

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA (भारत सरकार)
MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (रेल मंत्रालय)
RAILWAY BOARD (रेलवे बोर्ड)

No. 2000/TG.III/464/18/Policy

New Delhi, dated 11.06.2004

The General Managers
All Indian Railways

(COMMERCIAL CIRCULAR NO. 19 OF 2004)

Sub: Bookstall Policy – 2004

1. PREAMBLE

The matter regarding review of policy on bookstalls has been under consideration of the Ministry of Railways. At present, management of bookstalls on Railway stations is by two major bookstall chains which are M/s. A.H. Wheeler & Co. and M/s. Higginbothams Limited, by philanthropic and social organisations like M/s. Gita Press, M/s. Sarva Seva Sangh Prakashan, M/s. Ramakrishna Mission and Other Categories which are unemployed graduates or their cooperatives etc..

In the absence of a comprehensive policy on the subject, zonal railways have been approaching Railway Board on various issues from time to time. In addition, certain assurances had been given in Parliament, which have to be incorporated in the policy. It has been decided, therefore, to issue a comprehensive policy on the subject. The following policy guidelines are issued in supersession of all previous instructions issued in this regard.

2. CLASSIFICATION OF BOOKSTALLS

Bookstalls at railway stations may be classified into the following five categories :

‘A’ Category Bookstalls: All bookstalls at important stations in the National Capital and State/Union Territories namely, (I) Jammu, (ii) New Delhi, (iii) Delhi Junction, (iv) Hazrat Nizamuddin, (v) Lucknow, (vi) Patna, (vii) Bhopal, (viii) Guwahati, (ix) Howrah, (x) Sealdah, (xi) Bhubaneswar, (xii) Chennai, (xiii) Thiruvananthapuram, (xiv) Hyderabad, (xv) Secunderabad, (xvi) Bangalore, (xvii) Ahmedabad, (xviii) Jaipur, (xix) Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus/Mumbai, (xx) Churchgate, (xxi) Dadar, (xxii) Mumbai Central (xxiii) Bandra and at all other stations having annual passenger earnings of more than Rs. 6 crores.

‘B’ Category Bookstalls: All bookstalls at non-suburban stations with annual passenger earnings between Rs. 3 crores and Rs. 6 crores. Stations of tourist importance or very busy junction stations to be decided by the General Manager of the zonal railway should also be included in this category.

‘C’ Category Bookstalls: All bookstalls at suburban stations not mentioned under category ‘A’ above.

‘D’ Category Bookstalls: All bookstalls at non-suburban stations with annual passenger earnings between Rs. 1 crore and Rs. 3 crores.

‘E’ Category Bookstalls. All bookstalls at non-suburban stations with annual passenger earnings less than Rs. 1 crore.

3. SCALE OF FACILITIES

3.1. For providing minimum level of facilities at different class of stations, Zonal railways may arrange to provide the following scale of bookstall facilities on their system. If the level of facilities already available is more than the minimum prescribed, the same may be retained. In case where the facilities are less than those prescribed and if there is need and justification which should be decided at the level of the General Manager, additional facilities may be provided subject to the condition that the additional facilities do not add to congestion and do not hamper the free movement of passengers. The bookstalls/trolleys run at the station by philanthropic societies and social organisations would be over and above the minimum facilities indicated below.

3.2. The minimum facilities at different class of stations are indicated as under:

| S. No | Category | Concourse | PRS Office (if located away from the station) | Main Platform | Other Platforms |
|-------|--------------------|---|---|--|---|
| 1. | ‘A’ class stations | 1 bookstall or table depending upon availability of space | 1 bookstall | 1 bookstall at the center of the platform and two book-tables, one each at the end of the platform | 1 bookstall and 1 trolley on every platform |
| 2. | ‘B’ class stations | Nil | Nil | 1 bookstall | 1 trolley for all other platforms |

| | | | | | |
|----|--------------------------|-----|-----|-------------|------------------------------------|
| 3. | 'C' class stations | Nil | Nil | 1 bookstall | 1 trolley / table at each platform |
| 4. | 'D' & 'E' class stations | Nil | Nil | 1 bookstall | Nil |

3.3. Requirement of salesmen to operate bookstalls and other facilities will be determined by the zonal railways.

3.4. In view of the need for decongesting the platforms, certain stations have been placed in the 'banned' list. No new bookstalls can be opened at the existing platforms in the banned stations without prior clearance of Railway Board. This ban shall not be applicable on new/extended platforms, new station buildings etc. at these stations. A list of such 'banned' stations is enclosed.

4. SIZE OF STALLS/TABLES

4.1. In order to have uniformity and proper utilization of space the size of stalls has been standardised on the pattern of modular stalls. For new stalls, Stalls on the main platforms will be 300 cm. long (parallel to the track) and 250 cm. wide (perpendicular to the track) and shall be flushed with the station building wall. In case of other than main platform stall size should be of a maximum length of 300 cm. (parallel to the track) with 180 cm. width (perpendicular to the track). All stalls should have inside height of 210 cm. with overall height of 270 cm. with 60 cm. wide space for storage purposes. The top panel of the stall should be in the form of glow-signs having 60 cm. height all around the stall indicating the name of zonal railway, the licensee's name and logo of the company.

4.2. Size of book-tables will not be more than 180 cm. long (parallel to the track) and 120 cm. width (perpendicular to the track).

4.3. The cost of erection and maintenance of bookstalls, trolleys and tables will continue to be borne by the licensees.

5. MANAGEMENT OF BOOKSTALLS

5.1. TENURE AND RENEWAL

5.1.1. Tenure of the license of the bookstall of all categories would be five years. However, the Railway administration reserves the right to renew the licence for five years at a time subject to the satisfactory performance of the licensee. The performance should be monitored continuously and the renewal committee consisting of officers of the same rank as for the selection committee will scrutinize the track record of the licensee, observations made by officials during inspections conducted from time to

time, public complaints, fines imposed and timely payment of railway dues based on proper assessment of sales by railways.

5.2. LICENCE FEE

5.2.1. (a) Licence fee for major bookstall chains

The licence fee for Bookstall chains under single management will be 5% of the sales turnover. Further there will be 5% annual increase over the benchmark of licence fee paid in the year 2002 for M/s. A.H. Wheeler & Co. and 2003 for M/s. Higginbothams Ltd. – This should also be not less than the minimum prescribed for relevant class of stations as indicated under sub-paras (b) and (c) below.

(b) Licence fee for ‘A’ Class stations

It has been decided that all other categories of bookstall holders (except non-profitteering philanthropic social organisations) for `A` class stations will pay licence fee at the rate of 5% on the sales turnover subject to a minimum of Rs. 20,000/- per annum per bookstall and Rs. 2000/- per additional table/trolley. For new bookstalls where the selection is done on the basis of highest bidding, the licence fee shall be decided in terms of para 5.5.

(c) Licence fee for ‘B’ and below Class Stations

For ‘B’ and ‘C’ class stations, licence fee will be levied at the rate of 2.5% on the sales turnover subject to a minimum of Rs. 10,000/- per annum per bookstall and Rs. 1000/- per additional table/trolley. For ‘D’ Class stations licence fee will be levied at the rate of 2.5 % on the sales turnover subject to a minimum of Rs. 3000/- and for ‘E’ class station licence fee will be levied at the rate of 2.5 % on the sales turnover subject to a minimum of Rs. 1500/-.

(d) Licence fee for philanthropic organisations etc.

The revised licence fee for philanthropic societies etc. will be as under: -

| Type of Bookstalls | Proposed annual licence fee |
|---------------------------|---|
| A Category | 2.5% of sales turnover, subject to a minimum of Rs.5,000/- per bookstall and Rs 500/- for each additional table/trolley |
| B Category | 2.5% of sales turnover, subject to a minimum of Rs.3,000/- per bookstall and Rs.300/- for each additional table/trolley |

| | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| C Category (Suburban Stations) | 2.5% of sales turnover, subject to a minimum of Rs. 2,000/- per stall and Rs.200/- for each additional table/trolley |
| D & E Category | 2.5% of sales turnover, subject to a minimum of Rs 500/- per stall per annum |

5.2.2. The licence fee should be fixed by a committee of three officers one of whom should be an Accounts Officer not below the rank of Senior Scale. While fixing the licence fee, the committee should keep in view all the relevant factors, which shall include:-

- (a) Number of vendors, salesmen/workers allowed;
- (b) Size and number of stalls, structure, etc.;
- (c) Additional facilities like trolleys/counter tables etc.;
- (d) Location of the stall(s) at the station;
- (e) Importance of the station from the point of view of passenger traffic and demand;
and
- (f) Sale.

5.2.3. The licence fee should be determined at the time of allotment or renewal of the contract. In the case of new contracts, the amount of lumpsum licence fee should be indicated in the advertisement. In the case of renewals, the licence fee should be fixed three months before the date of renewal and advised to the contractor so that he can decide whether to continue the contract or not. In case of existing contracts, the existing licence fee may continue till such time renewal is due. It should be made clear to the contractors/licensees/applicants that the decision of Administration in regard to annual sales turnover will be final.

5.2.4. At the time of renewal, a fresh assessment of sales will be undertaken and licence fee will be revised. The licensee will deposit the licence fee for one year in advance as security deposit. The annual licence fee will also be collected from the licensee in advance every year.

5.2.5. With a view to ensure the correctness of the licence fee being recovered from the bookstall holders on the basis of their sales turnover the following action should be taken:-

- (1) Zonal Railways should arrange verification of the accounts of the Company/offices of the organisations, individual bookstall holders on quarterly basis regularly by deputing officers of the Commercial and Accounts Department jointly;
- (2) These officers should also inspect the records being maintained at the bookstalls. On-the-spot inspection of the bookstalls should be done by the officials of Commercial & Accounts Deptts. jointly in such a manner as to cover all the

bookstalls held by the Company/organization/individual bookstall holders on each Zonal Railway within a period of one year;

- (3) A report should be furnished to Railway Board on quarterly basis indicating the amount deposited by M/s A.H. Wheeler & Co. and M/s Higginbothams Ltd. with the Railways for all the bookstalls held by them, with a view to ensure that the amount due from these bookstall holders is paid by them and is duly accounted for in the Railway Accounts;
- (4) The relevant clauses of the agreements to be executed with the bookstall holders should also incorporate suitable provisions so that quality of literature including that of regional languages and display and sale of literature on national integration and communal harmony are duly ensured;
- (5) In order to ensure that requisite licence fee amount is credited to Railway's account promptly, M/s A.H. Wheeler & Co. and M/s Higginbothams Ltd. would also be required to deposit difference, if any, between advance licence fee payments and the licence fee dues (based on the actual turnover) within 30 days of close of the calendar year. For such adjustments, Northern Railway and Southern Railway respectively are nominated as the nodal Zonal Railways. Similar procedure for depositing the difference, if any, between advance licence fee payments and licence fee dues would be followed for other licensees by the concerned railways.

5.3. SOLE SELLING RIGHT

- 5.3.1. At present M/s. A.H. Wheeler & Co. is enjoying sole selling rights for running bookstalls at platforms on which this company had been running the same till 01.01.1976. It has now been decided that M/s. A.H. Wheeler & Co. shall not have any sole selling rights henceforth and their rights are brought at par with others. The number of bookstalls held by M/s. A.H. Wheeler & Co. and M/s. Higginbothams Ltd. are at present frozen. Since, the sole selling rights of M/s. A.H. Wheeler & Co. have been withdrawn and their rights have been brought at par with others, the freezing on the holding of stalls by M/s. A.H. Wheeler & Co. and M/s. Higginbothams Ltd. is also removed. In view of the need for decongesting the platform, any fresh allotment of any new bookstall to any category at the stations where railways had frozen the holding of M/s. A.H. Wheeler & Co. and M/s. Higginbothams Ltd. should have to be amply justified before any such decision is taken. The allotment at such stations should be done only with the personal approval of General Manager, irrespective of the type of station.

5.4. RENEWAL OF LICENSE FOR EXISTING BOOKSTALLS

5.4.1. Bookstall chain under single management

(i) **M/s A. H. Wheeler & Co.**

M/s. A. H. Wheeler & Co. are operating bookstalls on all zonal railways except Southern Railway and part of South Central Railway. Their licence, including revision of licence fee, is decided at the level of Railway Board. Northern Railway is the nodal agency, which coordinates with other railways and maintains record of sales and payment of licence fee in terms of agreement with this company.

The renewal of the license for the existing bookstalls would be done by Railway Board based on performance, for five years at a time.

(ii) **M/s. Higginbothams Ltd.**

M/s. Higginbothams Ltd. are running bookstalls on Southern Railway and part of South Central Railway. Their licence, including renewal and fixation of licence fee etc., is centrally controlled from Railway Board. Southern Railway is the nodal agency for coordination with South Central Railway and is maintaining record of sales and payment of licence fee in terms of the agreement with this company.

The renewal of the license for the existing bookstalls would be done by Railway Board based on satisfactory performance, for five years at a time.

5.4.2. Philanthropic and Social Institutions

Philanthropic and social institutions like the Gita Press, the Ramakrishna Mission and the Sarva Seva Sangh Prakashan and institutions established under the auspices of the Government are also allotted bookstalls for the sale of their own publications only. Their licence, including renewal and fixation of licence fee etc. will be decided by the zonal railways.

5.4.3. Other Categories

5.4.3.1. Bookstalls are also handled by individual unemployed graduates, their cooperatives, their organizations or their partnership enterprises. The other categories include: -

- (i) Cooperative societies registered under the Societies Registration Act of 1960, of unemployed graduates comprising actual workers/vendors;
- (ii) Partnerships and organisations of unemployed graduates;
- (iii) Individual unemployed graduates who are sons/wards of railwaymen, both in service or retired; or
- (iv) Individual unemployed graduates other than those mentioned above.

5.4.3.2. The renewal of the license of the bookstalls already allotted to 'Other Categories' would continue to be made by the zonal railways based on satisfactory performance, for five years at a time. However, the contracts of unemployed graduates managing bookstalls should be discontinued after their getting employment.

5.5 ALLOTMENT OF NEW BOOKSTALLS

5.5.1 New bookstalls will be allotted by zonal railways at ‘A’ class stations based on eligibility criteria through a two-packet system, where the first packet will be meant for short-listing tenderers/applicants satisfying the minimum criteria. The second bid will be purely financial where the tenderers/applicants will quote the annual license fee payable to Railway Administration subject to a minimum fee as laid down in para 5.2. above. The contract will be awarded to the tenderer who has quoted the highest annual license fee. The notification for inviting offers should also be placed in national newspapers.

5.5.2. At other stations (‘B’ class and below), applications will be invited by giving suitable notification through press. There will be no competitive bidding.

5.5.3 Eligibility Criteria

| Category | Financial/Solvency Criteria | Other Criteria |
|----------------------------|--|---|
| ‘A’ class stations. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The firm should be duly incorporated/registered for book business - The firm should have had an annual turnover from bookstall(s) elsewhere equal to at least 150% of the anticipated annual turnover from the tendered bookstall in any one of the last five years. - The revenue/bankers/solvency certificate equal to 40% of the advertised annual anticipated sales value. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The firm should have at least 10 persons on its rolls, 50% of whom should be graduates. - The firm should have at least one similar bookstall/bookshop in the same city. |

| | | |
|---|-------------|--|
| <p>‘B’ and below class of stations. To be allotted only to ‘Other Categories’ in terms of Para 5.4.3. above. Not to be offered to major bookstall chains. The contracts of unemployed graduates managing bookstalls should be discontinued after their getting employment.</p> | <p>None</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Each member of the association/partnership/society should be a graduate. - The member should be between the age of 18 and 36 years. - The member should be unemployed. - All work connected with the management of the bookstalls, including train side vending should be done by the members themselves. They will be issued photo-identity cards by the Administration. |
|---|-------------|--|

5.5.4 System of Allotment:

There would be a three Member Selection Committee at appropriate level of Commercial, Finance and one from a sister department, as indicated in para 5.5.5. below, which will scrutinize the offers received to select the eligible candidates

Railway Board should be kept advised in the matter, if such contract is awarded to any of the major bookstall holders (M/s A.H. Wheeler or M/s Higginbotham), since subsequent renewal of the contract will be done centrally at Railway Board’s level. The major bookstall holders shall be eligible for consideration for ‘A’ Class bookstalls only and not for lower category bookstalls.

Allotment of bookstalls to philanthropic and social organizations like Gita Press, Ramkrishan Mission, and Sarva Seva Sangh Prakashan will henceforth be made by the zonal railways.

Applications received from philanthropic and social institutions, will be processed by the zonal railways and decision taken subject to feasibility at that location. These cases will be decided with the personal approval of General Manager.

The above mentioned procedure will be applicable for allotment of bookstalls to philanthropic and social organization at all categories of stations.

5.5.5. Composition of Selection Committee

The composition of the selection committees and the level of the approving authority will be as under:

| Category of Bookstalls | Selection Committee | Approving Authority |
|--------------------------|--|--|
| 'A' category | 3 junior administrative grade officers from Zonal Railway Headquarters, one each from Commercial, Finance & another Department | HOD Incharge |
| 'B' and below categories | 3 Senior Scale officers, one each from Commercial, Accounts & another Department | Sr. DCM or ADRM in case Division does not have Sr. DCM |

5.5.6. Reservation

There will be a 25% reservation in the allotment of new bookstalls at 'B', 'C' and 'D' category stations as per the breakup given below:-

| | | |
|-------|--|-------|
| (i) | Scheduled Castes | - 6% |
| (ii) | Scheduled Tribes | - 4% |
| (iii) | People below poverty line | - 4% |
| (iv) | Women including war widows and widows of railway employees | - 3% |
| (v) | Other Backward classes | - 3% |
| (vi) | Minorities* | - 3% |
| (vii) | Physically handicapped persons | - 2% |
| | TOTAL | - 25% |

* the term minorities will include the communities viz. 1. Muslims 2. Christians 3. Sikhs 4. Buddhists 5. Zoroastrians (Parsis).

The Commercial Department of the Zonal Railways will maintain the record of application received through press notification from various categories separately. The above provision of allotments based on reservation will apply in the case of fresh allotments and Divisions will maintain records accordingly.

6. GENERAL

6.1. Land Rent, Conservancy, Electricity and Water Charges

The present systems of charging nominal rental charges @ Rs. 1/- per bookstall per annum will continue. The conservancy charges will also continue to be realized as per current rate. Electricity and water charges will be based on actual consumption.

6.2. Free Passes

Henceforth no free passes shall be given to any category of bookstall licencees.

6.3. Sale Of Items

Licensees will keep books on varied subjects viz. literature, history, children's literature, fiction, travel, light reading, art, culture, current affairs, professional interests, national integration, etc. in English, Hindi and regional languages. They should also sell timetables published by railways as well as railway souvenirs and the same should be displayed conspicuously at the stalls. Sale of all types of obscene, scurrilous, smutty, pornographic, offensive or objectionable publications including pirated books is prohibited at all bookstalls. Zonal railways should exercise strict supervision and in case any licensee is found indulging in sale of such literature serious view should be taken including termination of licence. In this connection, instructions issued vide Board's letter No. 78-TG.III/464/1 dated 8.1.1979 may be connected.

6.4 Mobile Library -cum- bookstalls, including hawking of books, magazines etc. inside coaches

In terms of Board's letter No. 75/TG.III/461/37/ML dated 28.2.1986, mobile library-cum-bookstalls including hawking of books, magazines etc. was banned on new trains. However, existing mobile libraries-cum-bookstalls on the trains already introduced were allowed to be continued.

It has now been decided that arrangements for such mobile libraries-cum-bookstalls should not be continued/extended further beyond the existing contractual obligations.

6.5. Inspection And Monitoring

Zonal railways will carry out frequent inspections at various levels to ensure that bookstalls function to the satisfaction of Railways. In case of any irregularity fine

may be imposed on the defaulting licensee and recovered. Emphasis should be laid on proper assessment of sales, type of published material being sold, payment of railway dues, public complaints and suggestions etc.

Please acknowledge receipt of this letter.

(Kamal Kant)
Executive Director (T&C),
Railway Board

Copy to: FA&CAOs, All Indian Railways – For information and necessary action.

For **Financial Commissioner/Railways**