

## Passenger's perception towards Indian railway service with reference to Villupuram junction

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### Abstract

The service quality of the southern railway Villupuram passenger's perspective is tried to analyze the factors with its attributes for understanding satisfaction of passengers on service quality of Villupuram junction. The study is based on primary data. Primary data were collected from 100 passengers in the Villupuram Railway Junction with the help of questionnaire. The researcher contribute many service factor which are best suitable for railway to consider in future for satisfying the passengers in Villupuram. Since the quality of service is questionable railway try to improve core areas and deliver quality of services to the passengers this attempt from the part of railways will definitely retain the passengers in enjoying its services in future with reference to Villupuram junction.

**Keywords:** satisfaction, railway passengers, service quality

### Introduction

The 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 the service sector is an indication that in the 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 tons of freight daily. The Head Quarters of the Indian Railways is in New Delhi. Indian Railways are 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

Railway has identified model stations for the provision of upgrading passenger amenities. Some of the stations have been identified for the provision of certain 'touch and feel items' to transform them into modern stations in order to bring about visible improvements at stations.

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. In India the population is increasing day by day most of the population prefers railway transportation. There are so many determinants which will influence while choosing the railway transport. The cost of railway transportation is low when compared to road transport, though they prefer rail transport the passenger's perception and preference delightment and level of expectations is high. So the researcher is curious to study about the passenger's perception and level of satisfaction, towards the delivery of Indian railway service with reference to Villupuram junction.

### Objectives of the study

To study about the level of perception and satisfaction of passengers about the services offered by the Indian railways with reference to Villupuram junction.

### Data Collection

The study is based on primary data. Primary data were collected from 100 passengers in Villupuram Railway Junction with the help of questionnaire.

### Scope of the Study

The study is mainly focused on the satisfaction level of the passengers from the services being offered by southern railways. Every aspect pertaining to railway service like ticket availability, quality of travel, staff behavior, safety, timing and other are required to be explored in a detailed manner. Hence the selected sample population is being chosen to know the pragmatic analysis particularly the Villupuram junction. The

research is mainly conducted to obtain the focus of service quality offered by the Indian railways.

**Review of literature**

Rajeshwari and Tamilchelvi (2014) [7] stated in their article entitled “*factors influencing the passengers to prefer rail transport: A study in Coimbatore region*” in this concept, railways as energy efficient transport mode ideally suited for long distance travel as well as perfect suited for bulk mode of transport Indian railways offer many services; the preferences and needs of the passengers are dynamic.

Sheeba and Kumuthadevi (2015) [8] stated in their article entitled “*service quality of southern railways – satisfaction on facilities: Karalla passengers perspective*” passenger satisfaction is one of the influencing factors with regard to the service quality of southern railways. Compared to the other transportation, Indian railways are convenient mode of transportation affordable etc. the passengers really depend on rail mode of transportation with many of reason of which safety, convenience and economy service factors of railways are prominent. The study analyzed those facility factors including amenities provided south Indian railways and its variables to determine the satisfaction of the passengers.

Anuradha (2014) [9] stated in their article entitled “*A study on passenger’s satisfaction towards railway services in erode junction*” “Railway transport dominated in Indian railway system. It is suitable for the all (upper, middle, lower) class peoples because fair is moderate comparing to other transport. Railways also provide services goods, vehicles transferred from one place to another place because people get more benefited.

Vimal kumar and Jitin (2015) [6] stated in their article entitled “*A study on passengers ‘satisfaction towards railway service with reference to Coimbatore junction*” Indian railway is one of the largest and busiest rail networks in the world, transporting sixteen million passengers and more than one million tons of freight daily. A study of the service quality address passengers concerns more effectively and at the same time it also effectively monitor the creation and maintenance of a good quality services.

Tomas and Ganiron (2015) [11] stated in their article entitled “*Exploring the emerging impact of metro rail transit (MRT-3) in metro manila*” the study focuses on the different elements of metro rail transit (MRT-3) operation with the aim of characterizing MRT operation and putting in context its impact in terms of what it is best designed for and what it can delivery. This also involves analyzing the status of the operations of MRT-3 in terms of accessibility to passengers, routing and convenience and determination of the factors affecting development of the MRT system.

Amit Singla (2015) [14] “*The effect of perceived service quality on customer satisfaction in Indian railways*”. Indian railways is the state-owned railway company of India. Indian railways have undergone many changes since its first journey in 1853. It has adopted many new technologies and made many strategic moves to keep its serval thousands of customers. Railway caters to the needs of the people across geographies and income strata as well as ethnic, religious and social

diversities. It is also connected with centers of commerce and industry. Places of pilgrimage, historical sites, and tourist attractions. Railways also reached the remote and understand areas of the remote and underserved areas of the country and bringing them into the national mainstream of development.

Bikramjit Singh Hundal Vikas Kamar (2015) [16] “*Assessing the Service Quality of Northern Railway by Using SERVQUAL Model*” The present study aims to put forth the evaluation of determinants of the passenger satisfaction on service quality of Indian Railway. Nowadays Service Quality of Indian of India Railway has a very high influence on passenger Satisfaction. Railway has a greater potential to draw economic benefits from its operations if their service quality is improved. Five dimensions of Service Quality SERVQUAL were taken in this research paper which is Tangibility Reliability Responsiveness Assurance and Empathy. The result indicates that a larger gap has been found in Reliability and Assurance dimensions of Railway Service quality and the most important factors determining Satisfaction of passengers are basic facilities Safety & Security punctuality and employee behavior towards passengers it was found that the dimensions that influence the good Services were Reliability and Assurance.

**Analysis and Interpretation**

**Table 1:** Profit of the Respondent

	Variables	Percentage
Gender	Male	64
	Female	36
Age	≤ 30 years	12
	31– 40 years	23
	41 – 50 years	27
	51 – 60 years	21
Occupation	Student	12
	Business	10
	Private / Government Employee	49
	Professional	11
	Daily wages	7
	Housewife	11

Table 1 presents profile of the respondents. It is observed that, male passengers constitute higher (64%) than female passengers (36%). Again, gender is a vital parameter to study. The passenger’s perception about train services, facilities, safety will be dependent on the gender of the passenger. The more common age group of the study samples is 41 years to 50 years where 27% are observed and the next common age group is 31 years to 40 years in which 23% are observed. In the age category 51 years to 60 years 21% are observed and in the age in excess of 60 years, 17% are observed. Only 12% age group is ≤ 30 years. The occupational details of the respondents shows that private and Government employees are representing in much higher proportions (49%) followed by student (12%), professional (11%) and business peoples (10%). Housewife’s representing around 11%. Different professions of people are travelling in a train because it is an easy mode of transport to all. Railways is the more convenient and safe mode of transport.

**Table 2:** Nature of visit

Variables		Percentage
Frequency of Travelling	Daily	42
	Weekly	8
	Occasionally	18
	Rarely	16
	Very Rarely	16
Purpose of Journey	Study	12
	Employment	35
	House Hold Matters	23
	Touring	30
Type of Train	Passenger	31
	Express	34
	Super-Fast	25
	Janshatabdi	10
Travelling Class	Second Ordinary	34
	Second Express	32
	Sleeper Class	21
	A/c Coach	13

Table 2 presents the nature of visit by the respondents. It is observed that more commonly passengers are using the train service on a daily basis (42%). About 18% are availing train service occasionally. 16% are using the service rarely and again 16% are using the service very rarely. 8% are using train service once in a week. Therefore majority of train users are commuters who regularly travel from one place to another,

typically to work. One of the important schemes introduced by the railway department is issuing of railway pass for a period of one month at cheap price. This is a huge bonus for the commuters. Therefore it is no surprise that majority of the passengers are using the railway service on regular basis. It is observed for the purpose of travelling in a train is more common purpose of train journey is for employment reasons (35%). Touring purpose comes next (30%) followed by Household purposes (23%) and study purpose (12%). Train is common means of transport for work and study purposes because it is more convenient and less expensive. The nature of train in which passengers are frequently travelled is presented in Table 2. It is observed that express (34%) and passenger (31%) train are the frequent mode of train transport. The next frequent mode of transport is by superfast trains (25%). It is observed from the modes of travelling class of train is that ordinary class (34%) and second express class (32%) are the common modes of travelling followed by sleeper class (21%). In the present study only 13% are commonly travelled in A/c coach. The choice of travelling class depends on many factors includes (i) the time duration of travel (ii) whether travelling in day or night trains (iii) Accompanied by family members or self-travel alone (iv) the purpose of travel and (v) financial constraint. In the present study, as the passengers are travelling in all the type of travelling class, it is better to study the pros and cons of each class.

**Table 3:** Perception on Railway Service

	Highly Satisfied		Satisfied		Moderate		Dissatisfied		Highly Dissatisfied	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Number of Unreserved Coaches in Train	27	27	17	17	23	23	21	21	12	12
Fare in Relation to Comforts	21	21	13	13	31	31	22	22	7	7
Conversion of Express Train into Superfast	3	38	20	20	31	31	9	9	2	2

*Source:* primary data from railway passenger

Table 3 shows that perception of railway service. Only 27% are highly satisfied about number of unreserved coaches in train. 17% are satisfied in this regard. Only 21% are highly satisfied with fare in relation to comforts and 13% are satisfied in this regard. 38% are highly satisfied and 20% are satisfied with conversion of express trains into superfast. Therefore the

satisfaction level of number of unreserved coaches, fare in relation to comforts and conversion of express train into superfast is not up to the mark. The passengers want more unreserved coaches in the train. The comfort level of the train travelling is to be improved and more number of superfast trains to be introduced.

**Table 4:** Facilities at the Reservation / Ticket Counter

	Highly Satisfied	Satisfied	Moderate	Dissatisfied	Highly Dissatisfied
Number of Reservation Counter	35	19	15	20	11
Working Hour of Reservation Counters	31	27	28	13	3
Advance Booking Period for Reservation	17	33	20	11	19
Safety and Security at the Counter	19	19	14	22	26

*Source:* primary data from railway passenger

The satisfaction level of facilities at the reservation / ticket counter is analysed in Table 4. It is observed that, 35% are highly satisfied and 19% are satisfied regarding number of reservation counter. Therefore overall only 54% are satisfied with number of reservation counter available at the station. 31% are highly satisfied and 27% are satisfied with the working hours of reservation counter. Hence overall 58% are satisfied with working time. With regard to period of advance booking of reservation ticket, 17% are highly satisfied and

33% are satisfied. With respect to safety and security only 19% are highly satisfied and similar percentage of passengers are satisfied. Overall only 38% are satisfied towards safety and security at the counter. Hence level of satisfactions of the facilities provided at the reservation counter is not at high standards. Therefore railway authorities should take immediate measures to improve the facilities at the reservation counter.

**Table 5:** Facilities at Platforms & Stations

		Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Basic Amenities	Cleanliness Platforms	5	26	15	21	33
	Security at Stations and Platforms	11	11	14	19	41
	Drinking Water Arrangements	15	10	15	25	30
	Waiting Rooms	-	-	8	31	61
	Retiring Rooms & Cloak Rooms	5	5	7	40	43
	Seating, fans and lighting facility	2	5	17	45	31
Modern Amenities	Pay and Use Toilets	-	-	-	20	80
	ATM Facility	19	25	26	17	13
	Refreshment / Food Plazas	33	19	12	25	11
	Touch Screen System	-	13	20	37	30
	Signage and Coach Indication Boards	31	24	20	17	8
Out-Station or Transportations Facilities	television and Audio Systems	-	-	39	43	18
	Availability of Porters and Trolleys	22	11	19	33	15
	Parking Facility	40	18	24	16	2
	Availability of Auto / Taxi / Buses	51	27	22	-	-

Source: primary data from railway passenger

The satisfaction of facilities at platforms and stations are presented in Table 5. The facilities are categorized under 3 heads viz. (i) Basic amenities (ii) Modern amenities and (iii) Out-station or transportations facilities. The passengers rating of basic amenities facilities are mostly not satisfactory. Cleanliness of platform, security, drinking water arrangements, waiting rooms availability, rest room facility, clock room functioning and functioning of lights and fans are considered as basic amenities. Maintenance of very good hygiene and providing basic facilities in the railway stations is

the need of the hour. With respect to modern facilities such as ATM facility at the premises, availability of refreshment and food plaza stores and the availability of signage and coach indications boards, passengers are given good ratings. But the rating is poor for touch screen monitoring functioning for enquiry of reservation and train information. The passenger’s satisfaction towards outstation and transportation facilities sounds better. This includes availability of porters, parking facility and availability of transport vehicles. Overall the services need to be improved.

**Table 6:** Facility in Train

Facility in Train		Highly Satisfied	Satisfied	Moderate	Dissatisfied	Highly Dissatisfied
Basic Amenities	Cleanliness in Train	20	10	42	18	10
	Proper Maintenance of Coaches	16	9	50	14	11
	Security in Train	16	16	44	17	7
	Watering Arrangement	33	14	27	13	13
	Catering Service	39	32	22	7	-
	Availability of Ladies Coaches	21	17	30	19	13
Modern Amenitie	Medical Assistance During Emergencies	17	21	27	20	15
	Mobile Charging Facilities	37	26	20	14	3
	Recreation Facilities	21	25	45	4	-
	Facilities for Physically Persons	16	17	13	33	21

Source: primary data from railway passenger

The satisfaction of facilities in the train is studied in Table 6. It is observed that, only 20% are highly satisfied and 10% are satisfied with reference to cleanliness in train. Only 16% are highly satisfied with the maintenance of coaches and 9% are satisfied with the maintenance of coaches. About 16% are highly satisfied and 16% are satisfied with securities in the train. The passengers are comparatively more satisfied with the watering arrangements and catering facilities provided in the train. About 21% are highly satisfied and 17% are satisfied with the availability of ladies coaches. Passengers are better satisfied with mobile charging facilities in the coach. But only less percentage of passengers are satisfied with recreational

facilities and special facilities provided for physically challenged persons. The most important part of railway service is providing excellent facilities in the train. Passengers are spending very limited time to long periods of time in the train depending upon the type and nature of journey. Excellent facilities and comforts of the train make journey a pleasant one. Now a day, government makes great effort in improvising the facilities of the train. But still, long way to go in achieving greater heights in this regard. In each year considerable amount of money should be earmarked for improvising facilities and bringing new trains to each and every state of India.

**Table 7:** Behaviour of Railway Employee

	Highly Satisfied	Satisfied	Moderate	Dissatisfied	Highly Dissatisfied
At the Counter	25	25	31	12	7
At the Station	20	26	37	9	8
In the Train	39	10	32	14	5
Sincerity in Discharging their Duties	33	20	29	11	7

Source: primary data from railway passenger

Behaviour of railway employees is studied in Table 7. Approximately 50% of the passengers are shown satisfaction towards employee's behaviour at the counter, at the station and in the train. This is one area where railway department needs to progress a lot. Stringent actions to be taken if the conduct and service of the employees are not met the railway regulations. Again for dereliction of duties, series actions to be taken to make the railway services more disciplined.

### Conclusion

Railway has been important role in the Indian travelling systems. It is suitable all passengers based on this study gender, income, level, family size, above study ratio analysis determine the passenger's satisfaction at the travelling time. This study concluded the passengers feel comfortable in train travelling totally this study was evaluating the passengers satisfaction towards railway. The service quality of the southern railway Villupuram passengers perspective is tried to analyze the factory with its attributes for understanding satisfaction of passengers on service quality from this study the researcher contribute many service factor which are best suitable for railway to consider in future for satisfying the passengers in Villupuram. Since the quality of service is questionable railway try to improve core areas and deliver quality of services to the passengers this attempt from the part of railways will definitely retain the passengers in enjoying its services in future with reference to Villupuram junction.

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