

SUMMARY

7.1 INTRODUCTION

India is one amongst the biggest countries in terms of its geographical size which requires effective means for long distance transportation. Among the varied modes of transport, railway is one in all the foremost convenient modes of transport for large scale product movement still as for long distance travel. The railway tested as a promising are for drawing economic and developmental process advantages by various countries. Indian railway is the largest network in Asia. It is the second largest employer with in the world over the china military.

It was in the year 1853 when for the first time train moved between Mumbai and Thane with a total distance of 34km. since then Indian railway in hand a complete route length of 64,000km 2,16,717 wagons, 39,263 coaches, 7,739 locomotives and runs about a total of 12,000 passenger trains and 7,000 freight trains daily. Indian Railways transports almost 23 million passengers every day. The headquarters of the Indian railway is located in New Delhi. Indian Railway is managed and controlled by Ministry of railways.

Railways are vital part of central transport. Railway is deemed to be one in every of the favored sectors of transportation practices in India owing to the low cost and pleasant journey. It is appropriate for all class people because fair is moderate comparison to alternative transport. Railway additionally provides service goods, vehicle moved from one place to different place because people get additional helpful for as. The railway faces long run competition pressures from luxury buses, airlines, personalized transport and upgraded public transport. Low cost carrier category airlines are giving stiff competition to upper class sections to the Indian railway passenger services. So as to contend with alternative mode of transportation, it is unavoidable for railways to accelerate the expansion of passenger's origination. This could be done by offering additional quality service to them. Indian railway services to a greater mass of the Indian population as well as the international travelers, its services quality is that the thought about because the primary concern. So, considering the massive population

relying for the most part on this mode of travelling and transportation, there is needs to be a deep study for the development in railway services. It is necessary for the railway authorities to understand concerning the view of the international passengers relating to the services offered to them so as to create future plans and policies, centered mostly upon the view of the passengers and their satisfaction level is set.

Indian railways can achieve success only when they provide satisfaction to the passengers in terms of providing better service quality. One of the major challenges among the railway authorities at the present is to confirm expected quality of services that the target audiences want to avail that makes use of this sector for many purposes. The railway is the backbone of Indian economy and society; however it's removed from healthy and adequate service providing. The services provided by the Indian railways are not up to the services as per the international standard. Subsequently, the customer choose to travel by train, there is very good demand for the rail service. If the Indian railway appropriately evaluate the precise client expectation and provide the services in step with their customer's expectation, it will be the chief gainful public sector organization in India. Indian railway has envisioned provision of various automated facilities focused on towards interfacing and supervising passengers to easily board trains and giving enquiry services at stations. Pay and use toilets, Provision of ticketing machines, signage, water vending machines, platform shelters at stations, effective lighting good retiring rooms with modern furniture, coach indication board, safety or security are also provided to fulfill the needs of the railway passengers . The Indian railway can accomplish well only when the passengers are pleased with the services they get. Hence the chief objective of the study is to recognize the present level of customer satisfaction.

Indian railway is allocated into 17 zones. The north central Railway zone is one of the 17 railway zones in India with 202 main line stations and 221 branch line station. The total area covered under this zone is 3062 route kms spread over parts of U.P, Haryana, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh. It spreads from Ghaziabad in the North to Mughalsarai in the east on New Delhi Howarh Trunk Route and from Palwal to Bina on New Delhi, Mumbai/ Chennai corridor. In its present form, NCR was established on April 1, 2003, and encompasses the reorganized Allahabad division of northern railway, the Jhansi

division of central railway, and the new Agra division. Its headquarter is located at Allahabad, and its network spreads over a large area of north central India, covering the states of Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and Haryana. Allahabad junction is important for three reasons; first it is the headquarter of the north central railway, second, all trains covered under NCR pass through Allahabad junction, along with large number of trains of central railway, north eastern railway and other zones and third it is an entry point for Sangam (Confluence of three rivers), Varanasi, Vindhyachal and National Parks of M.P. and Adjoining regions. And all these places has carved out a place for themselves in the heart of international tourist. Agra junction is the major entry point for international tourist it provides an opportunity to visit world renowned monuments like Taj Mahal, Red Fort, Akbar Tomb, Fatehpur Sikri and many more. Jhansi junction is the main hub for east, west, north and south bound trains. It is also an entry point to visit western M.P which encompasses Orcha, Shivpuri, Khajhuraho, Panna and many more. These places are amalgam of culture, history and ecology which is more significant in international market. Hence the main purpose of the study is to analyze the services offered and travellers' satisfaction with Indian railways at Platforms of North Central Railway zone.

7.2 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The major objective of this research is encircled towards the analysis of the services offered and traveler's satisfaction with Indian Railways. This research attempts to identify various determinants of service quality and customer satisfaction in platform services of Indian railways. The sub – objectives of the current study are canalizing into four in number and they are mentioned below:

1. To study the services offered by Indian Railways at Platforms of North Central Railway zone.
2. To analyze the service quality factors influencing the satisfaction level of travelers.
3. To determine the level of awareness about the services offered by Indian railways at platforms.

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

7.3 HYPOTHESIS

In a research study hypotheses can be describe as proposed assumption of a phenomenon. In order to accomplish the study objectives, the following research hypothesis are posed:

Ho (1): The opinion of travelers about the existing services offered at Indian railway platforms of North central railway zone is not (null) equally distributed.

Ho (2): There is no significant relationship between existing services quality offered at platform and traveler satisfaction.

Ho (3): There is no significant level of awareness about the services offered by Indian railways at platforms.

7.4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

7.4.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

Research design is a complete outline of how a research will take place. It is the description of procedure and methods for obtaining the information required to construct or to solve the problem.

This research design is exploratory, descriptive, diagnostic and applied in nature and based on different alternatives for optional solution. The research begins with the exploration of the study area to identify existing platforms services and their contribution in traveler's satisfaction. Through various literature reviews the present research gets the shape of descriptive research which contributes into the process of research progress. It is clear from the various literature reviews that for customer satisfaction different variables are required for different services. It is also observed that research on services offered at Indian railway platforms especially North Central Railway zone, level of traveller's satisfaction and level of awareness has been missing. After getting the detailed information about platforms services forty indicators were identified, a questionnaire was drafted to collect data and further the data was analyzed.

After the analysis the researcher concluded with some suggestions and recommendations to modify/ change/ enhance the platforms services of these three major junctions namely Agra, Jhansi and Allahabad (study area) of Indian Railway. Thus an attempt has been made to study travelers' satisfaction as well as level of awareness of travellers in the context of services offered at Indian railways platforms.

7.4.2 UNIVERSE AND SURVEY POPULATION OF THE STUDY

The analysis in this research focused the responses given by individual travelers at Agra, Jhansi and Allahabad junctions of North Central Railway zone. To satisfy the objective cross sectional data was collected from above railway junctions. The universe in this study was travelers coming to Allahabad, Jhansi and Agra or going to by different types of trains for different motives. All the individual travelers were surveyed population in this study.

7.4.3 SURVEY SAMPLE

The study conducted through convenience sampling. Data was collected from the travelers availing services offered at Indian railways platforms and travelling towards or going from Allahabad, Agra and Jhansi junctions. A total of 750 sample were collected at different intervals of time which focused on services of platforms at above mentioned major railway junctions out of 750 Respondents 540 were found suitable for the analysis.

7.4.4 DATA COLLECTION

The present research is based on both primary and secondary data. The essential background is constructed by information gathered through secondary sources and focused information was collected by primary data through a structured questionnaire.

- (a) **Primary data:** The Primary data for the present study was collected through structured questionnaire technique with travelers of Indian Railway through survey method. The question incorporated in the questionnaire focused on research objectives. To achieve the objectives of the study the questionnaire has been divided into three parts. The first Part A has been made to collect the

diverse demographic details of the respondents. Part B of the questionnaire comprises of the questions related to travel details of the travelers. Part C of the questionnaire consists of questions related to traveler's satisfaction, service quality and awareness.

- (b) **Secondary data:** Secondary data was collected from the various websites like Indianrailways.com, IRCTC, and other similar websites sharing information regarding Indian railways, annual reports of Indian railway, research obtain from Ministry of Railway Govt of India, various journals, periodicals and national survey report of Indian Railway. Though the research in the context of Indian Railways and platform services are very less and limited hence to get the construct hypothesis formulation and objectives, the researches that took place in allied fields like road transportation, metros, airlines services etc. were considered for the present study.

7.5 FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

a) Findings on the basis of personal profile of the respondents:

We found that 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. In case 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%. 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. According to the data of marital status we found that the majority (61.7%) of the respondents are married. The majority (47%) of respondents selected for the study are employed. Whereas it is observed that the majorities (232%) of the respondents are those earning above 50,000 and majority (85.4%) of the respondents belongs to urban area.

b) Findings on the basis of Travel details of the Respondents:

When we analyze the travel details of the respondents we found that 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. Maximum of 49.8% of the respondents are those who travel in 3A- AC 3 Tier class. The majority (24.8%) of the respondents selected for the study travels in train for vacation purpose. A maximum of 50.9% of the respondents are those who prefer IRCTC portal for booking of railway tickets. The majority (237%) of the respondents have given high priority to convenient feature of Rail Transport.

c) Findings on the basis of objectives are as follows:

Objective 1: To study the services offered by Indian Railways at Platforms of North Central Railway zone.

Ho (1): The opinion of travelers about the existing services offered at Indian railway platforms of North central railway zone is not (null) equally distributed.

Findings: when we analyze the first objective, about the services offered by Indian railways at platforms of North Central Railway zone, we find that our P value is higher than 0.05 it clear cut indicates that our null hypothesis is accepted in all services quality factors i.e. Tangibility (.346), Reliability (.685), Responsiveness (.513), Empathy (.247) and Assurance (.713). It means the opinion of travelers about the existing services offered at Indian Railway platforms of North Central Railway zone is not equally distributed.

Objective 2: To analysis the service quality factors influencing the satisfaction level of travelers.

Ho (2): There is no significant relationship between existing services quality offered at platform and traveler satisfaction.

Findings: when we analyze the second objective, about the service quality factors influencing the satisfaction level of travelers, we find that our P value is less than 0.05 in case of tangibility (.000), Reliability (.035) and Assurance (.000) it shows that our null hypothesis is rejected in case of these service quality factors, it indicates that there is a strong association of tangibility, Reliability and Assurance with travellers satisfaction. On the others hand in case of Responsiveness (.377) and Empathy (.120)

our null hypothesis is accepted because our P value is higher than 0.05, it indicates that there is no association of Responsiveness or Empathy with travellers satisfaction.

Objective 3: To determine the level of awareness about the services offered by Indian Railways platforms.

Ho (3): There is no significant level of awareness above services offered by Indian railways.

Findings: when we analyze the third objective. We found the awareness level of the respondents about the service quality offered by Indian Railway at platforms, the P values is less than 0.05.its clearly indicate that our null hypothesis is rejected in case of Tangibility (.006), Responsiveness (.000), Empathy (.000), Assurance (.000). It indicates that there is significant difference between the level of awareness about the services offered by Indian railways at platforms. But in case of Reliability null hypothesis is accepted. Because P value is higher ($0.870 < 0.05$). it indicates that there is no significant level of awareness about the services offered by Indian Railway at platforms and when we study the overall awareness of respondents we find that our null hypothesis is accepted because our p value is higher ($0.747 < 0.05$).

Objective 4: To examine the factors for enhancing the service quality of platforms

Findings: When we analyze the fourth objective. We find that there are two factors “Responsiveness” and “Empathy” where the Railways need to enhance the quality of services.

1. Long queue and waiting time to get the ticket can be minimized by opening of more ticket counters.
2. The Audio visual system is an important segment of Responsiveness. It is suggested to introduce more visible public address system with multi language.
3. The staff role in responsiveness can be ensured by rotation of job or minimizing absenteeism which is a policy decision of North Central Railway Zone.

4. More motivation in terms of better facilities can ensure better responsiveness of clerk, police and RPF staff.
5. Behavior of porter and sanitary workers can be improved by providing proper training to handle guest and sanitary equipment with proper equipment handling training.
6. The station should be facilitated with E- complaints, application based complaints, timely follow actions.
7. Railway inspection team should ensure availability of the quality product at stations. In this regard the team should inspect food stalls at any time and can ban and discard the vendors immediately.
8. Red Cross and NSS Volunteers can deputed along with first aid kit at stations. A list of doctors and medical officers along with their contact details must be displayed. Also, the doctor's name and his/her duty area should also mention. Doctors on call facility can also be implemented.
9. 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.
10. Railway should ensure movable and immovable food stalls at every platforms selling packaged items, fruits or ready to eat items.
11. Though the cloak room facility is available on all the major junctions but the pest control is major concern. The railway authority must focus on providing a clean, healthy and pest free place for luggage keeping.
12. The need of touch screen terminal and train running information enquiry are required to give alternate arrangement for the passengers who are coming to railway stations in the last hours. Such touch screens must be operated and installed at prime location of the stations.

13. 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.
14. 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.
15. 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 stroke.
16. The railway authorities must announce, display the information regarding self-help trolleys, stretchers, book stalls and 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.
17. 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.

7.6 RECOMMENDATION AND SUGGESTION

- It is suggested that Indian railway should provide similar services and facilities at all platforms (Agra, Jhansi and Allahabad) in equal manners.
- Indian Railways need to do more work on improving the service quality in all platforms to satisfy the travelers.
- 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.

- 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.

7.7 LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

In this research work on “A Study of Services Offered and Travellers 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 traveller’s satisfaction for other Railway Zones of India too.

1. The factor determines the satisfaction of travellers on railway was large in number. In this sense, the selection of limited variables not at all ensures comprehensive result towards the satisfaction of travellers.
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.

7.8 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 travellers and made initiative to enhance the quality of services to enrich the satisfaction of travellers.

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.