



Local **C**ircles



# ***“Making Railways Better”***

**Collective inputs from 120,000 Indian Citizens on**

**“Railway Issues Affecting Citizens”**

***(Issues, Root Causes and Proposed Solutions)***

***August 4, 2014***



## Background

Although the new railway budget has brought much hope with it, Indian Railway is still in the need of an overhauling. Issues like cleanliness and safety are still a major concern for citizens of India. We asked two of our circles and over 120,000 citizens on what are the Citizen facing issues with railways. Collectively they have identified Issues, Root Causes and Solutions which are presented in this whitepaper.

## Poll on Key Railway Issues:

A poll was recently conducted asking citizens of India about what should be the top most action priority for Indian Railways.

1. Ensuring cleaner coaches, toilets and stations (49 %)
2. Improving safety on tracks (35 %)
3. Improving the online and offline reservation system (9 %)
4. Making more hygienic and better food available (6 %)

Clearly, what citizens of India want is cleanliness in coaches, toilets and stations.

## Key Issues identified by Citizens:

1. Lack of cleanliness of coaches/ stations/ toilets
2. Unhygienic Food
3. Difficult online/offline ticketing systems
4. Lack of safety on tracks – accidents happen far too often
5. Corruption and discretion with TTE
6. Lack of timeliness of trains
7. Crowding of stations/platforms by people without travel and platform tickets

## Key Root Causes identified by Citizens:

1. Railways has become too large an organization to be managed by the Government
2. Standards set for the railway employees to follow are very low
3. Infrastructure is not strong enough
4. No training and development programs – employees still belong to the old school of thoughts
5. The sense of cleanliness/ hygiene among the general public is missing
6. The stations/platforms cater to huge numbers and hence become tough to manage
7. No thorough quality checks on the pantry car
8. Modern safety/ communication equipment are missing which lead to fatal accidents.
9. Too much dependency on human feedback
10. Too much power vested with the TTE's. Encouragement is also given by general public



11. Condition of the tracks is not in the prime state
12. A lot of people who are not even traveling are present on the platforms
13. Ticket windows to Customer ratio is very low
14. The online ticketing system is slow and outdated
15. Railways is still considered to be 'cheap' mode of transport and hence not much consideration is given to passenger comfort on the stations and inside the train
16. Lack of accountability of cleaning staff, faulty/negligent auditing system
17. Absence of credible grievance redressal mechanism
18. Touts make the ticket situation worse
19. Corruption in a large percentage of Railway contracts (Equipment Supply, Catering, Cleaning, etc.) leads to poor product/service quality
20. Passengers pull the emergency 'stop' chain without a valid reason.

### **Solutions Identified by Citizens:**

1. Unauthorized entry of citizens without ticket or platform ticket must be stopped.
2. Local vendors and beggars must be banned on the platform and in the train
3. Awareness should be created among the general public about keeping railways and platforms clean
4. The cleaning staff needs to be made accountable for their work
5. Cleaning of stations and trains must be outsourced to private industry with service level contracts
6. Bigger dustbins in every compartment and they being emptied at every major station
7. Bio toilets should be scrapped and the ones like in aircrafts should be installed
8. The pantry car should be made to adhere to the highest standards and should go through regular quality checks
9. More staff be redeployed for train maintenance, discipline, and functions like cleaning, pantry, catering outsourced.
10. Railway tickets should have more distribution channels so it is easier for citizens to buy them
11. Performance of the IRCTC website should be significantly improved
12. Railways should acquire modern safety, monitoring and communication equipment to prevent accidents
13. Regular training and certifications made mandatory for train drivers
14. Anti-collision devices should be made mandatory in all trains
15. Regular behavioural training programs should be organised for the railway employees
16. An accessible via internet and mobile phone anti-corruption wing should be created to keep a check on the TTEs
17. Rationalization of ticket quotas for VIPs and railway employees at all levels
18. Strict actions should be taken against touts and middlemen
19. Every compartment should have a cap on the number of passengers allowed in
20. All major stations should have a pre-paid porter counter.



## Key Railway issues affecting citizens – Posts and comments:

1. Computerized reservation system was installed many years back. Initially it was a great help as people got reservations easily. Then the railways modified the software at least two times and made many changes and provisions not known to the people, but after that securing a railway reservation has become a big problem. It is now common knowledge that touts, some key railway employees have access to the system and can and can modify the waiting lists and make reservations out of turn. I think the software needs to be audited by a neutral software firm and loop holes plugged so that public is reassured. Booking through touts and commission agents should be discontinued – **Dr. M. Khare**

2. Speed needs to be improved, Solution - Better Telecommunication and Signalling, Doubling the Tracks where current revenue collection is more, Railway-Over-Bridges at all access points (State Govt Funding), Dedicated Resource (Smart and Courteous) at each station for Train Coordination of Passengers for Station Arrival/Departure. Expectation – **Manoj Khade**

3. Railway is one of the best and cheapest transport systems of India. But it is totally tied in the net of corruption. Increasing of fare is totally unfair. People are suffering those kinds of hike due to corruption. Railways need to stop corruption and hope no need to increase the fare. It is money making machine. There is no any accountability to provide services to the people of India. Need to auction those materials laying near track. These can increase the railway fund. Need to utilize the railway spaces which are unnecessary occupied by the people. Need to maintain time to run railways. It cannot imagine railways are running some times more than 24 hours late. Late running train is common problem. Need to maintain. Railway minister should travel in general compartment to realize the exact situation – **Md. Nasim Alam**

4. Sir I am from Maharashtra and I have seen Nagpur railway station. It is very clean and build passenger friendly way. Why not others station adapt same way. For example when you travel with travelling bag having wheels so that you can pull it easily. To pull such travelling bag we need stiff platform not the steers. Pulling friendly steers are present in Nagpur but not in any Delhi railway stations, Nizamuddin or New Delhi not anywhere. It is very hard for people to carry luggage on platform crossing steers. Please it is very small thing but it will make very big difference for people's convenience – **Yogesh Khandokar**

5. Corruption on booking parcel service – **Sarvana Kumar**

6. We need fast trains at least connecting the major cities of the country. For this, railways needs a lot of money to invest in tracks, new lighter, faster coaches and engines, new signalling and technology etc – **Nirav Dalal**

7. Railways have to improve the monitoring system, means it should be online and automated, instead of manual feedback form filling in train compartment, it should be some keyboard type system nearby the wash room and that should be online with central monitoring system. In this feedback and issue/complain both can be capture in one window. This should be activated through last 3 digit of PNR+PIN no (means valid ID proof



no.) if possible Complain should be entertained within the traveling period of that passenger. As railway is 7x24 hr. service so handover and take over process should be very clear of each and every employee of railway, (in the train compartment also) – **Dinesh Agrawal**

8. I am proud to be the member of this group in particular giving suggestions in the improvement of the Railways which is considered to be the largest transport network in the world covering longest distance crisscrossing the Country. Considering yesteryears there has been considerable improvement in certain sectors bur needs improvement in major sectors. I agree with the suggestions/critics expressed by many of the members – **Jagadisan Srinivasan**

9. Many Big stations only one battery car is available to help Sr Citizens and disabled. More numbers to be provided. Providing lifts and escalator may take long time, hence the above suggestion – **Nakkeran Singaravelu**

10. Poor service by Govt. Sometimes many people crowded (when train was on platform) to get the ticket from one counter when other 3 or 4 counters are empty. Where they go nobody knows. Govt. has to implement certain system to provide a display board to mention where they are going in working time – **Sujith TV**

11. Pantry car systems is 100% failure in railway. It is only for creating problems. So central kitchen system on stations where more than 50 train passes per day should be implemented – **Dr. Rajesh Singh**

12. Regular employees instead of doing skilled job utilising contract labour and many are found fully drunk during working hours and no control over them. There should be consorted efforts from all trade unions to work in unison for the betterment of Railways both in operational and administrative work – **Ganpathi Raju**