

**STATE OF CONSERVATION REPORT**  
**DARJEELING HIMALAYAN RAILWAY**  
**Mountain Railways of India (India) (C 944ter)**



**Report Submitted by**  
**Indian Railways - State Party, India**  
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## 1. Executive Summary of the report

The Darjeeling Himalayan Railway (DHR) is the first, and still the most outstanding, example of a hill passenger railway. Opened in 1881, it applied bold and ingenious engineering solutions to the problem of establishing an effective rail link across a mountainous terrain of great landscape beauty. It is still fully operational and retains most of its original features intact.

The train services are running well for more than 138 years with almost NIL accidents. Number of services and passengers also increased many folds over the time. Darjeeling Himalayan Railway has preserved Steam Locomotives more than 100 years old and Vintage Coaches of 1917 make and they are in working condition. Significant artefacts, communication instrument etc. are also preserved. Zigzag reverse and loops of track are unique engineering marvel and are still preserved and in operation.

In Twenty-third session at Marrakesh, Morocco 29 November – 4 December 1999, Bureau recommended that the Committee inscribe the site on the World Heritage List under criteria (ii) and (iv):

**Criterion (ii):** The Darjeeling Himalayan Railway is an outstanding example of the influence of an innovative transportation system on the social and economic development of a multi-cultural region, which was to serve as a model for similar developments in many parts of the world.

**Criterion (iv):** The development of railways in the 19th century has a profound influence on social and economic developments in many parts of the world. This process is illustrated in an exceptional and seminal fashion by the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway.

This Heritage Railway continues to have a prominent role in social and economic development of this region.

As State Party, Indian Railways is fully committed to comply with the guidelines of World Heritage Committee. An agreement has been executed with UNESCO for “**Development of Comprehensive Conservation Maintenance Plan (CCMP) for Darjeeling Himalayan Railway (DHR) World Heritage site** through effective stakeholders’ empowerment” on 20-01-2017 at cost of USD 533,332. There were four review meetings held in past three years with UNESCO. Besides, three technical workshops and one International Workshop were also organized to understand the world heritage property. CCMP is under finalization.

Darjeeling Himalayan Railway is headed by Director/DHR looking after preservation of Heritage Values of the property assisted by Assistant Divisional Engineer (Looking after Infrastructure and Track), Assistant Divisional Mechanical Engineer (Looking after maintenance of rolling Stocks and Crew Management), Area Officer (Looking after Traffic Operation and commercial Activities). Director/DHR reports to Divisional Railway Manager/Katihar/Northeast Frontier Railway. At Zonal Headquarter level, Heritage Conservation Unit is headed by Additional General Manager/Northeast Frontier Railway. At Railway Board Level, Heritage matters are being monitored by Executive Director/Heritage/Railway board and Secretary/Railway Board.

Attention was drawn during Forty-third session at Baku, Republic of Azerbaijan 30 June - 10 July 2019 43 COM 7b.62 regarding lack of monitoring, general maintenance, serious encroachment by illegal construction and dumping of waste along the tracks.

Regarding the maintenance of trains, track and associated structures, it is stated that DHR is in operation for more than 138 years with almost NIL accidents. It has been possible because of proper maintenance of trains, track and associated structures. Funds allocation for DHR has increased substantially during last three years. No compromise is made with respect to safe running of the trains on DHR.

The observation made regarding waste dumping was critically examined by Heritage Conservation Unit of Northeast Frontier Railway and DHR Management Group. Videography was done of entire DHR stretch. Wherever dumping of waste was observed, the same has been cleared on a special drive. Besides, regular cleanliness drives are being conducted and regular coordination is being done with local authorities as well as local people to prevent dumping of waste on or near the track.

As regarding encroachment, no new encroachment by illegal construction along the tracks on Railway Property since inscription has been allowed. This has been made possible because of regular follow-up with Local Authorities and continuous monitoring to prevent encroachment.

**State Party is committed to preserve the OUVs of Darjeeling Himalayan Railway, the World Heritage Site.**