

**A STUDY ON THE PASSENGER SATISFACTION WITH SERVICE  
QUALITY OF SOUTHERN RAILWAYS WITH SPECIAL  
REFERENCE TO TIRUVARUR JUNCTION**

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*Abstract*

*Transport, thus is an important infrastructure in the economy of India. It assumes a greater role in developing countries since all the sectors of the development are closely dependent upon the existence of suitable transportation network. The history of rail transport in India began in the mid-nineteenth century. In 1842, there was not a single kilometer of railway line in India. At that point of time, the railways represented a capital value of some British Sterling Pounds 687 million, and carried over 620 million passengers and approximately 90 million tons of goods a year. The railways in India were a group of privately owned companies. The military engineers of the East India Company, later of the British Indian Army, contributed to the birth and growth of the railways which gradually became the responsibility of civilian technocrats and engineers. However, construction and operation of rail transportation in the North West Frontier Province and in foreign nations during war or for military purposes was the responsibility of the military engineers. In 1901, an early Railway Board was constituted, but the powers were formally invested under Lord Curzon. It served under the Department of Commerce and Industry and had a government railway official serving as chairman, and a railway manager from England and an agent of one of the company railways as the other two members. For the first time in its history, the Railways began to make a profit. In 1907, almost all the rail companies were taken over by the government.*

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**Keywords:** Transport, economy, railways, history, services

## **1.Introduction**

Indian service sector has witnessed a major boom and is one of the major contributors to both employment and national income in recent times. The weight age of service sector is an indication that in near future, India's GDP growth will be influenced considerably by the service sector. Future of the services and their role within the economy looks likely to continue to gain in strength. The marketers in the new millennium will continue to view service marketing as a critically important area for their survival in the market even though various factors contribute to the growth or constraints on the future of the service economy. The activities under the purview of the service sector are quite diverse. The infrastructures including trading, transportation and communication, financial, real estate and business services, community, social and personal services come within the gambit of the service industry.

Transport, thus is an important infrastructure in the economy of India. It assumes a greater role in developing countries since all the sectors of the development are closely dependent upon the existence of suitable transportation network. The whole structure of industry and commerce rests on the well laid foundation of transportation. Thus, an effective transport system is a pre-requisite for economic development of a country. The evident economic growth in India over the last two decades has increased demand for all transport services, particularly land transport through road and rail. The development of railways is one of the landmarks in the progress of human civilization.

Indian Railways owned a total route length of 64,000 kilometers, 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. It carries nearly 23 million passengers every day and transports over 2.65 million tonnes of freight daily. The Head Quarters of the Indian Railways is in New Delhi. Indian Railways is controlled by the Government of India through the Ministry of Railways. At present, there are 17 zones and 68 divisions in the Indian Railways. Indian Railways has identified model stations for the provision of upgraded passenger amenities. Some of the stations have been identified for provision of certain 'touch and feel items' to transform them into modern stations in order to bring about visible improvements at stations.

Delivering superior quality of service to passengers is important for Railways to survive in the competition from low cost airlines and super luxury bus services. Improved service quality influences the Railways competitive advantage and it gives market share and ultimately profitability. Service quality is generally recognized as critical factor in an organization endeavor's to differentiate itself from its competitors.

## **2. Review of Literature**

Devinder K Banwet, et al. (2000) investigated the quality of services offered to students in an institutional computer centre and measures tangible and intangible aspects of services quality, consumer satisfaction, and post-visit intentions. The study indicates that services performance generally lags behind users expectation. Tangible aspects of services performances have a stronger direct effect on post-visit intentions that in tangible aspects satisfied users intend to revisit the computer centre and advise others to visit it.

Anber Abraheem shalash Mohammad, et al (2001) examines the level of services quality as perceived by customers of commercial bank working in Jordan and its effect customer satisfaction. The results of this study indicated that service quality is an important antecedent of customer satisfaction.

Timothy L. et al. (2007) examined different customer satisfaction and loyalty metrics and test their relationship to customer retention, recommendation and share of wallet using micro (customer) level data. The results indicate that recommend intention along will not suffice as a single predictor of customers, future loyalty behavior use of a multiple indicator instead of a single predictor model performs better in predicting customers recommendation and retention.

## **3. Statement of the problem**

India is one of the largest countries in terms of its geographical size which requires efficient means for long-distance transportation. The public transport, being primary mode of transport remains as a powerful yardstick to measure the overall development of a nation. Among the various modes of transport, railway is one of the biggest modes of passenger transport in the world.

The Indian Railways, more than 150 years old, is among one of the largest and oldest systems in the world, fondly called by people as the 'Lifeline of the Nation'. With an extensive network spread across the country, Indian Railways plays a key role in the social and economic development of India. Indian Railway is a principal mode of transportation for long haul freight movement in bulk, long distance passenger traffic, and mass rapid transit in suburban area. It occupies a unique position in the socioeconomic map of the country and is considered as a vehicle and barometer of growth.

## **4. Need of the study**

This study throws light on the passenger satisfaction with service provided by the Indian railways. The study is restricted to Tiruvarur Junction. This study will be helpful to draw up further policy for improving passenger satisfaction and act as a secondary data for further research.

### **5. Objectives of the study**

The main purpose of the study is to analyze passenger satisfaction with service provided by the Indian railways. In order to materialize this objective, the following specific objectives were considered:

- To study growth and development of Indian Railways.
- To measure the level of satisfaction of the passengers about the services offered by the Indian Railways.
- To analyze the relationship between demographic variables and level of satisfaction with services of the Indian Railways.
- To find results and suggest remedial measures to the Indian Railways to improve passenger satisfaction.

### **6. Limitation of the study**

The study has some limitations need to be acknowledged and addressed regarding the present study. The study on its face appears to be limited as it is carried out in a single Indian transport industry, i.e. Indian Railways. Thus, its findings cannot be generalized to other transports. The study was carried out in Tiruvarur Junction. Thus, its finding cannot be generalized to other area due to geographical variation. The study is purely based on the passengers' opinion. The researcher felt that the passengers might express a biased opinion, which may limit the validity of the study. Respondents' opinion may change from time to time and the responses are subject to variation depending upon the situation and attitude of the respondents at the time of the survey.

### **7. Hypothesis of the study**

Several hypotheses were formulated keeping the content and coverage of the framed objectives. The formulated hypotheses are tested by employing appropriate statistical tools.

- There is no significant difference in the mean scores obtained by the respondents for passenger satisfaction.
- There is no positive relationship between perceived values of the passenger satisfaction factors such as Basic Facilities, Hygiene, Safety and Security, Catering, Punctuality, Behavior towards Passengers over all satisfaction.
- There is no significant difference between demographic variables of the respondents and their level of satisfaction with railway services.

### **8. Research methodology**

This study is an empirical research based on survey method. The present study is confined to

Tiruvarur Junction of Southern Railway zone. The universe in this case is defined as the entire population of the country and foreign nationals visiting India. Hence, a definite, statistically-sound sample was not feasible. Convenience sampling was used for the purpose of the survey, and a research sample was taken to measure passengers' satisfaction. Therefore, a total of 150 passengers are selected as sample on the basis of convenience sampling method.

In the present study, both primary and secondary data are used. The required primary data have been collected in the course of interview with the railway passengers through survey method with a questionnaire. The required secondary data for the present study have been collected through Annual Reports of Ministry of Railways, various journals, periodicals and through web sites.

### **8.1 Sample selection**

Sample Comprised of analyzes the passenger satisfaction with service quality provided by the Indian Railways in the study area. Simple Random sampling was preferred and 150 respondent were picked at Random, from different types of reveals that female passengers constitute a significant portion in the customer base of the Indian Railways in the study area.

### **8.2 Period of the study**

The Primary data pertain to a period of 3 years 2012-2013 to 2014-2015 were collected from the sample of 150 respondent, The collected data were presented in the form of tables and statistical tools a like T- test was used analyses the data and conclusion were drawn from the analyzed data.

### **8.3 Sources of the data**

Primary date, for the study, were collected through a structured questionnaire. Questions were prepared, using different sets of scales, namely, nominal and ordinal, as the attributes studied were non parametric.

### **8.4 Tools used**

In order to find out whether there is any significant difference in the mean scores secured by the respondents for passenger satisfaction, a null hypothesis are framed and tested with the help of t test.

## **9. Findings of the study**

India is one of the largest countries in terms of its geographical size which requires efficient means for long-distance transportation. The public transport, being primary mode of transport remains as a powerful yardstick to measure the overall development of a nation. Among the various

modes of transport, railway is one of the biggest modes of passenger transport in the world.

The Indian Railways, more than 150 years old, is among one of the largest and oldest systems in the world, fondly called by people as the ‘Lifeline of the Nation’. With an extensive network spread across the country, Indian Railways plays a key role in the social and economic development of India. Indian Railway is a principal mode of transportation for long haul freight movement in bulk, long distance passenger traffic, and mass rapid transit in suburban area. It occupies a unique position in the socioeconomic map of the country and is considered as a vehicle and barometer of growth.

The railway passenger services face long term competitive threats from airlines, luxury buses, personalized transport and improved public transport. Low cost airlines are giving stiff competition to upper class segments of the railway passenger service. Though there are competitions from various modes of transport, the railway has its own unique features and provides more services to the passengers. In order to compete with other modes of transport, it is inevitable for railways to accelerate the growth of passengers’ origination. This can be done by providing more quality services to them. Further, the opinion of the passengers towards the services provided by the Indian Railways will be quite different as they vary in socio-economic characteristics.

## **10. Suggestion of the study**

The ministry of railways should establish necessary infrastructure facilities at each station to improve passengers satisfaction.

The railway authorities should ensure sanitation quality in the platform, Cleanliness of toilets and Neatness of Compartment to enhance passenger satisfaction.

The Indian Railways should adhere to punctuality of Trains because most of the passengers are dissatisfied with the punctuality of the trains.

The Indian railways should increase number of seats in the compartment and establishes sitting facilities in the platform and more number of unreserved compartments should be attached in the long distance express trains.

The railways authorities should ensure availability of good quality drinking water in the in all the stations. The railways authorities should change timing of tatkal ticket booking in consultation with consumer protection forum to facilities easy booking of tickets.

## 11. Conclusion

It is well known that offering better services is vital for the growth of the Indian Railways. Still, Indian Railways has to offer services to enhance the level of satisfaction of the passengers. On the basis of the findings of the present study, some constructive and viable suggestions have been made. If the suggestive measurements have been considered earnestly by the Indian Railways and the Policy Makers, it is hope that the Indian Railways will shine and bring grandeur to India in the near future.

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**TABLE 5.1  
BASIC FACILITIES**

S.No	Parameter	Mean Score	Mean Score (%)
01	Availability of Seats	1.78	35.60
02	Availability Drinking Water	1.49	29.80
03	Power Supply	3.57	71.40
04	Lighting facilities	3.85	77.00
05	Inside atmosphere	2.96	59.20
06	Parking space outside	1.87	37.40
07	Working of fans	2.40	48.00
08	E-Booking facilities	3.98	79.60
09	Festival services	1.56	31.20
10	Summer specials	1.48	29.60
11	Tatkal services	1.69	33.80
	Overall (N=150)	26.63	48.42

Source: Primary data

**TABLE 5.2  
HYGIENE**

S.No	Parameter	Mean Score	Mean Score (%)
01	Sanitation Quality	2.74	54.80
02	Cleanliness of toilets	1.74	34.80
03	Neatness of Compartment	2.31	46.20
	Overall (N=150)	6.79	45.27

Source: Primary data

**TABLE 5.3  
SAFETY AND SECURITY**

S.No	Parameter	Mean Score	Mean Score (%)
01	Self Safety	3.98	79.60
02	Safety of Belongings	3.76	75.20
	Overall (N=150)	7.74	77.40

Source: Primary data