CHAPTER VII

SUMMARY, SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSION

In this chapter an attempt has been made to briefly summarize the thesis and to give concrete suggestions on the basis of findings of the study.

CHAPTER I

The Indian Railways in India provide the principal mode of transportation for fright and passengers. Indian Railways has been a vital component of the social, political and economic life of the country. Indian Railways transportation network has played a key role in weaving India into a nation. This network has not only integrated markets but also people across length and breadth of the country. It has bound the economic life of the country and helped in accelerating the development of the industry and agriculture. From a modest beginning in 1853, when the first train steamed off from Mumbai to Thane, a distance of 34 kms, Indian Railways has grown into a vast network of 6853 stations spread over a route length of 63028 kms, with a fleet of 7566 locomotives, 39236 passenger service vehicles, 4827 other coaching vehicles and 222147 wagons in 2009. The Indian Railways growth, since 1853 has been thus phenomenal. It has played a vital role in the economic, Industrial and social development of the country.

It can be said that by providing means of mobility to a large number of people and huge quantities of materials across the country, Indian Railways contribute substantially to the growth of the country.
economy. The passengers carried are enormous and the quantities of goods moved are massive. An important aspect of the railway system is its self-sufficiency in respect to the supply of most of the equipment needed by it.

When a station is constructed, certain minimum amenities should be provided at all the categories of stations. These were earlier termed as ‘Basic Amenities’ or ‘Minimum essential amenities’. Availability of these amenities at the prescribed scale at all stations will have to be ensured.

The amenities to be provided as per recommended norms are called ‘Recommended Amenities’. Once the ‘minimum essential amenities’ are available at a station, further augmentation of these amenities as per the norms should be done.

The amenities, which are considered desirable to improve customer satisfaction and interface process at the station, are called ‘desirable amenities’. The quantum of these amenities would depend upon the category of the station. To provide the desirable amenities, the railways need not wait for provision of all the recommended amenities. These amenities should be provided based on the need and relative importance of the station.

Customer care and customer service are the subjects being given a lot of importance in the present competitive market in all customer related services. Similarly the Railways are also equally concerned since the “customer care” is a very important tool in enhancing the image of the organization and thus the market share.
Thus, the Government has dedicated and declared the year 2002-2003 as the ‘Passenger Amenities Year’. The chief objective of the study is to make a comprehensive analysis of marketing of services in Indian Railways with reference to evaluation of amenities provided by Indian Railways to passengers at stations and on board and thereby, to identify and bring into light certain problems.

CHAPTER II

A brief review of some selected studies with their scope and their objectives may be useful for understanding the present scenario of Indian Railways. By and large the study is aimed at providing empirical evidence on few issues related to Indian Railways, which indeed will be of much use to the decision makers, for making effective changes in Indian Railways.

CHAPTER III

Railway was introduced in India in 1853, and by the time of India’s independence in 1947 Railways had grown to forty-two rail systems. In 1951, the systems were nationalized as one unit-Indian railway-to form one of the largest networks in the world. Way back in 1853, wheels rolled on rails on 16th April, where the first ever railway train in India, carrying 400 people in 14 carriages, covered the 21-mile distance between Bombay and Thane in about 75 minutes. The train took off with a regal gun salute to celebrate the occasion.

The main thrust of the Tenth plan is to strengthen the capacity of the Railway system as the prime carrier of long distance bulk freight and passenger traffic. To achieve this, the railways will
concentrate on multiplexing and electrification of dense corridors, improvement in reliability of operations, containerization and optimization of total system operations. The strategy is directed towards speedy completion of ongoing projects, capacity building, cost control measures, safety measures through technological aids, etc.

Railways has deployed their investible surplus of nearly Rs. 70,000 cr earned during 2004-05 to 2008-09 to increase its productivity. Railways will invest Rs.2,30,000 cr under the 11th five year plan, which is almost three times the amount allocated in the 10th five year plan. The objective is to increase the transport capacity of the railways and to reduce the unit cost of operations. Railways-investment outlays have been stepped up from Rs.13,394 cr in 2003-04 to Rs.36,773 cr in 2008-09. Railways would be completing the work of 4900 kms of gauge conversion, 1800 kms of doubling and laying 1100 kms of new lines, over five years.

CHAPTER IV

For more than one and a half century, the Indian Railways has been the principal mode of transport in India. Much more than that, it has become a part and parcel of the country’s socio-economic life, affecting not only its culture and socio economic activities but also largely influencing our art, history and literature besides unifying the people. The Indians have developed an abiding romance with the railways.
The Railway's renaissance has been engineered by simple entrepreneurial practices, which have evoked the admiration of internationally renowned institutions and companies alike. In a marked departure from its legacy, the focus on capacity utilization, reduction in unit costs, and improvement quality of service has yielded remarkable results.

The provision of passenger amenities is one of the important objectives of the Indian Railways both as a business ethic and a social obligation. The Indian Railways has issued a Citizens’ Charter on Passenger services in which, it has been pledged to ensure adequate passenger amenities in trains and at Railway stations. One of the thrust areas in the VIII Plan was to provide basic passenger amenities at all stations on a priority basis.

Provision of passenger amenities is linked to the category of the station. i.e., ‘A’ category station should be provided with much improved facilities as compared to the model station of other categories. The desirable Amenities are treated as yardstick to provide upgraded amenities at a model station. A master plan containing the desirable amenities should be made and they should be provided at the model station according to their category. In addition to the desirable amenities mentioned above, the revised list includes-washable apron, signages, pay and use toilets, SPTMs, computerization of complaints, AVMs, Modular catering stalls.
CHAPTER V

The introduction of economic liberalization in July 1991 threw a major challenge before the Indian Railways. As a result, it took several measures to modernize the rolling stock, tractions and coaches. Special emphasis was laid on customer care and user-friendly services. Even then there are certain problems faced by the passengers in Indian Railways.

The passenger are facing problems related to platform, reservation and booking counters, enquiry, compartments, waiting and retiring room and general services.

The variables like Type of train, Class of travel, Purpose of the journey, Residence, Usage pattern and Awareness of the passengers are tested with the above-said problems related to Indian Railways by using the well-known statistical tool of ‘Chi – Square test’. The analysis revealed that the main problem related to platform form is being misbehavior of public.

- The analysis reveals that there is no significant relationship between class of travel and problems related to platform. All other variables of type of train, purpose of the journey, residence, usage pattern and awareness have significant relationship with problem related to platform.

- The major problem faced by the passengers in relation with reservation and booking counters is the undue influence of agents. It is found that two variables of purpose of the journey and
awareness have no significant relationship with problem related to reservation and booking counters.

- Poor response is one of the major problems faced by the passengers. The study concludes that there is no significant relationship between purpose of the journey and awareness and problems related to enquiry. All other four variables type of train, class of travel, residence and usage pattern have significant relationship with problems related to enquiry.

- The major problem faced by the passengers in relation to compartments is lack of security. The study reveals that there is no significant relationship between class of travel and purpose of the journey problem related to compartments. All other variables of type of train, residence, usage pattern and awareness have significant relationship with problem related to compartments.

- It is found that the main problem related to waiting and retiring rooms is misuse of co-passengers. The study discloses that the variables of purpose of the journey, residence and usage pattern have significant relationship with the problem related to waiting and retiring rooms.

**CHAPTER VI**

In this chapter,

- The extent of satisfaction derived by the passengers of Indian Railways has been measured with the scale called “passengers’ satisfaction scale”. Based on the scores, the passengers are divided into three groups namely those with low satisfaction, medium
satisfaction and high satisfaction. A brief summary of findings is given below;

- The average satisfaction score of the sample respondents is 65.73 out of the maximum of 120. The middle-aged respondents have derived more satisfaction than the young and the aged. Female passengers are more satisfied than male passengers. The average satisfaction scores of the respondents are higher among the female passengers than those of the male passengers. This indicates that the female passengers are more satisfied.

- The average satisfaction scores of the passengers who resides in urban is higher than those of the rural. The urban passengers have more satisfaction than the rural passengers.

- Socially forward caste passengers are more satisfied on various amenities provided by Indian Railways than their counterparts. The respondents with college level of education are more satisfied than the other respondents. The passengers from nuclear family have derived more satisfaction.

- The passengers of super fast and special trains are more satisfied than those of other groups. The air conditioned coach passengers have more satisfaction in various amenities provided by Indian Railways than the second and first class passengers. The percentage of highly satisfied is the highest among the passengers who have been using Indian Railways for both their single and family usage.
The high income group of respondents receives more satisfaction. The passengers who aware of the amenities provided by Indian Railways are more satisfied than that of their counter parts. The passengers who are travelling for their business purpose derives more satisfaction than those of the other category.

Twelve factors are identified and their influences on satisfaction have been analysed. The influence of each factor has been tested with the help of correlation co-efficient. Among the factors tested, the following are the significant influences on satisfaction.

a) Gender  
b) Community  
c) Education  
d) Type of train  
e) Awareness  
f) Purpose of the Journey  

The above statistical tests have proved that the following factors do not influence satisfaction.

a. Age  
b. Residence  
c. Type of family  
d. Class of travel  
e. Usage pattern  
f. Income
Stepwise multiple regression analysis of five factors reveal that Purpose of the Journey, Age, Awareness, Residence and Income have significant influence on satisfaction when the influence of other factors are kept constant.

**SUGGESTIONS**

On the basis of the information obtained from the Passengers, some salutary suggestions are made by the researcher for enhancing better customer service and more efficient functioning of the Indian Railways.

- Every day in the passenger train a sizable number of students are travelling as commuters. If a separate compartment is provided for them, it will be more beneficial to them.

- Some of the respondents had problems regarding the railway activities. They did not care to complain about them, because they felt that it would be futile. If the complaints are registered through computers, it will be quickly disposed of. So installing of computerized grievance system in all stations is badly needed.

- The purpose of demarcation line drawn on the platform is not known to many people. Public announcement about the yellow line drawn on the platform should be made compulsory to avoid the inconveniences caused by the fellow passengers and visitors of the passengers.

- Passengers prefer advertisement for knowing the new concessions introduced by the railway authorities every year. It is
suggested that campaign about current concession can be made on a non-stop basis in popular dailies.

- Respondents lamented that the safety journey in train is questionable. So the authorities concerned should do whatever is requested to ensure safety travel and also take up the matter of increasing the insurance cover.

- Extra booking counters during rush and peak hours are required and particularly during vacations and festival days.

- In big cities separate counters for ladies are arranged. The study area Madurai Division receives lots of people in a day both for buying reserved tickets and unreserved tickets. It is suggested that at least during the peak hours one counter may be allotted for ladies in Madurai Division.

- It is noted that Self-Printing Ticket Machine has been already introduced in Indian Railways. But important stations in North eastern railway have been equipped with this facility. If it is introduced in the important stations of the study area, passengers can get rid of the problem in getting manual journey tickets.

- Passengers inside the train compartments need information of arrival time and station inside the train compartments on the electronic screen. This will help the passenger to plan for alighting at the destination before hand.

- Of late, people who intend to make long distance travel prefer to travel only in train. If bathing facility is provided in all express trains, passengers would be more satisfied.
Now-a-days the railway authorities have extended the facility of supplying bed rolls for second class passengers on payment of some nominal amount. This has not reached the second class passengers fully. Hence railways need to educate the public either through public announcement system or through advertisements in popular dailies read by all class of people or by any other mode railways may think of.

Audio visual entertainment programs, cell phone charging facility in all compartments and telephone facility in the train may be arranged.

Fire extinguishers must be provided in each compartment and coach attendant and Train Ticket Examiners have to be trained to use them.

Now-a-days tube lights and night lamps are available only in express and long distance trains. If this facility is extended to passenger trains, it will be more beneficial to passengers travelling in night passengers train.

The Railway authorities must study the provision of lending library facility in long distance express trains. In pantry car or at a suitable location in trains books, novels, and magazines can be made available. The passengers may be asked to deposit a refundable amount and books, magazines can be issued at a nominal rental. Before the passengers leave the train, they should return the books and get back the deposit amount. This minimizes the expenditure of passengers on purchase of books and magazines during travel.
❖ The design of the iron shutters of the windows should be modified. Passengers who travel during night find it difficult to see the names of the stations when they pull down the iron shutters. Strong mesh type shutters with bigger holes to see through the window without opening should be provided.

❖ A mug and a bucket in each toilet of all the compartments have to be provided. They can be attached to the water tap with a chain. Otherwise, they will be lost.

❖ It has been found out in the analysis that most of the passengers are not satisfied with catering. Quality of food should be improved and variety of items should be introduced. To make the service of catering uniform, all trains should be attached with pantry car facility.

❖ All compartments of trains should have first-aid boxes. These boxes should comprise of antiseptic creams, lotions, pain relievers, cotton bandages etc. the Train Ticket Examiner should be in charge of them and he should be watchful about the expiry dates of the medicines.

❖ Public Address System can be provided in all express trains/stations. Through this system railway authorities can make announcements on the speed of the train, important stations en route, and the duration of stoppage at stations, the importance of the city/station and the like. The same system can also be used for playing music, which will entertain the passengers on board and at stations.
Drinking water should be provided in every coach. A plastic tank can be fixed in the compartments to serve the needs of the passengers of that compartment. The tanks have to be filled up with pure water at important junctions.

Rechargeable electric lights have to be fitted in compartments and their functioning has to be monitored regularly. In times of emergency or an accident or when the power is off due to technical slack these emergency lamps will be of great use.

Seating arrangement in AC Chair Car should be modified, as it is inconvenient to sit so close to one another. Seats should be arranged in such a way that passengers have adequate leg space.

Doors should open only while reaching the platform so that no one can hurt or slip down to track. Also they should open only in direction of platform for the ease of passengers.

Design of coach should be such that the gap between the platform and train wall should be minimum so that fatal accidents can be avoided.
CONCLUSION

Customer care means a customer should get a feeling that he/she is being taken care of apart from normal service for which he has paid the charges. It does not mean a mere transport of passenger or goods from one place to another by Railways, but also needs to involve an extra care and concern. The researcher strongly believes that if all the suggestions offered are carried out, the Indian Railways may become an effective instrument of development for the economic welfare of the country. To improve the customer care in Railways, the role of user public and their co-operation play a vital role.

The image of Railways depends on its personality, perceptions of the passengers and the quality of the products or services offered. There are certain aspects towards which the respondents have positive feelings and there are others towards which the respondents have negative feelings. So it is very difficult to say in a single word as to state whether the Indian Railways has positive or negative images. But it is understood from the evaluation of the passengers that the negative aspects need the attention of the Indian railways.
The outcome of this research reveals the scope for future research in Indian Railways on the following aspects.

1. A study on achieving profitability from freight earnings in Southern Railway.
2. Impact of Absenteeism of Employees in Railways
3. A study on financial performance of Indian Railways
5. Service Quality Perception of Railway Commuters in Madurai Division.
6. Performance and achievement of Indian Railways Regional Trade Union activities.
7. Total Quality Management in Indian Railways with special reference to passenger amenities.