

FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS, CONCLUSION AND LIMITATIONS

The present study is encircled towards the analysis of the services offered and travellers satisfaction with Indian Railways. This research study also attempted to identify various determinants of service quality and travellers satisfaction in platform services of Indian railways. In this chapter summarized form of findings and the concise results in the form of conclusion have been presented. This chapter provides a brief idea regarding the whole research work and results along with the suggestions attained through the research study. This chapter will also help the reader of this thesis to get a clear cut overview of the work done by the researcher. This chapter also discusses the limitations of the study. The findings, recommendations and conclusion are summed up as under:

6.1 OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

This research thesis was designed to contribute on service quality of platform and overcoming the lacunae with possible changes. As these platforms are the showcases of Indian Railways and give first impression to the travellers. This study focused on the responses given by individual travellers at Agra, Jhansi and Allahabad Junctions of NCR Zone. A total of 750, questionnaires were distributed to the travellers at Agra, Jhansi and Allahabad junction. Out of all 620 were returned and out of 625 returned questionnaires 85 were incomplete or not suitable or usable hence 540 were finally taken for analysis purpose.

6.2 FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

SECTION 1: The personal profiles of the respondents are as follows:

Gender: Total number of respondents considered in the research is 540. Out of 540, 151 are females and 389 are males. In this sample 28% represent female and 72% represent male. Majority of the respondents are male.

Age: respondents are group into three categories on the basis of age. Majority of the respondents selected for the study belongs to the age group of 31-60 years. The percentage of this comes out to be 71.5%.

Educational Qualification: It is observe that out of 540 respondents 232 are graduates, 194 are post graduates, and 90 are professionally qualified. The percentage of these comes out to be 43% for graduate, 35.9% for post graduate and 16.7 for professionals.

Occupation: There are five categories of occupation in the questionnaire namely students, employed, professional, business and other. The majority (47%) of respondents selected for the study are employed.

Marital status: There are two categories in the surveyed questionnaire for marital status. According to the marital status we found that the majority (61.7%) of the respondents are married.

Residence: There are two categories in the questionnaire for residence namely urban and rural. The majority (85.4%) of the respondents belongs to urban area.

Monthly Income: It is observed that the majority (232%) of the respondents are those earning above 50,000. Whereas (26.5%) respondents are those earning between 30,001-50,000.

SECTION 2: Travel Details of the Respondents are as follows:

Travelling Pattern: The majority (42.4%) of the respondents selected for the study are those who travel on weekly basis and (24.1%) out of 540 are those who prefer train on half yearly basis for the purpose of travel.

Travel Purpose: The majority (24.8%) of the respondents selected for the study travels in train for vacation purpose and (24.3%) respondents are those travels for family purpose.

Travel Class: A maximum of 49.8% of the respondents are those who travel in 3A-AC 3 Tier class in train out of 540.

Average Distance of Travel in a Month: The majority (42.0%) of the respondents selected for the study are those who travel average distance of 1000 km in a train.

Preference for Ticket Booking: A maximum of 50.9% of the respondents are those who prefer IRCTC portal for booking of railway tickets.

Preferring Rail Transport: There are three categories in the questionnaire for preferring the rail transport namely comfortable, cost effective and convenient. The majority (237%) of the respondents have given high priority to convenient feature of Rail Transport.

Findings on the Basis of Research Objectives:

SECTION 3: Research Objective 1

The study successfully addressed the first research objective: “To study the services offered by Indian Railways at Platforms of North Central Railway Zone”.

To fulfill this objective we applied Chi-Square analysis. We found that the responses of travelers on Tangibility, Reliability, Responsiveness, Empathy and Assurance are not equally distributed.

- a) Tangibility is one of the important aspects of service quality offered at platforms of Indian Railway. In the research study the tangibility was measured by the variables such as sufficient surface of platforms, sufficient and comfortable seating arrangement, availability of power, hygiene and sanitation, availability of lighting, availability of fans, Facilities of drinking water, facility of waiting hall, toilet facility, ATM, postal and Telegraph services at platforms. When we analyze tangibility dimension of service quality, we found that P value of tangibility is higher than 0.05 it clear cut indicates that our null hypothesis is accepted in all services quality factors of tangibility. Since the chi-square value is not significant as the significant value is greater than 0.05, there is no evidence to reject null hypotheses. It means the opinion of travelers about the existing services offered at Indian railway platforms (Agar, Jhansi and Allahabad) of North central railway zone is not (null) equally distributed.

- b) In Indian Railway, Reliability is the spinal cord of the service quality offered at Platforms. The Reliability in service quality at platforms can be stated as the ability to perform the service perfectly and dependably. In this research the reliability is measured by the variables clarity of announcement, accuracy of announcement, frequency of announcement, display of reservation chart, clarity of given in the time table, clarity of information display at stations, digital display etc. When we analyze the reliability dimension of service quality, we found that P value of Reliability is higher than 0.05 it clear cut indicates that our null hypothesis is accepted in all services quality factors of Reliability. From the above table, since the chi-square value is not significant as the significant value is greater than 0.05, there is no evidence to reject null hypotheses. It means the opinion of travelers about the existing services offered at Indian railway platforms of North central railway zone is not (null) equally distributed.
- c) Responsiveness as dimension of service quality has been highlighted as willingness of the staff to help travellers and offer prompt services. In this research study responsiveness is measured (including TTE, booking clerk, police and RPF) to respond, behavior of porter and sanitary workers, promptness of railway staff in satisfying the request, medical facilities provided on time etc. when we analyze the responsiveness dimension of service quality, we found that P value of Responsiveness is higher than 0.05 it clear cut indicates that our null hypothesis is accepted in all services quality factors of Responsiveness. From the above table, since the chi-square value is not significant as the significant value is greater than 0.05, there is no evidence to reject null hypotheses. It means the opinion of travelers about the existing services offered at Indian railway platforms of North central railway zone is not (null) equally distributed.
- d) Empathy in the service quality dimension is the provision of caring, sense of security and efforts to know the travellers needs. In this research study empathy is measured by various variables such as tourist information counter, facility of touch screen terminal counter, affordability of refreshments, management of parking and public address system computerization at the station provide better

customer services. When we analyze the empathy dimension of service quality, we found that P value of Empathy is higher than 0.05 it clear cut indicates that our null hypothesis is accepted in all services quality factors of Empathy. From the above table, since the chi-square value is not significant as the significant value is greater than 0.05, there is no evidence to reject null hypotheses. It means the opinion of travelers about the existing services offered at Indian railway platforms of North central railway zone is not (null) equally distributed.

- e) Assurance dimension of service quality offered at platforms relates to the knowledge and politeness of the staff and their aptitude to convey confidence and trust to the travellers. In this study assurance is measured by various variables such as complaint handling system, security baggage counters, safety of passengers at transit area, security of luggage, providing help in theft and accidental situation. When we analyze assurance dimension of service quality we found that P value of Assurance is higher than 0.05 it clear cut indicates that our null hypothesis is accepted in all services quality factors of Assurance. From the above table, since the chi-square value is not significant as the significant value is greater than 0.05, there is no evidence to reject null hypotheses. It means the opinion of travelers about the existing services offered at Indian railway platforms of North central railway zone is not (null) equally distributed.

SECTION 4: Research Objective 2

To analyze the service quality factors influencing the satisfaction level of travellers.

In order to achieve this objective we applied Correlation co-efficient analysis.

When we study the satisfaction level of travellers about the service quality offered by Indian railways at platforms of North Central Railway Zone (Agra, Jhansi and Allahabad) we found that the traveler are not satisfied with service quality at platforms of Indian Railways.

- a) When we study the relationship between tangibility and satisfaction level of travellers we found that correlation coefficient of tangibility is .932, the significance level is .000 that means the strength of correlation co-efficient is highly positive so there is strong association between service quality (tangibility) and satisfaction level of travellers.
- b) In this study when we study the relationship between reliability and satisfaction level of travellers we found that correlation coefficient of reliability is .732, the significance level is .035 that indicates the strength of correlation co-efficient is highly positive so there is strong association between service quality (Reliability) and satisfaction level of travellers.
- c) When we study the relationship between responsiveness and satisfaction level of travellers we found that correlation coefficient of responsiveness is .483, the significance level is .377 that indicates the strength of correlation co-efficient is not positive so there is no association between service quality (responsiveness) and satisfaction level of travellers.
- d) When we study the relationship between empathy and satisfaction level of travellers we found that correlation coefficient of empathy is .304, the significance level is .120 that means the strength of correlation co-efficient is not positive so there is no association between service quality (empathy) and satisfaction level of travellers.
- e) In this study when we study the relationship between assurance and satisfaction level of travellers we found that correlation coefficient of assurance is .644, the significance level is .000 that indicates the strength of correlation co-efficient is highly positive so there is strong association between service quality (assurance) and satisfaction level of travellers.

SECTION 5: Research Objective 3

To determine the level of awareness about the services offered by Indian Railways at platforms.

In order to achieve this objective we applied ANOVA test (Analysis of Variance).

When we study the awareness level of travellers about the service quality offered by Indian railways at platforms of North Central Railway Zone (Agra, Jhansi and Allahabad) we found that the traveler are not aware towards the service and facilities offered by Indian Railways at platforms.

- a) When we analyze the relationship between tangibility and awareness level of travellers we found the P value is $.006 < 0.05$. It means there is significant difference between the level of awareness about the services offered by Indian railways at platforms.
- b) When we examine the relationship between reliability and awareness level of travellers we found the P value is $.870 > 0.05$. It means there is no significant difference between the level of awareness and about the services offered by Indian railways at platforms.
- c) When we evaluate the relationship between responsiveness and awareness level of travellers we found the P value is $.000 < 0.05$. It means there is a significant difference between the level of awareness and about the services offered by Indian railways at platforms.
- d) When we evaluate the relationship between empathy and awareness level of travellers we found the P value is $.000 < 0.05$. It means there is a significant difference between the level of awareness and about the services offered by Indian railways at platforms.
- e) When we evaluate the relationship between assurance and awareness level of travellers we found the P value is $.000 < 0.05$. It means there is a significant difference between the level of awareness and about the services offered by Indian railways at platforms.

SECTION 6: Research Objective 4

To examine the factors for enhancing the service quality of platforms.

When we analyze the fourth objective. We find that there are two factors “Responsiveness and Empathy” where railways need to enhance the service quality.

- a) It has been observed that the travelers coming to NCR zone especially for tourism purpose, there must be travel information counter to assist domestic and international tourist, though Jhansi and Agra station are available with few hoardings of local attractions but proper place with necessary information and skilled persons for handling such queries required.
- b) During survey period it was observed that ATM, Telegraph and postal services are available outside the platforms. The railway authorities must concentrate on providing ATM facilities on the identified platforms.
- c) A designated parking area for different types of vehicles like auto rickshaw, four wheelers must be clearly mentioned. The railway platform entry point should be restricted for all types of vehicles. A separate area is required for army vehicles and VVIP/VIP personnel's. Railway may have their own parking area for their employees which may be at different place.
- d) There are few escalators available on only platforms no1 of the major junctions of NCR zone. The railway authorities must ensure the operation and installation of escalators on other platforms too.
- e) The railway authorities must announce, display the information regarding self-help trolleys, stretchers, books stalls, medicine stalls at the platforms. They should also announce the area or location name of the in charge person for stretchers and self-help trolleys to help passengers in any emergency.
- f) It was observed that except of platforms no 1 which is supposed to be important platforms for special trains but the rest platforms are lacking with low length passengers shades. The last coach and engine always stands outside the shades area. It is recommended that the length of the shades be increased to protect the travelers from rain and sun stoke.

6.3 RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

The present study is helpful to the Indian Railway to improve the service quality offered at platforms which influence the satisfaction level of the travelers. This study is useful for the authorities and policy makers of Indian Railways to know more about the organization and identifying the lacunae in service quality and helpful in making major policies and planning to eradicate these issues. Some of the recommendation and suggestion are as follows:

- It is suggested that Indian railway should provide similar services and facilities at all platforms in equal manners.
- Indian Railways need to organize different types of programmes for motivating the employees in terms of providing better facilities and services and can ensure better responsiveness of clerk, police and RPF staff.
- The staff role in responsiveness need to ensure by rotation of job or minimizing absenteeism.
- Indian railway inspection team need to check the quality products at stations to improve the quality.
- Audio visual system is an important element. It is suggested to introduce more visible public address system with multi language.
- Indian Railways need to open more ticket counters to reduce the waiting time and long queue to get the ticket.
- Indian railway should maintain complains redressal system. They put on complain box on every platform and check them every day or certain time.
- It is suggested that Indian Railway need to improve the medical facilities at platforms. A list of doctors and medical officers along with their contact details must be displayed. Doctors on call facility should be implemented.
- Cloak room facility is available on all major junctions but the pest control is major concern. The Railway authority need to focus on providing clean, healthy and pest free place for luggage keeping.
- Indian Railways Authority should maintain ATM, Telephone facility and postal services inside the platforms.

- Indian railway authority should maintain ramp for handicapped persons on every railway platform.
- Railway Authority should provide fresh drinking water on every platform and installations of R.O for water purification.
- Ministry of Railways need to create awareness about the services offered among the travellers by printing the services and facilities on the ticket and display at platforms.

6.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

In this research work on “A Study of Services Offered and Travelers Satisfaction with Indian Railways” is done for NCR region and of course three major Railway Junctions have been incorporated. But the similar study can be conducted for attaining traveler’s satisfaction for other Railway Zones of India too.

1. The factor determines the satisfaction of travelers on railway was large in number. In this sense, the selection of limited variables not at all ensures comprehensive result towards the satisfaction of travelers.
2. As sample size 750 was taken but the respondents inaccurate response restricted the no up to 540, it was not necessary truly that truly represent the population/universe.
3. Some people may not give accurate response, which affects the results of the study.
4. This study was restricted only to services offered at Indian railway platforms in Allahabad, Agra and Jhansi junction of NCR zone.
5. The study restricted only the platforms services handily and not focused on in house train facilities.
6. The study is limited to Agra, Jhansi and Allahabad junctions. Actual problem of the passengers in other junctions/railway headquarter may be different.
7. Every person on Platform is in hurry so they have no time to fill the Questionnaire, so it is very difficult to fill the questionnaires.

6.5 CONCLUSION

Indian railway is gaining importance day by day. With the increase of passengers Indian railways has focused to extend its attentions to satisfy the need of its travelers and made initiative to enhance the quality of services to enrich the satisfaction of travelers.

It is also found there is significant level of awareness about the services offered by Indian railways. Therefore it is important to improve their awareness level. In this concern, it is recommended that the ministry of railways need to take all possible steps to promulgate the several services delivered to the travelers by keeping adequate Index board and bulletin boards in all possible places like at the entrance, ticket reservation counter, waiting room and platforms .It may facilitate the passengers to identify the facilities and services provided by the Indian railways. It is also proposed that announcements could be made quite often concerning the services provided by the Indian railways. It is well-known that offering superior services is vital for the progress of the Indian railways. Still, Indian railways have to offer services to develop the level of satisfaction of the travelers. On the basis of the outcomes of this research study, some useful and feasible recommendations have been made. If the suggestions have been carefully considered by the Indian railways and the policy makers, Indian railways will shine and bring grandeur to the country in the near future.