

The Hindu

Station masters press for filling up of vacancies

Members of All India Station Masters' Association staged a demonstration pressing for a charter of demands, including filling up of vacancies, to ensure punctuality and safety of trains, here on Wednesday.

Its divisional president, S. Sivagnanam, said that the protest was part of an all-India agitation.

Pointing out that several enquiry committees that probed into various accidents had recommended for additional station masters in stations with higher workload.

“This was defined as those stations served by single lines with more than 85 per cent traffic and all double lines. The railway board had agreed to implement it in 2012,” he said.

However, out of the 13 stations identified in Madurai, this was implemented only in seven stations.

“The failure to implement it in remaining six stations alone has left us with a vacancy of 18 station masters,” he added.

He said that the average length of a yard in station is 1.5 km.

A station master who has to clear signal for trains is also required to personally inspect whether the points and signals are properly clamped.

“A minor failure will force the SMs to concentrate on rectifying it rather than operation of trains to ensure punctuality and safety of trains,” said another station master, S. Kalyanaraman.

Besides, an average reserve strength of 25 per cent has to be maintained among the strength of station masters as the station masters have to be allowed to go for refresher course, medical examination, leave and other requirements.

With more women station masters in the rolls, the administration needs to fill up the posts as the women officials are eligible for six months maternity leave.