



## PROBLEMS FACED BY THE PASSENGERS OF INDIAN RAILWAYS- A STUDY IN SALEM DIVISION OF SOUTHERN RAILWAY ZONE

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### Abstract

The Indian Railways is an amazing example of successful government run enterprise not only in India but also for the whole world. Indian Railways remained as energy efficient transport mode ideally suited for long distance travel as well as perfect suited for bulk mode of transport. Indian Railways is one of the biggest transporters of passengers' traffic in the world. The provision of passenger amenities is one of the important objectives of the Indian Railways both as business ethic and social obligation. The study highlights the problems faced by the passengers while reserving tickets, on boarding the train and while travelling in the train in Salem Division of Southern Railway Zone. A sample of 500 passengers is drawn using stratified random sampling technique from the major junctions of Salem Division of Southern Railway Zone. Average rank analysis is the tool used to analyse the problems faced by the passengers.

**Key words:** problems, passengers and railways.

### Introduction

The transport sector bears a close and complex relationship with all the other sectors of a country's economy. Thus an efficient transport system is the yardstick of an economy (Padam S). Raghuram and Rachana Gangwar (2000) describes the Indian Railways is among one of the largest and oldest rail transportation systems in the world, more than 150 years old, fondly called by people as the "Lifeline of the Nation". It occupies a unique position in the socioeconomic map of the country and is considered as a vehicle and barometer of growth (Da Costa, F. (1987). India has a large network of railways throughout the country. We have trains from one corner of India to the other corner. Total length of the railway tracks in India is about 63000 kilometres. About 7800 trains carry about eleven million passengers to their destinations every day. Our railway network is the largest in Asia and the second largest in the world. . The Indian Railway helps to unite the integral, social, economical, and cultural foundation of the country.

The services offered by the Indian Railways need to be improved to satisfy the passengers. Since, the customers prefer to travel by train; there is a very good demand for the rail service. If the Indian Railways properly assess the problems and inconveniences of the passengers and deliver the service according to their expectation, it will be the most profitable public sector undertaking in India. Hence the present study has made an attempt to analyse the problems faced by the passengers of Indian railways.

### Review of Literature

John Gabriel and Suresh Babu (2005) examined the efficiency of passenger reservation services, whether the existing system of railway reservation is really efficient in satisfying the needs of the travelling public and whether any change or alteration in the existing system could bring about a perceptible improvement of the services. They found that the railway was the only organisation providing maximum passenger reservation services to the travelling public efficiently and effectively.

Arvind Brame, (2007), "Customer Complaints". According to Arvind Brame, customer complaints are a universal phenomenon, with the airline industry being no exception. Handling of complaints is the core activity for successful development. The author found that 56% of the customers are lost due to the short comings in customer service. He concluded stressing that there is a need for awareness and positive attitude and approach among staff to win the customer and customers' confidence to curb growing complaints.

### Objective of the Study

1. To analyze the problems faced by the passengers while reserving the tickets, on boarding the train and while travelling in the train.
2. To offer suggestions to improve the services of Indian railways.

### Sampling Design and Methodology

The present study is an empirical research based on survey method. The present study is confined to Salem Division of Southern Railway Zone. Stratified random sampling technique is used to draw samples from the major railway junctions of Salem division of Southern Railway Zone. The sample passengers are mobile population and they remain

busy in reaching their platforms, listening to announcement, making enquiry and looking at display charts. Hence, the sample size is chosen as 500 and it is considered to be adequate and representative.

## Data Collection

The present study is largely based on primary data. Primary and secondary data are used in the present study. The required primary data are collected using pre-tested and well structured questionnaire. The required secondary data are collected through Annual Reports of Ministry of railways, White paper on Indian railways published by Railway Ministry, various journals and websites.

## Data Covered

The present study focuses on the problems faced by the passengers such as long queue in the reservation counters, less number of booking counters, bulk booking by travel agencies, slow issue of tickets in the counters, heavy crowd in the platform, frequent change of platform, less halting time due to late arrival of trains, problems of theft, disturbance due to sales persons, nuisance of co-passengers and unauthorised entry in the reserved compartments.

## Analysis

In order to achieve the objectives of the study an analysis is made to understand the problems faced by the passengers of Indian Railways. Average rank analysis is the statistical tool used.

### Personal factors and problems faced by respondents while reserving tickets

The various factors considered under problems faced by the respondents while reserving their tickets are

- Long queue in the reservation counters - B<sub>1</sub>
- Less number of booking counters - B<sub>2</sub>
- Bulk booking by travel agencies - B<sub>3</sub>
- Tickets are booked immediately when the website is opened especially during festive occasions - B<sub>4</sub>
- Transfer of tickets to another date is not permitted - B<sub>5</sub>
- Frequent failure of server - B<sub>6</sub>
- Slow issue of tickets in the counters - B<sub>7</sub>

The table 1 describes the results of average rank analysis in terms of personal factors, average rank and final rank on the problems faced by the respondents while reserving tickets.

Table 1: Average rank -Personal factors and Problems faced by the respondents while reserving tickets

Problems faced by the respondents while reserving tickets			B <sub>1</sub>	B <sub>2</sub>	B <sub>3</sub>	B <sub>4</sub>	B <sub>5</sub>	B <sub>6</sub>	B <sub>7</sub>
Personal factors									
Gender	Male	AR FR	3.83 4	3.84 5	2.90 1	2.91 2	3.79 3	4.97 6	5.50 7
	Female	AR FR	3.60 2	3.64 3	3.22 1	4.04 5	3.86 4	4.74 7	4.66 6
Age (years)	Less than 20	AR FR	2.63 1	2.83 2	3.13 3	5.50 7	3.50 4	4.87 6	4.37 5
	20-30	AR FR	3.88 3	3.99 4	2.58 1	2.77 2	4.08 5	5.20 6	5.50 7
	30-40	AR FR	3.77 3	3.84 4	3.37 1	3.92 5	3.70 2	4.43 6	4.71 7
	40 and above	AR FR	4.14 4	2.86 2	4.21 5	1.71 1	3.79 3	5.50 6	5.79 7
Educational qualification	No formal education	AR FR	2.00 2	3.00 3	1.00 1	5.00 5	6.00 6	7.00 7	4.00 4
	School level	AR FR	3.67 4	3.91 5	2.91 1	2.92 2	3.47 3	5.15 7	5.14 6
	College level	AR FR	3.71 4	3.56 2	3.00 1	3.62 3	4.10 5	4.84 6	5.18 7
	Others(experience and self interest)	AR FR	4.03 3	4.13 4	4.13 4	4.41 7	3.22 1	3.75 2	4.34 6
Occupational status	Agriculture	AR FR	2.75 2	2.75 2	1.50 1	5.00 5	4.50 4	6.25 7	5.00 5
	Business/Professional	AR FR	4.19 5	3.77 3	3.83 4	3.04 1	3.16 2	4.49 6	5.34 7
	Employed	AR FR	4.11 3	4.15 4	1.92 1	3.21 2	4.50 5	4.90 6	5.11 7
	Others (home maker, student, retired employee )	AR FR	2.07 1	3.21 2	4.14 4	4.76 6	3.95 3	5.00 7	4.14 4

It is found from table 1 that the respondents irrespective of their personal classifications have given top priority towards bulk booking by agencies followed by tickets are booked immediately when the website is opened especially during festive occasions, long queue in the reservation counters and so on as the problems faced while reserving tickets.

It is concluded that the majority of the respondents have given high priority towards bulk booking by agencies as the problems faced while reserving tickets.

### Personal factors and problems faced by the respondents in boarding the train

The various factors considered under problems faced by the respondents in boarding the train are

- Heavy crowd in the platform - C<sub>1</sub>
- Frequent change of platform - C<sub>2</sub>
- Less space to walk in the platform - C<sub>3</sub>
- Less halting time due to late arrival of trains - C<sub>4</sub>
- Vendor movement - C<sub>5</sub>

The table 2 describes the results of average rank analysis in terms of personal factors, average rank and final rank on the problems faced by the respondents in boarding the train.

Table 2: Average rank -Personal factors and Problems faced by the respondents in boarding the train

Problems faced by the respondents in boarding the train			C <sub>1</sub>	C <sub>2</sub>	C <sub>3</sub>	C <sub>4</sub>	C <sub>5</sub>
Personal factors							
Gender	Male	AR	2.24	2.33	3.33	3.73	3.36
		FR	1	2	3	5	4
	Female	AR	2.18	2.87	3.16	3.29	3.38
		FR	1	2	3	4	5
Age (years)	Less than 20	AR	1.89	2.37	3.60	3.77	3.37
		FR	1	2	4	5	3
	20-30	AR	2.69	2.90	2.95	3.24	3.04
		FR	1	2	3	5	4
	30-40	AR	2.08	2.39	3.16	3.61	3.76
		FR	1	2	3	4	5
	40 and above	AR	1.00	3.00	4.36	3.57	3.07
		FR	1	2	5	4	3
Educational qualification	No formal education	AR	2.00	4.00	3.00	1.00	5.00
		FR	2	4	3	1	5
	School level	AR	2.16	2.29	3.07	3.79	3.68
		FR	1	2	3	5	4
	College level	AR	2.22	2.88	3.37	3.37	3.02
		FR	1	2	4	4	3
	Others(experience and self interest)	AR	2.41	2.35	3.35	3.47	3.41
		FR	2	1	3	5	4
Occupational status	Agriculture	AR	2.00	2.80	3.00	3.00	3.60
		FR	1	2	3	3	5
	Business/Professional	AR	2.55	2.42	3.09	3.52	3.42
		FR	2	1	3	5	4
	Employed	AR	2.05	3.00	3.53	3.49	2.92
		FR	1	3	5	4	2
	Others (home maker, student, retired employee )	AR	2.05	2.21	3.09	3.72	3.93
		FR	1	2	3	4	5

It is found from table 2 that the respondents irrespective of their personal classifications have given top priority towards heavy crowd in the platform followed by frequent change of platform, less halting time due to late arrival of trains and so on as the problems faced in boarding the train.

It is concluded that the majority of the respondents have given high priority towards heavy crowd in the platform as the problems faced in boarding the train.

### Personal factors and problems faced by the respondents while travelling in the train.

The various factors considered under problems faced by the respondents while travelling in the train are

- Unauthorised entry in the reserved compartments - D<sub>1</sub>
- Disturbance due to beggars - D<sub>2</sub>
- Disturbance - D<sub>3</sub>
- Nuisance of co-passengers - D<sub>4</sub>
- Problems of theft - D<sub>5</sub>

The table 3 describes the results of average rank analysis in terms of personal factors, average rank and final rank on the problems faced by the respondents while travelling in the train.

Table 3: Average Rank – Personal factors and Problems faced by the respondents while travelling in the train

Problems faced by the respondents while travelling in the train			D <sub>1</sub>	D <sub>2</sub>	D <sub>3</sub>	D <sub>4</sub>	D <sub>5</sub>
Personal factors							
Gender	Male	AR FR	3.43 5	2.74 2	3.26 4	2.96 3	2.43 1
	Female	AR FR	2.99 3	2.79 2	3.49 5	3.19 4	2.55 1
Age (years)	Less than 20	AR FR	3.62 4	2.31 2	3.62 4	3.55 3	1.90 1
	20-30	AR FR	3.86 5	3.09 4	2.79 2	2.84 3	2.42 1
	30-40	AR FR	2.58 1	2.79 3	3.67 5	3.33 4	2.63 2
	40 and above	AR FR	2.14 1	2.48 2	4.05 5	2.52 3	3.24 4
Educational qualification	No formal education	AR FR	6.25 5	5.00 4	2.00 1	2.80 2	3.00 3
	School level	AR FR	4.49 4	5.34 5	2.55 2	2.42 1	3.09 3
	College level	AR FR	4.90 4	5.11 5	2.05 1	3.00 2	3.53 3
	Others(experience and self interest)	AR FR	5.00 5	4.14 4	2.05 1	2.21 2	3.09 3
	Occupational status	AR FR	2.50 2	3.00 3	4.50 5	4.00 4	1.00 1
	Agriculture	AR FR	2.50 2	3.00 3	4.50 5	4.00 4	1.00 1
	Business/Professional	AR FR	2.46 1	3.03 3	3.43 5	3.00 2	3.09 4
	Employed	AR FR	3.57 5	2.72 2	3.47 4	2.72 2	2.51 1
	Others(home maker, student, retired employee )	AR FR	3.32 4	2.55 2	2.89 3	3.61 5	2.32 1

It is found from table 3 that the respondents irrespective of their personal classifications have given top priority towards problems of theft followed by nuisance of co-passengers, unauthorised entry in the reserved compartments and so on as the problems faced while travelling in the train.

It is concluded that the majority of the respondents have given high priority towards problems of theft as the problems faced while travelling in the train.

### Findings of the Study

- The majority of the respondents have given high priority towards bulk booking by agencies as the problems faced while reserving tickets.
- The majority of the respondents have given high priority towards heavy crowd in the platform as the problems faced in boarding the train.
- The majority of the respondents have given high priority towards problems of theft as the problems faced while travelling in the train.

### Conclusion and Suggestions

The services offered by the Indian Railways to its passengers need to be improved and modernized to satisfy the passengers. Among the various factors considered, the problems faced by the majority of the passengers are bulk booking of tickets by agencies, heavy crowd in the platform and problems of theft. Railway Police Force could be strengthened to improve the security of the passengers. Better infrastructures can be introduced to avoid congestion in the stations and railway ticket reservation facilities can also be improved. If all the suggestions are considered by the railway authorities, then it is a hope that Indian railways will excel in the near future.

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