Wing should be formed for dealing with police and courts in cases of unruly passengers since at present, the pilot and crew members have to attend the court and visit police stations for prosecuting the unruly passenger. The Ministry may also coordinate with the concerned Departments to ensure that any victims of unruly passengers are not required to physically visit distant police stations and courts in pursuance of legal remedy in such cases.

(Para 252)

#### **Capacity Constraints at Airports**

The Committee is aware that there are various capacity constraints at the existing airports/ terminals. For instance, a fourth runway (29 ‘right’) at Terminal-1 of the Indira Gandhi International Airport, Delhi has not been operationalised due to some administrative reasons and also due to some obstacles such as buildings in the flight path. The delay in operationalization of this runway is hampering the capacity of a critical airport as flights are being delayed affecting the operational cost of airlines. The Committee had taken up this issue during the examination of the Demands for Grants (2023-24) of the Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA) and the Secretary, MoCA had assured

that action has been initiated for demolishing a particular building which was creating hindrance and this will pave the way for operationalization of the said runway. The Committee would like to know the present status of the action taken in this regard.

(Para 253)

### **CAG Observations**

The Committee recommends that the Ministry may ensure that replies in respect of observations made in CAG Reports are furnished in a time-bound manner without fail. The Committee may be apprised of the reasons for not furnishing reply to the Para No. 3.1 of CAG'S Report No. 13 of 2013 (Commercial) even after a decade has passed since the Report came out.

(Para 255)

### **Issues pertaining to Digi Yatra**

The Committee recommends that the Ministry may ensure that the technical issues faced by the users of the Digi Yatra app are ironed out at the earliest. The reviews of the users may be duly looked into and issues highlighted thereat may also be resolved.

(Para 257)

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**Three Hundred Fifty First Report on the subject ‘Functioning of National Akademis and other Cultural Institutions’**

**RECOMMENDATIONS/OBSERVATIONS- AT A GLANCE**

The Committee appreciates the efforts made by the Akademis in organizing various cultural programmes and events to achieve their mandate to preserve and promote the diverse cultures and art forms of the country.

(Para 6)

**Budgetary Allocation and issues**

The Committee notes that the overall budget allocation for the Ministry of Culture is only 0.075% of the total budget, which is grossly inadequate. In particular, the combined budgetary allocation (2023-24) for the National Akademis is just Rs. 401 crore. The Committee in this regard, recommends that the Ministry of Culture should increase the budgetary allocation to the National Akademis and other Cultural Institutions in order to increase their efficiency and outreach.

(Para 10)

Committee observes that countries like China, the U.K., U.S., Singapore and Australia spend roughly 2%-5% of their budget on the promotion of art and culture and a majority of the amount spent by these countries on art and culture is sourced from non-government sources which is not the case in India.

(Para 11)

The Committee recommends the Akademis to explore the option of CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) Funds available for “protection of national heritage, art and culture including restoration of buildings and sites of historical importance and works of art; setting up public libraries; promotion and development of traditional arts and handicrafts;” as provided in clause (v) of Schedule VII of the Companies Act, 2013 read with Section 135. The Committee recommends that some portion of the CSR Fund may be mandatorily earmarked for the development and promotion of Culture and Cultural Institutions. Government can think of making such amendments in the legislation related to CSR.

(Para 12)

In Committee’s view a long-term guarantee of sustained funding will go a long way in creating a stable environment to implement ambitious plans. Artistic excellence can flourish only in good cultural infrastructure. Thus, Committee feels that Private partners can also provide financial support through sponsorships, grants, donations, or investments under PPP mode.

(Para 13)

Further, funds can also be raised as monetary benefits from YouTube channels and other OTT platforms. Akademis can organize fundraising events such as galas, auctions, benefit concerts or cultural festivals. These events can attract donors, sponsors, and supporters who are interested in experiencing cultural performances and supporting the academy's mission.

(Para 14)

Akademis must augment resources to become sustainable and resilient. The Committee, therefore, recommends that in order to develop a strong sustainable cultural environment, Akademis need to take significant steps to attract investments from the Government and private sectors, to develop and maintain their cultural and social infrastructure. Akademis should start thinking outside the box with ‘imagination and a vision’ and draw up a plan to

explore other suitable types of external financing. Investments should include audience engagement, supporting artists, and subsidizing performance to optimize public engagements. The Committee believes that along with tourists and visitors, citizens also constitute a major part of the consumers, who are willing to spend larger portions of their disposable income to seek entertainment. The Akademis should tap such potential of the citizens.

(Para 15)

#### Election and Tenure of Heads of the National Akademis and Cultural Institutions

The Committee notes that only the Chairman of Sahitya Akademi is elected. The process for appointment of the Chairman/President as also their tenure varies between the Akademis. The tenure of the Governing Body is also different for the different Akademis, ranging between 3 years for Lalit Kala Akademi to 10 years for Kalakshetra Foundation. There are no fixed guidelines with regard to the number of members of the Governing Council, the number of meetings to be held, etc. Also, there are no people's representatives in the Governing Council of the Akademis.

(Para 17)

The Committee observes that there are different parameters for different Akademis. In Committee's view, this lack of uniformity is not desirable as it leads to administrative and organisational inconsistencies among the various Akademis and Institutions. The Committee, therefore, recommends Government to formulate a policy emphasising uniformity among all the Akademis in terms of the tenure of the Chairman/President, representation and election of the General Council, and the minimum number of meetings to be held each year. If required, legislation governing the Akademis/ Institutions may be amended to ensure uniformity among the Akademis and their functionaries.

(Para 18)

Committee, further, suggests that one Member of Parliament should be included on the Governing Board of each of the Institutions on the lines of All India Institute of Medical Sciences and other such institutions to assist the working of Akademis and to provide ground reports to the Akademis.

(Para 19)

The Committee also recommends that there is a need to increase the involvement of States in the overall functioning of the National Akademis and other Cultural Institutions and this may be done by giving representation to all States in the administrative set-up and through collaboration with cultural bodies at the state level. In this regard, proper consultations must be conducted with all States.

(Para 20)

The Committee observes that at present, only a few National Akademis and Cultural Institutions have established regional centres across the country. States are not evenly covered in so far as the establishment of regional Centres in the country is concerned. The map given above shows that there is no representation of culturally rich regions like Mizoram, Nagaland, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, Punjab, Chhattisgarh, Bihar, Arunachal Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh. The Committee notes that a substantial chunk of the population is left out of the reach of the Cultural Institutions and Akademis. In Committee's view, this has greatly restricted the active local presence of these national cultural bodies.

(Para 28)

The Committee notes most of the cultural institutions are headquartered in Delhi. The Committee reminds that these cultural bodies can be relocated to various other parts of the country to ensure Pan India presence of the Institutions.

(Para 29)

The Committee, therefore, recommends that there is a need for establishing regional centres in each State as well as in remote areas like tribal areas to promote tribal culture, and in rural areas to promote village culture. Further, Regional Centres must be set up in all culturally rich regions to promote art and culture at grassroots level. The Committee also suggests that there is a need for cultural mapping of districts using the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP). Regional Centres must cater to all the aspects of art and culture of that region.

(Para 30)

Zonal Cultural Centres (ZCCs) provide facilities for the promotion of arts and culture in their respective regions. The Committee, however, observes that the functioning of ZCCs is not always uniform across the States, thereby defeating the very purpose of fostering cultural activities equitably throughout the country. The Committee also recommends that the National Akademis and other Cultural Institutions must collaborate with ZCCs to remove this disparity across States. The Ministry of Culture needs to play a lead role in such coordination works. Ministry/ National Akademis must evolve a mechanism to ensure effective coordination of efforts between National Akademis/Cultural Institutions and ZCCs

(Para 31)

The Committee takes note of IGNCA's reply that the opening of Regional Centres in more number of States would be feasible subject to the allocation of more funds for staff as well as establishment costs. The Committee takes note of the fund constraints faced by the Institutions. In this regard, the Committee recommends that the Ministry of Culture should seriously consider enhancing the budgetary allocation for the Akademis. The Committee also noted the suggestion from the National School of Drama, requesting Hon'ble MPs to contribute funds from MPLAD funds which could be used in the enhancement of art and culture education.

(Para 32)

The Akademis, during the course of the discussion, agreed to the view that Members of Parliament and MLAs of the region can help the Akademis with outreach and accessibility to the interior parts as they are more aware of the cultural spread in their regions. The Committee appreciates that the views of the Committee in this regard are well taken by the Akademis. Popular participation is essential to propagate and preserve various forms of our culture. The elected representatives of the area can contribute immensely to popularize the art and art forms. The Committee, therefore, recommends that all MPs and MLAs of the region should be invited to the events organized by the respective organizations. Also, Ministry/ Akademis should actively involve Members of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Transport, Tourism and Culture.

(Para 33)

Committee recommends the Ministry/ Akademis to attend the DISHA meetings. Representatives of the Ministry/Akademis should be encouraged to attend the DISHA meetings for consultation with Members of Parliament, State Legislatures and Local Governments (Panchayati Raj Institutions/Municipal Bodies). These Committees can monitor the implementation of the programmes and promote synergy and convergence for greater impact. They can also facilitate coordinated solutions to remove constraints, if any.

(Para 34)

#### Administrative Staff and Vacancies

The Committee observes that the Government's Cultural Institutions are affected by vacancies and a lack of trained manpower. Lack of manpower not only affects the working

of these organizations but also hinders their efficiency. The Committee, therefore, recommends that the Ministry of Culture should urgently take measures to fill up the said vacancies at each level since manpower is the backbone of these Organisations. The Committee also emphasizes that the Ministry must conduct the recruitment process in a fair and transparent manner, adhering to equal opportunity for all and non-discrimination principles. The Committee may be apprised of the recruitment process being followed in the Akademis and Cultural Institutions to fill in posts.

(Para 37)

The Committee desires the Ministry to complete the recruitment process and fill up all the vacancies within a fixed time period. The Ministry may also apprise the Committee of the status of the matter.

(Para 38)

#### Cultural knowledge and Expertise of Staff

The Committee notes that a majority of the administrative staff have little knowledge/expertise in arts and culture management. The Committee feels that extensive training programmes are required for better expertise of staff to enable proficiency and competency at scale, and across levels. The Committee, therefore, recommends that a comprehensive assessment of the training needs of the staff may be undertaken to identify the areas where they require skill development or additional knowledge in art and culture and specific domains. The Ministry can also establish mentoring or coaching programmes where staff members are paired with experienced professionals in the field.

(Para 44)

#### Governance and related issues

Committee feels that resolving governance issues in National Akademis requires a systematic and proactive approach. First of all, Committee suggests identifying the specific areas where governance problems exist, acknowledging the issues, and committing to addressing them. Further, there is a need to enhance transparency and accountability and promote a culture of ethical conduct and integrity within the Akademis.

(Para 49)

Committee, further, flags that continuous monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of governance practices is also required at regular intervals. Akademis should seek feedback from stakeholders, conduct internal and external evaluations, and use the findings to identify areas for improvement.

(Para 50)

In cases where governance issues persist or are complex, the Akademis should consider seeking external expertise or consulting services. Independent evaluations or audits can provide valuable insights and recommendations for addressing governance challenges.

(Para 51)

Further, the Ministry/Akademis may also consider the possibility of adopting new technological advancements in administration for improving the day-to-day functioning of the Akademis.

(Para 52)

#### Segregation of Functions

The Committee feels that the function of the Akademis is to enable artists to create and express their creativity. The role of the Ministry should be to help the organizations and their artists to realize the organizational vision and fulfil their mission. Its responsibility is to provide an atmosphere for artists to develop and realize their vision with resources that would otherwise be unavailable or greatly diminished in the face of lack of opportunities. The Committee notes that the 2014 High Powered Committee also expressed that the

Ministry has to work as a point of coordination for cultural expression and a catalyst for the dissemination of that expression through the encouragement and sponsorship of multifarious artistic activity. To this end, Committee feels that there should be proper and clear segregation of functions among the Akademis.

(Para 54)

The Committee observes that segregation of functions is also an important concept to internal control frameworks, financial reporting and regulatory compliance. The overall effectiveness of the organization depends on an effective internal administration, adequate division of responsibilities, and the requirement of a sufficient number of staff who are adequately trained. Separation of functions is an important mechanism to help reduce the risk of fraud, error and other financial misconduct. In addition, it helps to promote accountability, transparency and ethical behaviour within the organization. The Committee, therefore, recommends segregation of the purchasing, provisioning, financing and policy-making functions within the Akademis.

(Para 55)

Roles and responsibilities need to be clearly defined. The Heads of these institutions must be domain experts for such bodies. They must be persons with knowledge and work experience in the cultural domain of their institutions. More autonomy and proper policy or guidelines to guide the working of these institutions will enable them to carry on their designated tasks efficiently and effectively. This will further create transparency and build stronger working relationships and clear dissemination of information across the organizations.

(Para 56)

The working of the cultural institutions and the inherent gaps and discrepancies suggest that there is still significant room for improvement. There is a need to strengthen the technical and financial capacities of government departments responsible for cultural policy in order to enable them to harness potential synergies with all agencies. Cooperation is needed to develop regulatory frameworks, policies and strategies. Effective decentralization, government engagement and collaboration between the Government, Akademis and multi-stakeholders can improve policy design, implementation and monitoring for the cultural institutions by adhering to shared principles and developing complementary strategies. This will strengthen informed and transparent systems of governance.

(Para 57)

#### Synergy and coordination among the Institutions

The Committee, in this regard, recommends that Inter-Akademi cooperation is the need of the hour for a coordinated and effective promotion of art and culture across the country. Akademis should establish formal channels of communication between different cultural Akademis. The Ministry can encourage the Akademis to share best practices, lessons learned, and resources with each other. This can also resolve the issue of lack of infrastructure. Moreover, it can lead to optimum utilization of resources. The Committee is also of the view that the Ministry can explore the streamlining of the functions of the Akademis, defining separate functions and compartmentalization of the same. The committee notes that “Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav” was a stellar success in promoting and propagating our culture in various nooks and corners of the country. The Committee reminds that the lessons learned in organising “Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav” should be further utilised to generate synergies among all the cultural institutions and those lessons may be converted into institutional mechanisms to administer the Cultural Institutions and Akademis.



(Para 62)

Further, the Committee recommends that the Ministry must facilitate joint research projects, exchange programs and interdisciplinary collaborations between Akademis to encourage scholars, researchers, and artists from different academies to work together on shared research interests, cultural preservation projects and innovative initiatives. Ministry must establish common standards, policies, and guidelines across different Akademis to ensure consistency and alignment. This can include areas such as governance, ethical practices, financial management and quality assurance.

(Para 63)

The Akademis can also explore opportunities for collaborative funding and resource mobilization. By jointly applying for grants, sponsorships, or donations, academies can enhance their chances of securing funding for larger projects or infrastructure development.

(Para 64)

### Outreach and Inclusivity

The Committee feels that the National Akademis need to enhance its outreach, both within urban and rural areas, to make the arts more accessible and inclusive. Without effective outreach programmes, Akademis may struggle to reach a broader audience, beyond their immediate surroundings. A lack of outreach can reinforce existing cultural hierarchies and exclude cultural practices that are not adequately represented or recognized. This exclusion can lead to marginalization of certain art forms, traditions or communities, thereby, limiting cultural diversity and stifling creativity. There is also a risk of losing intangible cultural heritage, as there may be insufficient engagements with communities, artists and practitioners who are the custodians of these traditions.

(Para 67)

The Committee, therefore, recommends that to address these challenges, National Akademis should prioritize outreach efforts by actively engaging with communities, promoting accessibility, fostering partnerships, and utilizing various communication channels to raise awareness about their activities and opportunities. By doing so, they can broaden their impact, increase inclusivity, and promote cultural exchange and understanding.

(Para 68)

Further, the Akademis must evolve a cultural landscape that ensures the creation of cultural platforms, supports cultural diversity and provides sustainable employment/ jobs for artists after the Akademis programmes.

(Para 69)

The Akademis must work towards increasing cultural public infrastructure such as affordable workspaces and easy access to cultural centres and cultural hubs across the country. They should bring activities closer to people and increase outreach through different means such as the EAST (Easy, Attractive, Social and Timely) principle.

(Para 70)

The Akademis must also leverage technology for coordination between the Akademis to improve outreach and promote each other.

(Para 71)

### Interaction between Akademis and educational institutions

The Committee observes that in the past our cultural Akademis did not seem to interact nor did they have any sustained or meaningful dialogue with schools, colleges and

universities– even in the metros, leave alone the vast remainder of the country. As a result, the Akademis, for the most part, worked like museums in the wilderness. The Committee, however, notes that various initiatives have been taken by the cultural institutions to interact with educational institutions. In the existing scenario, the Committee feels that our schools need to integrate cultural education as part of their curriculum as mentioned in New Education Policy. This has to become mandatory for it to be effective.

(Para 77)

The Committee emphasizes the significance of an interdisciplinary approach in schools and higher education and also introducing students to tangible and intangible heritage as suggested by New Education Policy. Teachers need to be groomed as specialists and an excellent team of teachers and faculty will have to be developed. Also, local artists and crafts persons have to be hired as guest faculty to promote local music, art, languages, and handicraft, and to ensure that students are aware of the culture and local knowledge where they study.

(Para 78)

Education and culture are inseparable and will remain incomplete without one another. The Committee, therefore, feels that the mandate of the Akademis needs to be rearticulated to emphasise links among the Akademis as well as with a range of educational institutions. They should interact with Indian universities and educational institutions to propagate, preserve, and enrich our heterogeneous culture. Such a link would also promote arts education, essential if we are to build a new generation of culture and arts “managers” with a vision.

(Para 79)

#### Infrastructure and Facilities

The Committee observes that investing in infrastructure for cultural Akademis is essential for supporting the growth, development, and sustainability of artistic and cultural practices. Committee recommends that informal education may also be imparted through these Institutions. Ministry should provide the necessary funds and also promote synergy among the Institutions for sharing of infrastructural facilities. Committee also suggested Akademis to explore CSR funds to mobilise the resources for infrastructure developments including auditoriums, classrooms, studios, rehearsal halls and exhibition areas.

(Para 82)

#### Technological Advancements/Digital accessibility

The Committee appreciates the efforts being made in the direction of digitalisation. However, it feels that more can be done in achieving the goal of Digital India. Akademis must adapt to innovations in this digital age and expand their reach through digital platforms like OTT apps, promoting the creation of content, creation of productions, etc., to be facilitated by them online. Akademis can explore the provision of online membership programs that offer exclusive benefits, such as access to premium content, discounts on events, or personalized recommendations. Akademis should also utilize live-streaming technologies to broadcast performances, lectures, workshops, and other cultural events in real time. This allows people to experience cultural activities from anywhere in the world, fostering engagement and participation.

(Para 85)

Akademis should develop online learning platforms or learning management systems that offer courses, workshops, and educational resources. These platforms can provide a range of content, including video lectures, interactive modules, downloadable materials, and assessments.

(Para 86)

**Akademis can also venture into the creation of virtual spaces that showcase exhibitions and galleries, allowing users to explore artworks and cultural artefacts virtually. These platforms can provide 360-degree views, detailed descriptions, audio guides, and interactive elements to enhance the user experience. Virtual exhibitions can reach a wider audience.**

**(Para 87)**

**The Committee also recommends that Akademis should develop comprehensive digital archives and libraries that provide searchable databases, high-resolution images, and detailed metadata. These digitized collections enable researchers, scholars, and the general public to access and study cultural heritage materials remotely.**

**(Para 88)**

**Akademis should also utilize social media platforms to engage with audiences, share updates, and promote cultural programmes. Further, fostering collaborations with other cultural institutions, universities, and organizations to create joint digital initiatives can also be a great help.**

**(Para 89)**

### **Returning of Awards**

**The Committee notes the instances of recipients of awards, given by Akademis (such as Sahitya Akademi Awards), returning their awards in protest of certain political issues which are outside the ambit of the cultural realms and the autonomous functioning of the concerned Akademi. Such inappropriate incidents involving the return of awards undermine the achievements of the other awardees and also impact the overall prestige and reputation of the awards.**

**(Para 92)**

**A Member of the Committee opined against the view that artists, authors and other intellectuals and performers who have been recommended for awards must sign a commitment that they will not return the awards as a form of protest at any point in the future before they are able to receive it. He was of the view that India is a democratic country, and our Constitution has provided to every citizen the freedom of speech and expression and also the freedom to protest in any form. Returning of awards is only a form of protest. The Member added that the Committee must strongly recommend to the Government to look into the actual issues in protest of which such awards have been returned and work towards resolving them. He was seconded by another Member.**

**(Para 93)**

**The Committee questioned the re-engagement of such awardees who joined the Akademi after insulting it. Such inappropriate incidents involving the return of awards undermine the achievements of other awardees and also impact the overall prestige and reputation of the awards. The Member again submitted that the Akademis and the other Institutions should continue to work together with these artists and not shun them.**

**(Para 94)**

**The Committee observes that the awards given by each Akademi continue to be top honours for an artist in India. The Committee emphasizes that Sahitya Akademi or other Akademis are apolitical organizations. There is no place for politics. The Committee, therefore, suggests that whenever an award is given, the consent of the recipient must be taken, so that he/she does not return it because of political reasons; as it is disgraceful to the country. The Committee recommends prior concurrence of short-listed candidates for awards before finalization. A system may be put in place where an undertaking is taken from the proposed awardee citing acceptance of the award and that the awardees cannot dishonour the award at any point of time in future. Awards may not be given without such**

an undertaking. In the event that the awards are returned, the awardee shall not be considered for such award in the award in the future.

(Para 95)

#### Community participation and public awareness

In Committee's opinion, artistic and cultural activities can engage a wide audience in a way that resonates with their cultural background. They are an effective forum for community collaboration and engaging marginalized communities.

(Para 102)

The Committee feels that there is a need to strengthen ties with local communities, artists, and cultural organizations. Further, a bottom-to-top approach is required for a better understanding of the ground level requirements. Akademis should involve communities in decision-making processes, co-creation of programs, and the preservation of intangible cultural heritage. Engaging with the community helps ensure relevance and authenticity in cultural activities, further, leading to the revival of lost traditions, languages and customs.

(Para 103)

#### Public-Private Partnership (PPP):

The Committee feels that little has been done in engaging the private sector and there is still a wider scope for exploration in this field. Private partners can provide financial support through sponsorships, grants, donations, or investments. Private partners can also provide expertise, resources, and technical assistance to the Akademis. Collaboration with private partners in the co-creation and co-production of programs, exhibitions, festivals, or other cultural events can bring diverse perspectives, innovative ideas, and broader networks to the cultural Akademis.

(Para 108)

#### Protection of rural and tribal culture

The Committee is not satisfied with the reply of the Ministry. The Committee feels that the specialized body for Rural, Tribal and Folk Arts could if set up, be a vehicle for the propagation of folk and tribal art forms effectively. This would also mean nurturing these forms and preserving them in their original form as well as encouraging innovation in presentation without destroying the authenticity of these art forms. This could perhaps also be a way to raise the status as well as the remuneration of these artists to levels comparable to those of the classical artists. In addition, it can facilitate a cultural dialogue between all art forms from classical to traditional.

(Para 117)

The Committee also believes that it is important to prioritize the voices and perspectives of tribal communities, while also providing platforms for them to share their culture with a wider audience. Akademis should develop educational outreach programs that promote tribal and rural culture in schools, colleges, and local communities. There is also a need for collaboration with tribal organizations, NGOs, and tribal development agencies to jointly support initiatives for the promotion of tribal culture. Further, Akademis must promote rural stays and tribal stays, especially among the younger generation to acquaint them with the cultural heritage of the country.

(Para 118)

#### Youth engagement

The Committee notes that the efforts are largely targeted at getting children to learn art forms – namely dance and music. The Committee feels that intervention is required to make them aware of what these traditions are; at least to a point where they can identify some very basic ideas of the performing and visual arts. While the Ministry of Culture set up the CCRT with somewhat a similar idea of reaching out and creating opportunities for

young children, especially from smaller cities, and all regions including the North-East, the program needs to be seriously reviewed and updated. Further, it should be linked with other ongoing efforts of the Ministry.

(Para 121)

### Leveraging G20

The Committee appreciates the initiatives taken by the Ministry of Culture and various cultural institutions in showcasing India's rich cultural heritage and art forms at various G20 forums and Conferences. The Committee observes that this is a golden opportunity to propagate and exhibit our thousands of years old continuous cultural heritage to the world community.

(Para 127)

The Committee recommends that Akademis should collaborate with tourism authorities and G-20 stakeholders to promote cultural tourism in India. Akademis should also encourage G-20 delegates to explore Indian cultural treasures beyond the conference venues, thus promoting tourism and economic opportunities. Akademis can initiate collaborative projects between National Akademis and cultural institutions from G-20 member countries. This can involve joint exhibitions, performances, artist residencies, or cultural exchanges. Digital platforms like social media handles, live streaming, and virtual exhibitions can be utilised to extend the reach of National Akademis cultural initiatives during the G-20 summit and to engage a global audience and promote cultural exchange beyond physical boundaries.

(Para 128)

### Members of the Committee also raised various other issues which are as follows:

#### i. Incentives for artists showing their talent on trains, buses, etc.:

Some people beg for money in trains, buses in exchange of a devotional song, a qawwali or a melodious Bollywood number. While most of them are physically challenged, some just take up the practice out of sheer poverty. However, many of these beggars are also musically trained or belong to families that have been practising music for generations together. Ministry/Akademis must take measures to identify such artists and provide them a platform to showcase their talent and also provide monetary support to them.

(Para 129(i))

#### ii. Representation and promotion of culture of North East States of India:

North East India is known for its geographical location, ecology and diverse culture. It is the homeland of large number of ethnic groups. Each ethnic community has its own distinct culture including food, music, dance, dress, language, etc. However, despite this, the North East has not been represented to the degree it deserves to be represented. Ministry must take measures in this direction and implement more schemes to preserve and promote various forms of art and culture in the NER. Ministry must extend all kinds of assistance including financial support to the individual artists and organizations in this region.

(Para 129(ii))

#### iii. Handling, preservation and digitization of Manuscripts:

Manuscripts are the primary source of historic information. Manuscripts are diminishing along with time. Despite their best efforts, it is difficult to save manuscripts in a physical form beyond a time frame. Digital preservation of manuscripts restores them from damage, larceny and decay. The Ministry should evolve a well-designed digitization program that includes not just digital capture, but also appropriate care and repair of original materials, and long-term management of the digital files it produces.

(Para 129(iii))

**iv. Need for promotion of art and culture in schools:**

Arts in modern education help to stimulate creativity, inspire confidence, and foster personal growth. It is a necessary part of any student's education and should be encouraged in all schools. Indian arts of all kinds must be offered to students at all levels of education, starting with early childhood care and education. Outstanding local artists and crafts persons should be hired as guest faculty to promote local music, art, languages, and handicraft, and to ensure that students are aware of the culture and local knowledge of the region where they study.

(Para 129(iv))

**v. Lack of career guidance programmes in the arts for school children:**

Most teenagers are receiving little to no career guidance outside the home. Choosing a career path after school can be challenging, especially for students who have pursued arts. However, with the growing demand for creative and artistic talents in various industries, the career options for art students have increased significantly. Arts need no longer remain a passion and hobby. Career option guidance programmes must be encouraged in schools to help students who want to pursue a career in the arts and creative field full-time.

(Para 129(v))

**vi. Non-availability of information in Hindi or any other local language:**

Culture is encased in our languages. Art, in the form of literature, plays, music, film, etc. cannot be fully appreciated without language. In order to preserve and promote our diverse culture, we need to preserve and promote a culture's languages. Further, information on the art and culture must also be made available in Hindi and the local languages.

(Para 129(vi))

**vii. No mention of Gujarat which is famous for various cultural values like Garba, Navratri and other traditional dances, natakas like Bhavai:**

Ministry must take measures for equitable representation of all states in the field of art and culture.

(Para 129(vii))

**viii. Lack of infrastructure in various Akademis and regional centres in Arunachal Pradesh:**

Ministry/ Akademis may look into the matter and ensure that necessary measures are taken in this regard

(Para 129(viii))

**ix. Need for international recognition of Kalaripayattu, Kathakali and other art forms:**

Ministry may take a look into the matter and take appropriate action in the matter.

(Para 129(ix))

**x. Details of cultural activities organized in Kerala in Thrissur and Thiruvananthapuram:**

The details of the same may be provided to the Committee for information.

(Para 129(x))

**xi. Provision for assisting State Akademis in Kerala:**

The Ministry/ Akademis may take necessary measures to implement schemes for providing support and financial assistance to the State Akedemis in Kerala.

(Para 129(xi))

**xii. Number of cultural Akademis in Andhra Pradesh:**

The total number of Akademis in Andhra Pradesh may be furnished to the Committee.

(Para 129(xii))

**xiii. Plans for future expansion of such Akademis, especially in Rajamundry constituency, etc.:**

**The Ministry/ Akademis may take measures for the expansion of Akademis and other cultural institutions in Rajamundry and other constituencies for the promotion of local art and culture in these regions.**

**(Para 129(xiii))**

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