# A Study on Service Quality of Southern Railway With Reference To Tuticorin Terminal

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*Abstract-* **Indian Railway is the second largest railway in the whole world. Indian Railway is one of the most effective networks established in 1853 to operate both, long distance and sub-urban railway system on a multi-gauge network of broad, meter and narrow gauges. The Indian Railway helps to unite the integral, social, economical and cultural foundation of the country. Indian Railway has around 1,14,500 kilometres of railway track with 7,500 railway stations. This railway carries approximately 30 million passengers and 2.8 million tons of freight daily. The present Indian Railways are characterized by challenges of market changes and increasing demand in capacity moreover, completion is a key factor in achieving improved productivity, lower prices and higher quality of services and product respond to the change in needs of the customer. A certain degree of competition exists between railway and road transport, but the level of competition varies widely with volume, distance and customer names regarding transit time, reliability of service and value of goods. Indian Railways can provide the necessary customer focus and compete effectively with road provided its reliability, productivity and efficiency are enhanced.**

## SOUTHERN RAILWAY

Southern railway has been occupying a place of pride in the inland transport of South India. From a humble beginning, southern railway has now become the backbone of the economy of South India. Southern railway has been opening new doors to the distant places of South India.

Southern railway was the first railway zone to be created in independent India. The capital of Tamilnadu, Chennai serves as the head quarter of southern railway. In 2001, the zone has been segregated into five divisons namely Chennai, Madurai, Palaghat, Thiruvananthapuram and Tiruchirapalli. The southern railway encompasses the States of Tamilnadu, Pondicherry, Kerala as well as little segment of Andra Pradesh and Karnataka. Over 500 million passengers commute on the southern railway network annually.

## TUTICORIN TERMINAL

The Tuticorin station is a terminal station and there are currently 3 platforms for handling passenger traffic and another platform that serves as an pit lane for trains. The station has computerized reservation center, ATM's (Automated Teller Machine), dormitories, clock room, magazine kiosks. Also it has pit line maintenance facility for cleaning and maintenance of rail coaches.

## STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

In India the population is increasing day by day. So the people are needed transportation to move from one place to another place. So most of the people prefer railway transportation. The Railway passengers are facing the lot of problems and as well as that the Indian Railways provide various quality service to the passengers. The Research goes a ride on the various quality service provided by Indian railway in as a part of southern railway. So the majority of problems availability of ticket, delay in arrival, poor safety measures and over crowd etc.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To study social condition of the respondents towards service quality in southern railway.
- To study the behaviour of the respondents towards service quality in southern railway.
- To study level of satisfaction of respondents in service quality of southern railway.
- To find out after suggestion for improvement of satisfaction of service quality in southern railway

To know the reason for its success.

## SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The study is mainly focus on the service quality of southern railways and satisfaction level of the respondents from the services offered by southern railways. Every aspect related to railway service like ticket availability, quality of travel, staff behaviour, safety, timing etc., are studied at different level of the research. The sample population is chosen from Tuticorin city. The research is mainly conducted to obtain the quality of the service providing by the southern railways. Data from the selected respondents were collected from June 2016 to October 2016.

## METHODOLOGY

This study is based on the survey method. Data were collected from the respondents directly by using questionnaire. The researcher selected 120 respondents in the study area by

adopting convenience sampling method. The researcher personally contacted the respondents and explained the purpose of the study and requested them to answer the question. Each question in the questionnaire was explained and the respondents answers were asked to fill. The secondary data were collected from the books, journals, reports and websites.

## DATA PROCESSING

After completion of the data collection, the filled up questionnaire was analyzed properly. A master table was prepared to sum up all the information contained in the questionnaire. From the master table calculation tables were prepared and classification tables were taken directly for analysis.

## LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The following are the limitations of the study:

- The study is restricted to Tuticorin city only. Hence, the results obtained cannot be generalized to the population as a whole.
- The study is mainly based on the information given by the sample respondents and the information given by them, are subject to their belief and attitude.
- Due to time and economic constraints of the research, number of respondents has been limited to 120.

## ANALYTICAL AND INTERPRETATION

Table 1: Demographic Characteristic of Respondents.

| Characteristics | Sub Categories | No. of respondents | Percentage |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Gender** | Male | 77 | 64 |
| | Female | 43 | 36 |
| | | 120 | 100 |
| **Age** | Below 30 years | 54 | 45 |
| | 30- 39 years | 19 | 15.83 |
| | 40- 49 years | 29 | 24.17 |
| | 50- 59 years | 13 | 10.84 |
| | 60 and Above | 5 | 4.16 |
| | | 120 | 100 |
| **Occupation** | Students | 31 | 26 |
| | Salaried | 53 | 44 |
| | Professionals | 10 | 8 |
| | Others | 26 | 22 |
| | | 120 | 100 |

Source: Primary Data

Table1 discloses that out of 120 respondents: 64 percentages of male respondents are availing most services than the female respondents. 45 percentage of respondents are below 30 years of age groups of respondents are availing most services than the other age groups. 44 percentage salaried group of respondents are availing most services than the other occupant groups.

**Table 2: Type of train**

| S.No | Type of train | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Local | 0 | 0 |
| 2 | Passenger | 4 | 3 |
| 3 | Express | 38 | 32 |
| 4 | Superfast | 78 | 65 |
| | **Total** | 120 | 100 |

Source: Primary Data

Table 2 represents that out of 120 respondents 65 percentage of respondents are availing superfast railway services when compared to other type of trains.

**Table 3: Travelling class**

| S.No | Travelling class | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Second Ordinary | 6 | 5 |
| 2 | Second Express | 9 | 7.5 |
| 3 | Sleeper Class | 60 | 50 |
| 4 | AC Class | 45 | 37.5 |
| | **Total** | 120 | 100 |

Source: Primary Data

Table 3 extracts that out of 120 respondents 50 percentage of passengers are preferring sleeper class when compared to other travelling classes.

**Table 4: Preference of railway service than other modes of transport**

| S.No | Preference of railway service than other modes of transport | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Low Fare | 88 | 73 |
| 2 | Comfort | 27 | 23 |
| 3 | Speed | 5 | 4 |
| 4 | Security | 0 | 0 |
| 5 | Reliability | 0 | 0 |
| | **Total** | 120 | 100 |

Source: Primary Data

Table 4 describes that out of 120 respondents 73 percentage of passengers are using railway services due to low fare when compared to other mode of transport.

**Table 5: Type of improvements needed**

| S.No | Type of improvements needed | Frequency | Percentage |
|------|------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| 1 | Comfort | 18 | 15 |
| 2 | Convenience | 14 | 11 |
| 3 | Safety | 56 | 47 |
| 4 | Punctuality | 32 | 27 |
| | Total | 120 | 100 |

Source: Primary Data

Table 5 describes that out of 120 respondents 47 percentage of passengers require improvement in safety in railway services when compared to other type of improvement.

## PURPOSE OF JOURNEY OF THE RESPONDENT AND THEIR LEVEL OF SATISFACTION

The table 6 shows the occupation of the respondents and their level of satisfaction. In order to study whether there is any relationship between the purpose of journey of the respondents and their level of satisfaction chi-square test was used.

**Table 6**

| S.No | Purpose of journey | Level of satisfaction | | | Total |
|------|--------------------|------|--------|------|-------|
| | | Low | Medium | High | |
| 1 | Study | 1 | 13 | 6 | 20 |
| 2 | Employment | 7 | 23 | 6 | 36 |
| 3 | House hold | 11 | 35 | 9 | 55 |
| 4 | touring | 1 | 7 | 1 | 9 |
| | Total | 20 | 78 | 22 | 120 |

Source: Primary data

The above table shows that out of 120 respondents, 20 respondents are using railway services for education purpose, out of them 1 respondent have low level of satisfaction, 13 respondents have medium level of satisfaction and 6 respondents have high level of satisfaction on service quality of southern railway.

36 respondents are using railway services for employment purpose, out of them 7 respondents have low level of satisfaction, 23 respondents have medium level of satisfaction and 6 respondents have high level of satisfaction on service quality of southern railway.

55 respondents are using railway services for house hold matters, out of them 11 respondents have low level of satisfaction, 35 respondents have medium level of satisfaction and 9 respondents have high level of satisfaction on service quality of southern railway.

9 respondents are using railway services for touring purpose, out of them 1 respondent have low level of satisfaction, 7 respondents have medium level of satisfaction and 1 respondent have high level of satisfaction on service quality of southern railway.

Chi-square test has been applied to test if there is any significant difference between respondents of different purpose of the journey and their level of satisfaction towards service quality of southern railway.

Null hypothesis (Ho)
There is no significant difference between the purpose of journey of the respondents and their level of satisfaction towards the service quality of southern railway.

**Table 6.1: CHI-SQUARE TEST**

| Rows and Columns | O | E | O-E | (O-E)² | (O-E)²/E |
|------------------|---|---|-----|--------|----------|
| R1C1 | 1 | 3.3 | 2.3 | 5.3 | 1.61 |
| R2C1 | 7 | 6 | 1 | 1 | 0.12 |
| R3C1 | 11 | 9.2 | 1.8 | 3.24 | 0.4 |
| R4C1 | 1 | 1.5 | 0.5 | 0.25 | 0.17 |
| R1C2 | 13 | 13 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| R2C2 | 23 | 23.4 | 0.4 | 0.2 | 0.0085 |
| R3C2 | 35 | 36 | 1 | 1 | 0.03 |
| R4C2 | 7 | 5.9 | 1.1 | 1.21 | 0.21 |
| R1C3 | 6 | 3.7 | 2.3 | 5.3 | 1.43 |
| R2C3 | 6 | 7 | 1 | 1 | 0.143 |
| R3C3 | 9 | 10.1 | 1.1 | 1.21 | 0.12 |
| R4C3 | 1 | 1.7 | 0.7 | 0.5 | 0.3 |
| Total | | | | | 4.5 |

Source: Primary data

Chi-square value = 4.5

Chi-square = $\sum (O-E)^2/E$

Where,
O – Observed frequency
E – Expected frequency
E = Row total X Column total/Grand total
Degrees of freedom $(\gamma)$= (R-1) (C-1)
= (4-1) (3-1)
= (3) (2)
= 6

The table value for 6 degrees of freedom at 5% level of significances is 12.592.

Since the calculated value 4.5 is less than the table value 12.592, the hypothesis is accepted and it can be concluded that there is no significance difference between the purpose of journey of the respondents and their level of satisfaction towards the service quality of southern railway.

## FINDINGS:

The findings are based on the collected data and their interpretations are as follows:

- 64% of the respondents are male.
- 45% of the respondents are in the age group of below 30 years.
- 44% of the respondents are salaried.
- 65% of the respondents are using superfast railway services.
- 50% of the respondents are travelling in sleeper class.
- 73% of the respondents are preferring railway service than other modes of transport due to low fare.
- 47% of the respondents are in the need of safety and improvement.
- There is no significance difference among the respondents of different purpose of journey in their level of satisfaction on service quality of southern railways.

## SUGGESTIONS:

Based on the findings of the study the following suggestions are offered by the researchers:

- The percentage of female who prefer railway service is less than when compared to the percentage of male, this is mainly due to the lack of safety and security. Proper safety measures must be undertaken to safe guard the female passengers and also provide separate counter and concession must be given to them. Therefore enough number of female police can also posted in all the women coaches.
- Giving concession to students and improving the train punctuality will attract more students towards the railway service.
- Providence of increased police assistance for each coach and CCTV (Closed Circuit Television) camera will make train journey more secure and reliable.
- The height of the platform must be equivalent to the level of the coach entrance to enable safe entry and exit to passengers.
- In each coach, display boards along with audio facilities indicating the next station must be fixed.
- The emergency windows present in the coaches must be easily openable during emergency needs.
- The station boards kept in the stopping must be provided with good lighting facilities.

## CONCLUSION

Among the different modes of transport available, railways is preferred by all people irrespective of their class. It is well known fact that a train journey is comfortable and convenient to people belonging to all section. If the above mentioned suggestions are being undertaken the journey can be made more comfortable, convenient and enjoyable more number of people will prefer railway service.

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