

A STUDY OF PROBLEMS FACED BY THE INDIAN RAILWAYS – A STUDY WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO MADURAI CITY

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Abstract

This paper gives a brief analysis of problems faced by Indian railways with special reference to Madurai city. Indian Railways have been making efforts over the past few years to enhance the services being provided to their passengers. The opinion of the passengers towards the services provided by the Indian railways are quite different as they vary in socio-economic characteristics. This study surveyed 300 passenger's opinions to analyse the problems faced by them in Indian railways. Conclusions are drawn and suggestions offered.

Keywords: problems of Indian Railways, Garrett's Ranking Technique

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Introduction

The East Indian Railway was started in the year 1848 and it opened the first line of Railway between Bombay and Thane in 1853. This early development was purely due to British influence and the various networks gradually extended and increased in size. The Indian Railway provides the principle mode of transportation for freight and passengers. It has been a component of the social, political and economic life of the country. Indian Railway transportation network has been playing a key role in weaving India into a nation. This network has not only integrated markets but also people across the length and breadth of the country. It has improved the economic life of the country and helped in accelerating the industry and agriculture. The Indian Railway network is a nation providing economic and reliable transport to Indians. While the freight traffic generates bulk of the revenue for railways, passenger transport is the more visible face of the railways as it touches directly the lives of millions who avail of the passenger transport services. The provision of security on trains needs to be bolstered as most passengers feel that there is not enough security to prevent theft and crime on trains. This concern is mirrored in the rising rate of crime on trains. There is a need to set norms for escort parties, providing for the required number of personnel, ensuring that they are provided with needed equipment and ensuring coordination with the train staff, for providing effective security aboard trains. While the Indian Railways have begun to address the passenger services in a big way, there is a need to integrate passenger concerns with the operational concerns in planning and other processes that impact passenger services. This will help the railways address passenger concerns more effectively. At the same time there is a need to effectively monitor the creation and maintenance of services so that the gains can be consolidated and the position on ground can be improved.

Statement of the Problem

The railway is one of the biggest modes of passenger transport in the world. The railway passenger services face long term competitive threats from airlines, luxury buses, personalised transport and improved public transports. Though there are competitions from various modes of transport, the railway has its own unique features and provides more services to the passengers. On the other hand Indian Railways will be quite different as they vary in socio-economic characteristics to the opinion of the passengers. It is essential for the Railway Authorities to

know the problems of the passengers regarding the services offered to them in order to make future policies and provisions.

Objectives of the Study

To analyze the problems faced by the passenger services in Indian railways

Review of Literature

R.Thirumoorthy (2001), in his study, “Consumer Images of Indian Railways- A study in Madurai Railway Station”, has found that the image of the Indian Railway dependentaing on its performance.

Koichi Goto (2001) in his article, “ Passenger Service Technologies” has described the trend in seat reservation systems, automatic ticket machine in stations, automatic fare collection system, automatic ticket checking machines, revolutionizing ticket system using contact less IC cards and a guide system IC chips programmed with location information are embedded in tactile used to mark paths for visually impaired people; this is read by a cane with an embedded antenna and verbal directions are given by a pocket-sized portable machine. The machine will guide him or her right platform.

G.Jeganathan (2002) in his study, “Commuters of Railways – An Attitude Study with Special Reference to Thirunalveli - Nagercoil Section” has found that if season ticket fares are reduced for long distance travel, it is an added attraction to the commuters.

R. Kavitha (2004) in her study “A Study on Passenger Amenities at Madurai Railway Junction”, has pointed out that majority of the pay and use toilets are well maintained and kept clean”.

Methodology

In the present study primary data have been collected in the course of interview with the railway passengers through survey method. This study is an empirical based survey method and is confined to Madurai Zone of Southern Railways. 300 samples were taken to analyse the data.

Convenient sampling method was used to collect the data from the sample respondents. This study has been undertaken mainly to analyse the passenger services in Indian Railway with special references to Madurai City.

Tools of Analysis

Percentage analysis has been used to analyse the Socio-Economic conditions of the sample respondents. Garrett's Ranking Technique has been applied to identify the problem faced by the Railway Passengers.

Period of the Study

The survey for collecting primary data was carried out from Dec 2017 to March 2018. The reference period is 2017- 2018.

Result and Discussions

Table 1: Socio Economic Conditions of the Sample Respondents

S.No	Gender	No. of. Respondents	Percentage
1	Male	132	44
2	Female	168	56
	Total	300	100
S.No	Age(years)	No. of. Respondents	Percentage
1	20-30	132	44
2	30-40	90	30
3	40-60	62	21
4	Above 60	16	5
	Total	300	100
S.No	Occupation	No. of. Respondents	Percentage
1	Students	36	12
2	Employed	108	36
3	Professional	72	24
4	Business	42	14
5	Others	42	14
	Total	300	100

S.No	Area Residents	No. of. Respondents	Percentage
1	Rural	78	26
2	Urban	222	74
	Total	300	100
S.No	Period for Seasonal Pass	No. of. Respondents	Percentage
1	Day	12	4
2	Weekly	18	6
3	Monthly	24	8
4	Systematically	246	82
	Total	300	100
S.No	Class you Travel	No. of. Respondents	Percentage
1	I AC	60	20
2	II AC	30	10
3	III AC	42	14
4	Sleeper Class	72	24
5	Seated Class	78	26
6	Un reserved Class	18	6
	Total	300	100
S.No	Nature of Ticket Holding	No. of. Respondents	Percentage
1	Seasonal tickets	30	10
2	Unreserved tickets	66	22
3	Reserved tickets	204	68
	Total	300	100
S.No	Mode of Reservation	No. of. Respondents	Percentage
1	Internet	180	60
2	Through Agent	36	12
3	At Station Counter	84	28
	Total	300	100

Source : Primary Data

Table 1 shows that the percent of female respondents is higher than the male respondents. The overall percent of male respondents is 44.0 percent and it is 56.0 percent for female respondents. The profile of passengers has been arranged according to their age. It reveals that 44 percent of the travelling people are in the age group of “20-30”. Those who constitute 30 percent belong to the age group of “30-40”. 21 percent of the respondents are in the age group of “40-60”. The senior citizen group (above 60) forms part of five percent of the respondents. Therefore it is inferred that respondents belonging to “20-30” year’s group constitute a majority of the travelers and that 36 percent of the respondents are form employed, whereas professional class respondents constitute 24 percent followed by 14 percent of the respondents who are from business and others. Below of 36 (12%) respondents are students. The majority of 74 percent of the respondents are from Urban Area and 26 per cent of the respondents are from Rural Area. The most of the respondents belong to seated class in 78 (26%), followed by the sleeper class respondents in 72(24%). 60 respondents (20%) travel in I AC class, 42 respondents (14%) travel in III AC class and the II AC class in the respondents travelled in 30 (10%). Other respondents travel in Unreserved class in 18 (6%) only. The majority of 204 respondents (68%) reserve their tickets. 66 respondents (22%) travel with Unreserved Tickets, and the seasonal tickets of railway passengers are only utilized by 30 respondents (10%). The majority of respondents above 180(60%) use the reservation mode by with Internet. This is followed by the station counter reservation in 84 respondents at 28% of the Total respondents, and the other reservation is done through agents in with has 36 respondents at 12% level.

Problem Encountered

To analyse the problem faced by the Railway Passengers while viewing Passenger Services of the Respondents are asked to rank the factors responsible for such act. The order of merit is assigned by the respondents. It is converted into scores by using the Garrett Ranking Technique. Garrett has suggested this method for converting ranks into scores when number of items ranked differed from respondent to respondent. The percent position of each rank is found by using the formula.

$$\text{Percent Position} = 100(R_{ij} - 0.5) / N_j$$

Where

1. R_{ij} = Rank given to i^{th} individual

2. N_j = Number of Factors ranked by j^{th} individual

By referring the table given by Garrett the position estimated is converted into scores. Then for each factor the scores of various respondents are added and dividable by the number of respondents. The scores thus obtained for each factor are arranged in descending order and the factor with the highest mean value are considered most important.

TABLE 2: PROBLEMS OF PASSENGERS IN THE STUDY AREA

S.No	Problem	Garrett Ranking	Rank
1	Inadequate ticket facilities	56.82	1
2	Old track and poor state Rolling Stock	54.88	2
3	Competitions with Road Transport	49.40	3
4	Travel without Tickets	48.14	4
5	When it comes to making money passengers come last	46.54	5
6	Disturbance of Baggers inside the compartment.	44.22	6

Source: Primary Data

From Table 2 it is observed that ‘Inadequate Ticket Facilities’ by the passengers is an alarming problem and has been placed in the first position with the score of 56.82. The second important problem is ‘Old Track and poor state Rolling Stock’ with the mean score of 54.88. The third important problem is ‘Competitions with Road Transport’ with the mean score of 49.40. The fourth important problem is ‘Travel without Tickets’ with the mean score of 48.14 and the problem of ‘when it comes to making money passengers come last’ ranks fifth with a mean score of 46.54 and the problem of ‘Disturbance of Baggers inside the compartment’ ranks with a mean score of 44.22.

SUGGESTION TO OVER VIEW THE PROBLEM BY THE PASSENGERS IN TRAIN TRAVEL

- The railways should work for bringing a paradigm shift in the customer perception of railways. In this regard periodical surveys have to be conducted to ascertain the customer needs in terms of level of satisfaction and delivery of services.
- The Railways should attract the passengers who travel by airlines and roadways

regularly. For this, the railways should improve the facilities both at the compartments and stations.

- The Railways should utilize the unused and underutilized lands for creating passenger facilities with private partnership to augment overall revenues.
- The Railways has vast development in technologies but it is not easily availed by all the people. The railways should take necessary arrangements in this regard.
- As the development of Railways shall result in development of infrastructure in the country, the government should also extend budgetary supports regularly to Indian Railways.
- The Railways should establish a separate Railways Board for monitoring passenger amenities at zonal levels
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Conclusion

Indian Railways is the largest Public Sector industry in the world. It renders numerous services to the Passengers in Madurai Zone. They are Net Booking, Central Railway reservation system, Unreserved Ticket System, Passenger Reservation System enquiry through Internet, Tourism Services, E-Working System. In addition to these, it provides good drinking Water, neat compartment, safety, Pantry in Transit. It is concluded that the railway is considered to be an important transport system in India. It carries lakh number of passengers at a time and that too for longest distance who have to be satisfied with the service rendered by the Indian Railway.

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