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PASSENGERS SATISFACTION TOWARDS RAILWAY SERVICES WITH REFERENCE TO COIMBATORE JUNCTION

*¹Dr. Kalaiselvi, A., ²Sandhya, D. and ²Athira, C.G.

¹Associate Professor of Economics, PG and Research Department of Commerce with CA, Hindustan College of Arts and Science, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, India

²II M.Com CA, PG and Research Department of Commerce with CA, Hindustan College of Arts and Science, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, India

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Corresponding author

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ABSTRACT

The Indian railway is one of the largest and busiest rail network in the world, transporting sixteen million passengers and more than one million tons of freight daily. Its serves the passengers in a big way, therefore there is a need to integrate passenger concerns in the operation, planning and other processes that impact passenger services and its quality in bigger way and it effectively monitors the creation and maintenance of a good services. Hence in this study is made upon the satisfaction level and problems faced by the southern Indian passengers.

INTRODUCTION

Indian Railway is the second largest railway in the whole world. Indian railway is one of the most effective networks established in 1853 to operate both, long distance and suburban rail systems on a multi-gauge network of broad, meter and narrow gauges. The Indian Railway helps to unite the integral, social, economic, and cultural foundation of the country. Indian railway has around 114,500 kilometers of railway track with 7500 railway station. This Railway carries approximately 30 million passengers and 2.8 million tons of freight daily. The present Indian railways are characterized by challenges of market changes and increasing demand in capacity. The South Indian Railway was originally created in the British colonial times as Great Southern India Railway Co founded in Britain in 1853 and registered in 1859. Its original headquarters was in Tiruchirappalli (Trichy) and was registered as a company in London only in 1890. In 1944, all Railway companies were taken over by the Government.

And three years later, when India woke up to independence in 1947, the stage was set for the integration of different Railways into smaller zones. In 1948, immediately after independence, there were as many as 42 different railway systems - a multiplicity of railway administrations, varying in size and standards. The Southern Railway, headquartered at Chennai Central, is one of the 17 zones of Indian Railways. It is the earliest of the 17 zones of the Indian Railways created in independent India. It was created on 14 April 1951 by merging three state railways, namely, the Madras and Southern Mahratta Railway, the South Indian Railway Company, and the Mysore State Railway.

Review of Literature

Vishnuvarthan and Selvaraj (2012), concluded that the awareness of the passengers about the railway services (communication and retiring services, reservation knowledge, catering services, utility services, ticketing and fares, special

services and miscellaneous services) have significant relation with the level of satisfaction of the passengers. Sheeba and Kumuthadevi (2013) revealed that the most important factors determining satisfaction of passengers in train are basic facilities, water facilities, toilet facilities, hygiene, safety and security, catering, health care service, punctuality, essential facilities, availability of seats and arrangements and neatness. Anuradha,(2014), concluded that majority of the sample passengers are having low level of awareness and dissatisfied with the services offered by the Indian Railways. Vimal and Jitin (2014), concluded that the respondents preferring railways' service because it cheaper than other mode of transport and majority of the respondents are facing problem of overcrowding or rush in railway compartments.

Objectives of the study

- To measure the level of satisfaction of passengers on services provided by the rail system.
- To explore the problem faced by the selected sample respondents in passenger under the study area.

Scope of the Study

The study is mainly focused on the satisfaction level of the passengers from the services offered by southern railways. Every aspect related to railway service like ticket availability, quality of travel, staff behavior, safety, timing etc. are studied at different level of the research. The sample population is chosen from Coimbatore junction. The research is mainly conducted to obtain the quality of the service providing by the southern railways.

Statement of Problem

In India most of the people are preferring railway transportation due to low cost and convenience. Satisfaction is based on the perception of passengers on various services offered by the rail system. To offer customized services, it is essential to understand the expectations and perceptions of the passengers with regard to quality of services offered by the rail system. The railway passengers are facing a lot of problems. The majority of problems are availability of ticket, over crowded, delay in arrival, poor safety measure etc. The research goes a ride on the problems faced by the passengers. Based on the above issues, it is pertinent to focus the study on customer satisfaction on services provided by the rail system.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The methodology adopted in the present study includes the research design, the sampling technique, and the collection of data and tools of analysis. A descriptive cross sectional survey based questionnaire design was used as research design. The present study was based on both primary and secondary data. Well-structured and pre tested questions based on the variables contained in the interview schedule were used for collecting primary data by personal interview method. The questions contained in the interview schedule were mainly dichotomous questions and five point Like scale questions. Secondary data have been collected from books, journals, newspapers, periodicals, reports, and internet. Statistics tools used in this study is simple percentage analysis and weighted average analysis.

Limitation of the study: The study is mainly based on the information given by the sample respondents, and the factors given by them are subject to their beliefs and attitude. Due to time and economic constraints of the research, number of respondents has been limited to 100. The suggestions are not constant because the mindset of the respondent may be changed. Since the data collected from the respondents are subjected to their opinion and perception. The study mainly covered the southern railway Coimbatore junction, so it may be vary in other junction.

Table 1. Simple Percentage Analysis

Age	No of Respondents	Percentage
Below 30 years	58	58%
30 years - 39 years	20	20%
40 years - 49 years	10	10%
50 years - 59 years	6	6%
60 years & above	6	6%
Gender		
Male	68	68%
Female	32	32%
Occupational Status		
Business	18	18%
Salary	26	26%
Professional	18	18%
Other	38	38%
Service of the Railway		
Daily	26	26%
Weekly	34	34%
Occasionally	14	14%
Rarely	20	20%
Very rarely	6	6%
Purpose of Journey		
Study	12	12%
Employment	46	46%
Household matters	10	10%
Tour purpose	32	32%
Train Frequently Used		
Passenger	34	34%
Express	46	46%
Super-fast	14	14%
Jan Satabdi	6	6%
Traveling Class		
Second ordinary	30	30%
Second express	40	40%
Sleeper class	14	14%
A/c class	16	16%
Selection for Transporting		
Low fair	44	44%
Comforts	12	12%
Speedy	26	26%
Security	6	6%
Reliability	12	12%
Method of Getting Ticket		
Ticket counters	40	40%
E ticketing	36	36%
Post Office	2	2%
Vending Machines	8	8%
Agents	14	14%
Difficulties in e Ticketing		
Service Charges	20	20%
Automatic Cancellation of	32	32%
Waitlisted Tickets		
Change in Name and Hearing	26	26%
Station		
Connectivity Problems	22	22%

Source: Primary Data

From the above table it is inferred that availability of porters and trolleys got ranks 1st, ATM facility got ranks 2nd, refreshment/food/plazas got ranks 3rd, cleanliness on platform and security at station both got ranks 4th, parking facility got ranks 5th, Touch screen system got ranks 6th, drinking water

arrangements got ranks 7th, pay and use toilets got ranks 8th, and waiting room got ranks last.

Table 2. Satisfaction Levels of Facilities at Platform and Stations

Facilities at Platforms and Stations	Weighted Average Score	Rank
Cleanliness on platform	340	4
security at station	340	4
Drinking water arrangements	306	7
Waiting room	290	9
Pay and use toilets	296	8
ATM facility	352	2
Refreshment/food/plazas	346	3
Touch screen system	332	6
Availability of porters and trolleys	356	1
Parking facility	334	5

Source: Primary Data

Table 3. Satisfaction Levels of Facilities Available in Trains

Amenities	Weighted Average Score	Rank
Cleanliness and Security in trains	344	1
Proper maintenance of coaches	330	4
Availability of ladies coaches	336	2
Mobile charging facilities	328	5
Facilities for physically challenged persons	322	3

Source: Primary Data

From the above table it is inferred that cleanliness and security in trains got ranks 1st, availability of ladies coaches got ranks 2nd, facilities for physically challenged persons ranks 3rd, proper maintenance of coaches got ranks 4th, mobile charging facilities got ranks 5th.

Suggestion

The contribution of this study is the identification of factors that determine passenger satisfaction with services offered by the rail system. Availability of power, responsiveness of railway staffs (including TTE, booking clerk etc), safety and security, digital display and individualized attention to passengers are the factors considered most important by the passengers. The proposed model of customer satisfaction may be used as a basis to plan efforts towards increasing customer satisfaction. Improvement in sanitation facility, catering facility, infrastructures in the train, behaviour of porters, responsiveness of railway doctors, Railway staff's knowledge in answering the queries, punctuality of train services and understanding the needs of the passengers is required to enhance the satisfaction of the passengers and to improve the quality of services of the rail system. The study thus provides a direction for railway administration whereby areas for improving services may be identified and passenger satisfaction may be enhanced.

- To implement effective and qualified services to the customers and should maintain quality of food items.
- Focus on vital service quality factors like basic facilities, hygiene and safety- security, which is considered important, factors to determine the satisfaction of the customers.

- The numbers of general compartments have to increase in order to reduce the overcrowding in the trains.
- Increase in the price of ticket will shift the passengers to other mode of transport. So authority has to take necessary step to cut down ticket price because most of the rail passengers are middle income and poor people.
- Authority has to provide training and tries to improve the behaviour of the railway staffs so that they have to be more responsive to the passenger.

Conclusion

The empirical study is really a contribution to identify the factors that determine passenger satisfaction in rail with service and quality of services provided by the Southern Railways. The Indian Rail transportation is gaining importance day by day. With the increase of passengers, the Indian Railways has focused to extend its attention to satisfy the needs of passengers and made initiatives to improve the quality of service to enrich the satisfaction of passengers. Even though repeated attempt made by the Railways to improve the quality of services, the result would not satisfied the passenger's needs. It reveals that, continuous, comprehensive, lengthy intentional performance and attempts are essential to solve these problems. Accordingly, the research gives some insights to develop and improve the quality of services to satisfy the passengers in rail. The service offering by Indian railway is vital for its growth. The satisfaction of the need of the passengers is important to compete with other mode of transport. On the basis of this study some suggestions has been made. If the suggestive measurements have been considered by the Indian Railways, it is hope that the Indian Railways will shine and bring magnificence to our country in the near future.

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