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Editor's Note

Tourism is a global economic powerhouse, contributing significantly to the GDP of many countries and providing employment to millions. However, the environmental and social costs associated with traditional tourism practices have raised concerns about its long-term sustainability. Green and sustainable tourism investments offer a promising solution to this dilemma by fostering economic growth while protecting the planet and benefiting local communities.

Green and sustainable tourism investments encompass a wide range of strategies and practices aimed at minimizing the negative impacts of tourism on the environment and society while maximizing economic benefits. These investments focus on responsible resource management, community engagement, and the preservation of cultural and natural heritage. Investing in renewable energy sources such as solar panels and wind turbines can power hotels, resorts, and transportation services, reducing reliance on fossil fuels and decreasing greenhouse gas emissions. Sustainable tourism investments prioritize efficient waste management systems. Recycling, composting, and reducing single-use plastics are essential steps towards minimizing pollution.

Investing in the protection and maintenance of natural reserves and national parks ensures the long-term viability of tourism destinations while preserving biodiversity. Implementing water-saving technologies, promoting responsible water use, and protecting local water sources help conserve this precious resource.

Green and sustainable tourism investments prioritize hiring locally, empowering communities economically, and reducing income inequality. Supporting cultural heritage through investments in local arts, crafts, and traditions helps preserve the unique identities of tourist destinations. Sustainable tourism investments diversify the local economy, reducing dependence on a single industry and increasing overall resilience.

Green and sustainable tourism investments are not just an ethical choice; they are a smart economic strategy. By balancing economic growth with environmental preservation and social well-being, these investments create a win-win scenario for tourists, host communities, and future generations. As responsible stewards of our planet, it is our duty to support and encourage these investments, ensuring that tourism continues to thrive while safeguarding the natural and cultural treasures that make our world so beautiful.

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An Analytical Study of IRCTC in Promoting Tourism and Upgrading Catering Services Towards Travelling Commuters in Indian Railways at Gwalior Railway Station

Manoj Kumar Yadav

Abstract

IRCTC is a subsidiary wing of Indian Railways responsible for ticketing, promoting tourism and providing catering services to travelling commuters of Indian Railways. For better control and effective management, the Indian railway network is decentralized into 16 railway zones. It sells around more than 5 lakh tickets everyday which makes the IRCTC site second busiest site in the world. Apart front ticketing, it also manages tourism and catering related services for domestic and international tourists and travellers. Besides conventional tourism, nowadays it also offers adventure tourism and customized tours. Recently, IRCTC launched "Rail Tourism India" to provide direct catering and tourism packages to its users. This research study reveals about the challenges faced by IRCTC and what measures IRCTC can take for making the travel passengers' meal experience and moment of truth better. Tools like One way ANOVA and Descriptive analysis are used to draw the inferences.

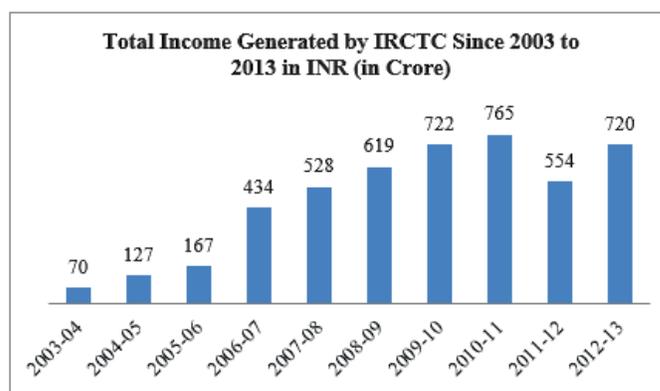
Keywords: Rail Tourism, PSU, MICE, Moment of Truth, Meal Experience, Single-Window Platform

Introduction

The network of Indian Railways is third largest railway network in the world. The milestone in the growth phase of Indian Railways can be traced back in year 1853 when it started its first journey of 53 km from Mumbai to Thane. As compare to any other mode of transport, Railway is considered as cheapest and affordable mode of transport for millions of passengers, particularly for long run journey. For better management, Indian Railway is divided into 16 railway zones and 73 railway divisions throughout the nation.

Indian Railway plays a significant role in the social and economic growth of India. Upto 2013, Indian Railways served to 1.4 crore passengers every day and during the year 2015 it increased to 8.101 billion passengers. As a result, the revenue generation of Indian Railways is also increased gradually. IRCTC is a subsidiary body of Indian Railways responsible for managing catering and tourism services besides ticketing. The revenue growth rate of IRCTC, from year 2003 to 2013, can be seen in the below given bar chart. Conventionally, ticketing is the major revenue source for Indian Railways but as time passes Indian Railways increases its revenue sources

particularly by offering tourism and catering oriented services. Initially, catering venture was handled by Indian Railways and its Zonal points but from the year 1999 the responsibility of catering was handed over to the newly formed IRCTC. Nowadays IRCTC organizes budget and deluxe tour packages for domestic as well as foreign tourist via different high speed and luxury trains.



Source- India Tourism Statistics at a Glance, 2017

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Apart from travel related activities, earlier Indian Railways was also managing its catering services through departmental catering units available on different Railway Zones. In broad spectrum, the work profile of railway from ticketing to catering was vast and completely different in nature. As a result complaints from travelling commuters are obvious but these complaints started increasing day-by-day, particularly meal and beverage related complaints. To strengthen the marketing efforts and service capabilities in the areas of rail catering, hospitality and passenger amenities a corporate entity IRCTC was formed.

IRCTC, formed on 27th September 1999, is a Schedule “B” PSU Enterprise under the direct control and supervision of Ministry of Railways. But it obtained the certificate for commencement of Business on 2nd December 1999 and full flesh functioning was started on 01 August 2001. IRCTC is an extended arm of Indian Railways to upgrade, professionalize and manage the catering and hospitality services of Indian Railways on railway stations, trains, and at other locations. IRCTC was formed with an aim and objective to promote domestic and international tourism through the development of budget hotels, special tour packages, information and commercial publicity and global reservation system. The five inherent activities of IRCTC are- catering; hospitality; internet ticketing; travel & tourism; and manufacturing packaged drinking water (i.e railneer).

Currently, IRCTC manages more than 1500 specialized hospitality professionals and a widespread network across India. IRCTC works as a *single-window platform* for managing multifaceted, most prominently hospitality, tourism and travel related concerns. During the last decade, the corporation has made significant progress in catering, travel and tourism segment of business. The

revenue turnover of this segment (except departmental catering units) has almost double due to significant strides made in the domestic tourism.

In new catering policy 2010, the business of catering and hospitality run by IRCTC is limited to Food Plazas, Food courts and Fast Food Units on railway network nationwide. Besides railway catering, IRCTC also manages its catering services at various offices, institutions and at high-end events and functions. Apart from catering, IRCTC also promotes tourism sector by different means of efforts, for instance introduce new trains, air fare arrangement, extension of route of exiting trains, new tour packages, organization of MICE events and so forth.

All above given areas of development collectively promote tourism and hospitality services for Indian national and international tourist arrivals. But yet the share of Indian in International Tourism Index is floating around 1.2% which is extremely low as compare to other countries. This research paper is written in an attempt to determine the catering and service quality through assessment of expectation and perception of travelling passengers who used to purchase meals and beverages from IRCTC operated outlets.

Tourist Arrival in India

Tourism is important for the country’s economic growth and from the perspective of employment. According to WTTC, tourism generated around 15.24 lakh crore rupees or 9.4 % of India’s GDP in year 2017 and supported around 08% of its total employment. In addition, WTTC also forecasted the growth of tourism in India at an annual rate of 6.9% to Rs. 32.05 lakh crore by the end of year 2028- it means 9.9% of GDP. All these figures clearly reveals about the role and importance of tourism and its related component in the growth and development of the country. The growth rate of inbound tourism from year 2000 in India can be seen in below given Table 01.

Table 2 Inbound Tourism- Foreign Tourist Arrivals (FTAs), Arrivals of NON-Resident Indians (NRIs) and International Tourist Arrivals (ITAs) 2000-2017 (till June)

Year	FTAs in India (in Millions)	Percentage change over previous year	NRIs Arrivals in India (in Millions)	Percentage change over previous year	ITAs in India (in Millions)	Percentage change over previous year
2000	2.65	6.7%				
2001	2.54	-4.2%				
2002	2.38	-06%				
2003	2.73	14.3%				
2004	3.46	26.8%				
2005	3.92	13.3%				
2006	4.45	13.5%				
2007	5.08	14.3%				
2008	5.28	04%				

2009	5.17	-2.2%				
2010	5.78	11.8%				
2011	6.31	9.2%				
2012	6.58	4.3%				
2013	6.97	5.9%				
2014	7.68	10.2%	5.43		13.11	
2015	8.03	4.5%	5.26	-3.15%	13.29	1.4%
2016	8.80	9.7%	5.77	9.67%	14.57	9.6%
2017(P) (Jan-June)	4.89	17.2%				

(P) Provisional, @ Growth rate over Jan-June 2016

Source - A) Bureau of Immigration, Government of India, for 2000-16 and B) Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, for Jan-June 2017

The role of IRCTC in the growth and development of railway catering and hospitality services towards

travelling passengers can never be denied. For detail reference, Table number 2 and 3 can be referred to see segment wise break-up of last five years' profit and loss in the various business segments of IRCTC.

Table No. 2

Business Segment	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16 (P)
Licensee Catering	9.42	3.20	3.97	8.22	19.44
Railneer	-0.82	0.45	2.65	5.52	16.71
Internet Booking	111.02	137.51	171.62	215.59	260.41
Tourism	-10.83	-12.98	-4.68	18.65	28.15
Departmental Catering	-53.59	-59.84	-68.23	-57.32	-65.66
Total	55.20	68.34	105.33	190.56	259.05

Source - India Tourism Statistics at a Glance, 2017

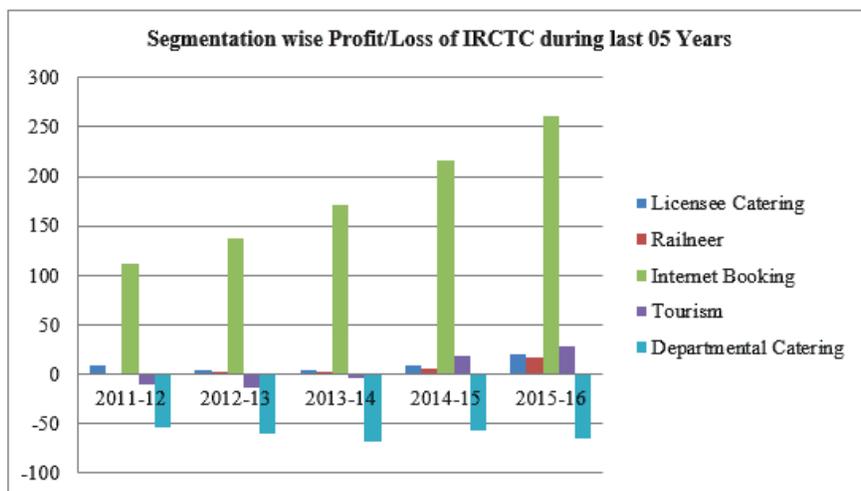
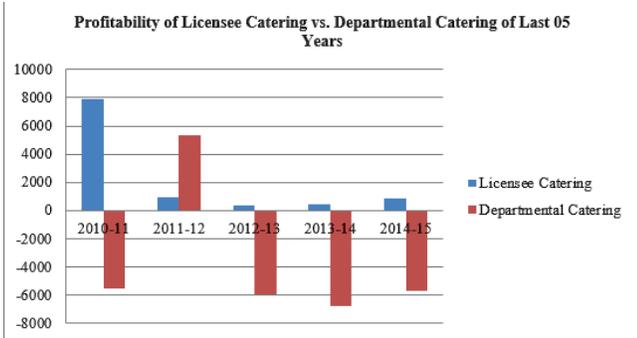


Table No. 3

Particulars	Years (Profit/Loss)				
	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
Licensee Catering	7874.18	941.75	319.97	396.59	822.37
Departmental Catering	-5546.84	-5359.79	-5984.12	-6823.40	-5732.16

Source - India Tourism Statistics at a Glance, 2017

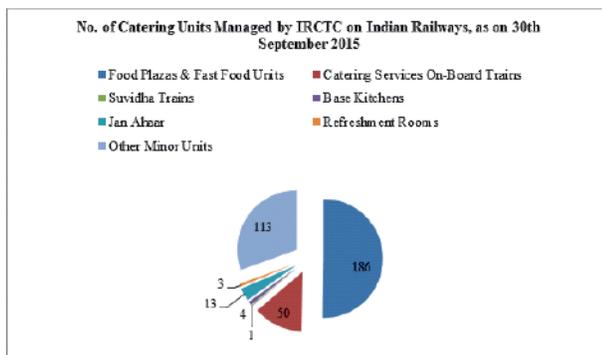


Since its inception and still IRCTC continuously putting all efforts for the betterment of passengers’ overall meal experience and moment of truth. It provides catering provision via different on-board and off-board mechanisms. Its efforts in terms of number of outlets on railway stations and on-board catering provisions can be seen in below given Table 04.

Table No. 04

1	Food Plazas & Fast Food Units	186 units
2	Catering Services On-Board Trains	50 trains
3	Suvidha Trains	01 train
4	Base Kitchens	04 kitchens
5	Jan Ahaar	13 units
6	Refreshment Rooms	03 stations
7	Other Minor Units	113 units

Source - India Tourism Statistics at a Glance, 2017



Source - India Tourism Statistics at a Glance, 2017

IRCTC works hard to take new initiatives in various fields to encash new opportunities in railway and non-railway segments to sustain its high level of performance, simultaneously also emphasis on existing business segment for betterment and improvement. Today, IRCTC operates more than 200 outlets throughout the Indian railway network.

Literature Review

Railway catering is almost identical to airline catering due to various factors, most prominently in terms of target market segment i.e. travelling passengers. The difference lies in both industries only in the average spending power of passengers. Generally, the average spending power of airline commuters is quite high as compare to railway passengers. **R. Archana and M.V. Subhain (2012)** stated in their study, titled “Study of Passenger’s Satisfaction with Respect to the Catering Facilities Available at Raipur Railway Station” that there are three dimensions of perceived service quality by airline commuters i.e. cuisine, seat and safety. These three identified dimensions collectively play a significant role in overall passengers’ satisfaction.

Mohd. Zahari, M.S, Salleh et al (2011) stated in their research work that retaining old passengers and attracting new passengers is an important strategy to survive in this competitive business era. They concluded that flight meals/food service plays an important role in generating business for airlines.

Geethika and Shefali Nandan (2006) identified in their research work, titled “Determinants of Customer Satisfaction on Service Quality: A Study of Railway Platforms in India”, that refreshments and behavioural factors are counted as most important determinants that determines the passengers’ satisfaction with the provided service quality on railway stations.

Catering not only plays a considerable role in transport catering segment but it also forms a key component in welfare catering sector too. **Firenze A, Morici N et al (2009)** concluded in their research work “Patients Evaluation of Hospital Food Service Quality in Italy: What Do Patients Really Value”, that the satisfaction level of patient regarding catering in private hospital was 80% and that of public hospital was 50%. Resultant, the catering services in public hospital needed to be improved.

Cronin and Taylor (1992) revealed in their research work “Measuring Service Quality: A Re-examination and Extension” that perceived service quality led customers to satisfaction and also stated that this is the service quality which actually an antecedent of customer satisfaction.

Bitner and Hubbert (1994) revealed in their research study that the customer’s perception is an important dimension of service quality. The service quality varies with profession and customers’ perspective; thus the definitions of service almost formulated in accordance with customers’ perspective.

M. Joseph (2000) stated in his work “Customer Satisfaction in Southern Railway, Madurai Division” that the service quality of meals and beverages served in Indian Trains must be improved to make the passengers satisfied. For improvement, he suggested for frequent and random

inspection of catering units by railway officials and local NGOs.

Gronoos (1884), counted as a pioneer in conceptualization of the service quality, revealed in his research work that technical, functional and reputational quality are considered as major concern for service quality. Later on **Gronroos (1988)** stated that the overall perception of quality was a disconfirmation of a customers' expectation and evaluation of a service offered. The same assertion is continuously maintained by world renowned authors Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1988) in their research work.

Chang Ee Ling and Cyril De Run (2009) stated in their research work that supporting services, products and promotional efforts are few major variables for customer satisfaction. On the flip side, they stated that convenience, services, satisfaction and associate costs are primary determinants of customer loyalty. The findings of the research work concluded that service providers must look beyond price wars to keep their customers satisfied and loyal.

Service is most important concern for **T and A. Stephen (2012)** they stated with the help of Railquail model in their research study that reliability, assurance and empathy are three major concerns for travelling passenger.

Aggarwal R. (2008) discussed in his research work that the behaviour of employees play a significant role in overall satisfaction of guest. He said that in Indian Railways, the impact of catering staffs' behaviour work as a determinant for passenger satisfaction.

Statement of Problem

The facility of on-board and off-board catering improves a lot after the involvement of IRCTC in catering services of Indian Railways. Now it is convenient for passengers to place their orders via mobile number as well as on-line booking portal but yet there is a need of further development in the sector of generosity in the behavioural aspect of railway catering staff, food quality and waste treatment in an attempt to meet passengers' expectation level. This research paper confers about the pre-determined standard level of catering with on-going reality and describes how passengers of Indian Railway can be better satisfied by its catering and hospitality services.

Objectives of the Research

- ❖ To study the role and impact of catering services in passenger's overall *moment of truth* and *meal experience* cycle.
- ❖ To find out the impact of different catering dimensions (preferable travel mode, travel frequency, purpose of travel, class of travel, travel itinerary, purchase preference and ASP) over the passengers' overall satisfaction level.

- ❖ To evaluate the passenger satisfaction level among the travellers of Indian Railways with the services of IRCTC, particularly catering and hospitality services.
- ❖ To observe the passengers' post purchase behaviour towards the offered catering services and hospitality services provided by IRCTC.

Period of Study

This research study was conducted in between the month of July, August, September, October and November 2019

Sources of Data Collection

The primary data for this research work has been collected through questionnaire and personal observation of travelling passengers. In questionnaire, 20 questions (divided into 05 parts- each contains 04 questions) were used to collect the response and feedback in respect to catering services provided by IRCTC. For questionnaire, the *sample size* of the study was around 75 respondents but proper and complete responses were received from only 43 respondents. The sample selection was done randomly who travelled via express and Mail trains. The sample composition was consists of those travellers who travel towards Delhi meanwhile passes from Gwalior railway station. On the flip side, the secondary data has been collected from newspaper, magazines, CAG report, articles, relevant websites, previous research papers and annual report of Indian Railways.

Data Analysis and Interpretations

The data analysis of this analytical study is based on the hypothesis testing- finding the differences between variables then analyze these variables on the basis of their mean and percentage score. In reliability statistic, the Cronbach's Alpha is .724. Additionally, collective response of travelling passengers in regard to five major questions which included in questionnaire is briefly explained below-

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.745	.724	20

Question 01 Do you prefer to purchase meals and beverages from the catering service providers during the travelling hours, irrespective to authorized or unauthorized vendors?

Remark- From all the chosen respondents from captive market segment (i.e. railway commuters), around 65% respondents accepted that they mostly prefer to purchase meals and beverages during the journey hours. On the opposite side 30% respondents responded that they do not prefer to purchase meals and beverages during the journey. And remaining 05% respondents said that sometime they prefer to purchase but not always.

Question 2 From whom, authorized or unauthorized vendors, you would mostly prefer to purchase meals and beverages during the travelling hours?

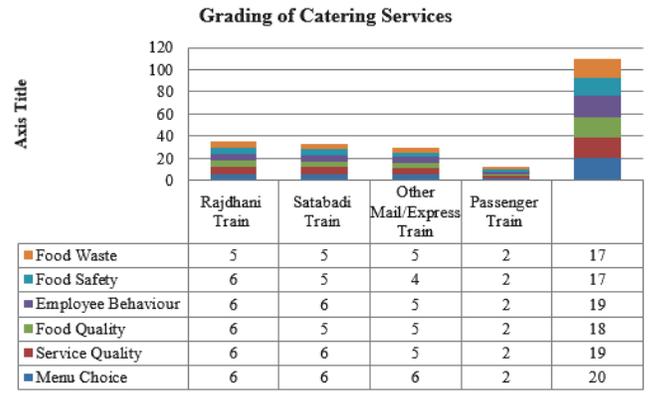
Remark- Around 40% respondents accepted that they mostly purchase meals and beverages from authorized vendors only (or IRCTC affiliated vendors) particularly due to safety and quality assurance. In contrary, 35% respondents said that they purchase from local vendors/non-authorized vendors and 15% accepted that they purchase from both authorized as well as unauthorized vendors. The remaining 10% respondents claimed that they mostly prefer to carry food from their home because it is more safe and hygienic as compare to vendors' food.

Question 03 How do you wish to rate the various catering dimensions (menu choice, food quality, service quality, employee behaviour, food safety and food waste) of Indian railway catering services in order-of-their-importance?

Remark- For 25% passengers' food quality is highly important followed by food safety (21%), service quality (18%) and employee behaviour (18%) as compare to other dimensions. 12% respondents claimed that menu choices also form a significant role in catering services after food quality and food safety. On the flip side only 06% respondents have given weightage to food waste and said it also plays a significant role in catering related services apart from other stated core components.

Question 04 How do you wish to grade the various catering oriented, in regard to menu choices, serving method, food quality, employee behaviour, food safety and food waste, services provided by IRCTC and its authorized vendors.

Source - Author



Question - 04

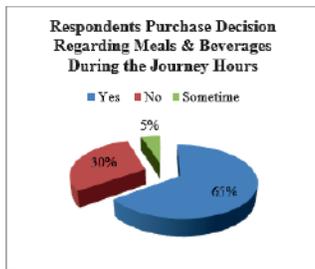
Source - Author

Remark- The overall facility of catering and its related components are highly acceptable in Rajdhani trains followed by Satabadi and other mail/express and passengers trains. The collective response of all respondents is somewhat like-

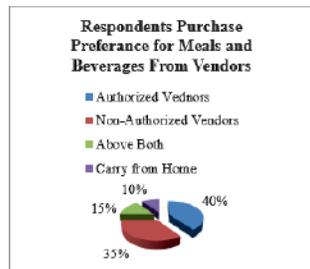
Catering Components	Marks	Overall Percentage	Ranking of Catering Components
Menu Choice	20 marks out of 40, it means 50%	16.67%	01st Rank
Service Quality & Employee Behaviour	19 marks out of 40, it means 47.5%	15.83%	02nd Rank
Food Quality	18 marks out of 40, it means 47.5%	14.95%	03rd Rank
Food Hygiene and Food waste	17 marks out of 40, it means 42.5%	14.17%	04th Rank

All selected respondents collectively gave 61.62 % marks out of 100% to catering and its related components. Yet catering components are lacking behind with 38.38% marks which is not a good indication of passenger satisfaction. The above given response figures clearly reflected that respondents have gave maximum marks to menu choice followed by service quality, employee behaviour and food quality. Food hygiene and food waste dimension get minimum marks and placed on 4th position. But remember the entire response scenario varies with type of train.

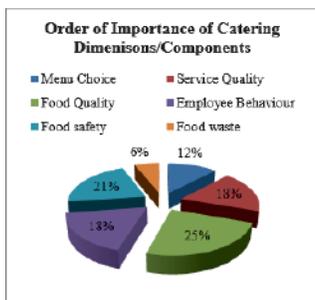
Question 05 How do you want to evaluate the overall catering services provided by IRCTC, its co-partners and unauthorized vendors to travelling passengers?



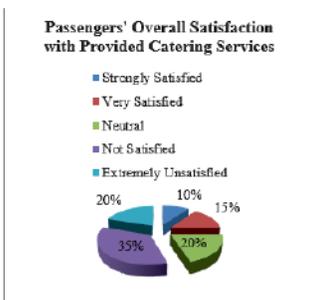
Question - 01



Question - 02



Question - 03



Question - 05

Remark- In terms of overall passenger satisfaction, 35% passengers are not satisfied with various catering services provided by authorized (or IRCTC/Indian Railways affiliated) and unauthorized vendors. 20% passengers are extremely dissatisfied with catering services and 20% passengers gave their neutral response (neither

fully dissatisfied nor completely satisfied) with catering services of Indian Railways. Only 10% passengers are strongly satisfied with provided meals and beverages whereas 15% passengers are very satisfied.

Distribution of Catering Dimensions and Response Figures of Travelling Commuters and Passengers

Catering Dimensions		Frequency	Percentage
Preferable Travel Mode	- Rail	37	85
	- Bus	02	05
	- Car	02	05
	- Air	02	05
	- Water	-	
Travelling Frequency	- On daily basis	01	02
	- Once a week	03	07
	- Once a month	22	51
	- Once in half year	06	14
	- Once in a year	11	26
Purpose of Travel	- Business	08	19
	- Leisure	35	81
Class of Travel	- Sleeper Coach	27	63
	- AC Coach	16	37
	- General Coach	-	-
Travelling Itinerary	- Pre-planned	17	40
	- On the Spot	08	18
	- Both	17	40
	- Not Sure	01	02
Food Preference	- Carry food from your home	28	65
	- Purchase from catering vendors	08	19
	- Both	07	16
Purchase Preference	- Authorized Vendors/IRCTC affiliated Bodies	30	70
	- Unauthorized Vendors/Local Vendors	02	45
	- Both	11	25
Purchase Frequency	- Once a day	23	54
	- Twice a day	08	18
	- Thrice a day	05	12
	- Round the clock	01	02
	- Never	06	14
ASP	- Below Rs. 500	29	68
	- Rs. 501 – Rs. 1000	06	14
	- Rs. 1001 –Rs. 1500	07	16
	- Rs. 1501-Rs. 2000	01	02
	- Above Rs. 2001	-	

The result of hypothesis testing reveals-

ANOVA						
		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Travel Mode	Between Groups	2.415	3	.805	2.122	.140
	Within Groups	5.690	15	.379		
	Total	8.105	18			
Travel Frequency	Between Groups	2.231	3	.744	.552	.654
	Within Groups	20.190	15	1.346		
	Total	22.421	18			
Travel Purpose	Between Groups	.507	3	.169	1.039	.404
	Within Groups	2.440	15	.163		
	Total	2.947	18			
Travel Class	Between Groups	.343	3	.114	.456	.717
	Within Groups	3.762	15	.251		
	Total	4.105	18			
Travel Itinerary	Between Groups	.310	3	.103	.113	.951
	Within Groups	13.690	15	.913		
	Total	14.000	18			
Food Preference	Between Groups	.729	3	.243	1.502	.255
	Within Groups	2.429	15	.162		
	Total	3.158	18			
Purchase Preference	Between Groups	.939	3	.313	.398	.756
	Within Groups	11.798	15	.787		
	Total	12.737	18			
Purchase Frequency	Between Groups	4.922	3	1.641	1.081	.387
	Within Groups	22.762	15	1.517		
	Total	27.684	18			
Average Spending Power	Between Groups	.308	3	.103	.265	.849
	Within Groups	5.798	15	.387		
	Total	6.105	18			

H₀₀ Statistically there is no significant difference between passengers' satisfaction level and their preferable travel mode.

Result - One way ANOVA clearly reflects that statistically there was no significant difference between passengers' satisfaction level in respect to their preferable travel mode. The significance value is 0.140 (p= .140) which is above 0.05 and F(3,15)= 2.122

H₀₁ Statistically there is no significant difference between passengers' satisfaction level and their travelling frequency.

Result - One way ANOVA clearly reflects that statistically there was no significant difference between passengers' satisfaction level in respect to their travelling frequency. The significance value is 0.654 (p = .654) which is above 0.05 and F (3,15) = .552

H₀₂ Statistically there is no significant difference between passengers' satisfaction level and their purpose of travel.

Result - One way ANOVA clearly reflects that statistically there was no significant difference between passengers' satisfaction level in respect to their travel purpose. The significance value is 0.404 (p = .404) which is above 0.05 and F (3,15) = 1.039

H₀₃ Statistically there is no significant difference between passengers' satisfaction level and their class of travel.

Result - One way ANOVA clearly reflects that statistically there is no significant difference between passengers' satisfaction level in respect to their class of travel. The significance value is 0.717 (p = .717) which is above 0.05 and F (3,15) = .465

- H₀₄ Statistically there is no significant difference between passengers' satisfaction level and their travelling itinerary.
Result - One way ANOVA clearly reflects that statistically there was no significant difference between passengers' satisfaction level in respect to their travelling itinerary. The significance value is 0.951 (p = .951) which is above 0.05 and F (3,15) = .113
- H₀₅ Statistically there is no significant difference between passengers' satisfaction level and their food purchase preference.
Result - One way ANOVA clearly reflects that statistically there was no significant difference between passengers' satisfaction level in respect to their food purchase frequency. The significance value is 0.756 (p= .756) which is above 0.05 and F(3,15)= .398
- H₀₆ Statistically there is no significant difference between passengers' satisfaction level and their purchase frequency.
Result - One way ANOVA clearly reflects that statistically there was no significant difference between passengers' satisfaction level in respect to their purchase frequency. The significance value is 0.387 (p = .387) which is above 0.05 and F (3,15) = 1.081
- H₀₇ Statistically there is no significant difference between passenger satisfaction level and their average spending power.
Result - One way ANOVA clearly reflects that statistically there was no significant difference between passengers' satisfaction level in respect to their average spending power. The significance value is 0.849 (p = .849) which is above 0.05 and F (3,15) = .265

Table 3 Descriptive Analysis of Satisfaction Dimension

S. No.	Rating Scale	Percentage					Mean Score and SD	
		SU	US	SA	VS	SS		
1	Menu Choice (Food)	9.1	20.5	59.1	9.1	-	2.70	.773
2	Menu Choice (Beverages)	2.3	18.2	56.8	20.5	-	2.98	.707
3	Menu Choice (All Round Snacks)	-	20.5	43.2	29.5	2.3	3.14	.783
4	Food Quality	11.4	25.0	52.3	11.4	-	2.64	.838
5	Service Quality	9.1	13.6	31.8	40.9	4.5	3.18	1.040
6	Food Hygiene and Safety	4.5	15.9	45.5	27.3	2.3	3.07	.876
7	Prices of Meals & Beverages	4.5	36.4	47.7	4.5	2.3	2.62	.764
8	Food Waste Disposal	11.4	25.0	47.7	4.5	6.8	2.69	1.000
9	Employee Behaviour	4.5	11.4	56.8	27.3	-	3.07	.759

Note. SU- Strongly Unsatisfactory, US- Unsatisfactory, SA- Satisfactory, VS-Very Satisfactory, SS- Strongly Satisfactory

In the above given table of descriptive analysis of satisfaction dimension, this is observed that four out of nine dimensions has a *mean score* on a higher note, i.e. <3 and remaining five dimensions are on a lower note >3. The dimension with very lowest value is prices of meals and beverages with *mean score* of 2.62 followed by food quality (2.64) and waste disposal (2.69). The *mean score* of service quality stands at 3.18 followed by menu choices of all-round snacks at 3.14 and satisfy the condition of catering services and provision provided by the Indian Railways at this particular junction. Consequently the above given analysis also suggests that passengers are least satisfied with prices of offered meals and

beverages (followed by food quality) with rest of the dimensions on catering provisions at Gwalior Railway Stations.

Limitation of the Study

1. The data collected may not be generalized for the entire catering provisions throughout the Indian Railway network because it is collected from limited passengers who pass from Gwalior railway station.
2. The correctness of the data analysis and interpretations is subject to the correctness of responses given by the randomly chosen respondents.

3. Respondents' responses may suffer from their personal biasness also which can affect this research work either positively or negatively. .
4. Apart from tourism and catering provisions, there are countless variables that determine the satisfaction of passengers. So, the study may not reveal comprehensive result.

Findings of the Study

The tested hypotheses clearly specify that there were no significant differences between passengers' satisfaction level in respect to varying catering dimensions. The *mean score* of menu choices, food quality, prices for meals & beverage and food waste disposal clearly intimates that these weaken areas should be seriously addressed and need to be strengthened.

Recommendations and Suggestions

1. The result of tested hypothesis reveals that there are no significant differences in between the catering dimensions in respect to passengers' satisfaction level. Consequently, the framed policies, in respect to catering provisions and services, by IRCTC and Indian Railways should be quantified in general. Therefore, these dimensions need not to be specific.
2. A differential margin is found with respect to prices of meals and beverages, food quality and food waste disposal. These dimensions should be strengthened with respect to others particularly service quality, menu choices, employee behaviour followed by food hygiene and safety and menu choices (all round snacks).
3. Collectively, catering service provider must focus on all dimensions of catering services, especially on food quality and prices as these dimensions significantly affect to others and significantly affects in forming overall passenger satisfaction level.

Conclusion

Indian Railway is a highly preferable mode of transport for majority of travellers. IRCTC, a subsidiary of Indian Railways, plays a significant role in ticketing, tourism and catering oriented services to travelling commuters. This analytical study reveals that catering is a vital aspect of Indian Railways and performs a noteworthy contribution

in overall satisfaction of passengers. This study explores an insight of passengers' satisfaction with catering services at Gwalior Railway station. Tested hypothesis revealed that there are no significant differences between catering dimensions and passengers' satisfaction level. However the qualitative and quantitative aspects of food quality and prices of meals and beverages followed by food waste and menu choices are significantly not prevailing at expected level.

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