

**12**

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON  
RAILWAYS  
(2021-22)  
SEVENTEENTH LOK SABHA**

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**MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS  
(RAILWAY BOARD)**

**[Action taken by Government on the Observations/Recommendations contained in the 8<sup>th</sup> Report of the Standing Committee on Railways (Seventeenth Lok Sabha) on 'Passenger Reservation System of Indian Railways']**

**TWELFTH REPORT**



**LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT  
NEW DELHI**

**AUGUST, 2022/SRAVANA, 1944 (SAKA)**

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**[Action taken by Government on the Observations/Recommendations contained in the 8<sup>th</sup> Report of the Standing Committee on Railways (Seventeenth Lok Sabha) on 'Passenger Reservation System of Indian Railways']**

**Presented to Lok Sabha on 04.08.2022**

**Laid in Rajya Sabha on 04.08.2022**



**LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT**  
**NEW DELHI**

**AUGUST, 2022/SRAVANA, 1944 (SAKA)**

## **CONTENTS**

COMPOSITION OF THE COMMITTEE.....	(iii)
INTRODUCTION.....	(v)

### **PART-I**

CHAPTER I	REPORT.....	1
CHAPTER II	Observations/Recommendations which have been accepted by the Government.....	10
CHAPTER III	Observations/Recommendations which the Committee do not desire to pursue in view of the Government's reply.....	29
CHAPTER IV	Observations/Recommendations in respect of which replies of the Government have not been accepted by the Committee and which require reiteration .....	30
CHAPTER V	Observations/Recommendations in respect of which final replies of the Government are still awaited .....	32

### **ANNEXURE**

I.	Minutes of the sitting of the Standing Committee on Railways held on 03.08.2022	33
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### **APPENDIX**

I.	Analysis of the Action Taken by Government on the Observations/Recommendations contained in the Eighth Report of the Standing Committee on Railways (Seventeenth Lok Sabha)	35
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## COMPOSITION OF STANDING COMMITTEE ON RAILWAYS (2021-22)

**Shri Radha Mohan Singh** - **Chairperson**

### MEMBERS

#### LOK SABHA

2. Shri T.R. Baalu
3. Smt. Ranjanben Dhananjay Bhatt
4. Shri A. H. Khan Choudhury
5. Shri Kaushalendra Kumar
6. Ms. Diya Kumari
7. Smt. Jaskaur Meena
8. Smt. Satabdi Roy<sup>#</sup>
9. Ms. Chandrani Murmu
10. Smt. Keshari Devi Patel
11. Shri Mukesh Rajput
12. Shri N. Reddeppa
13. Shri Achyutananda Samanta
14. Shri Sumedhanand Saraswati
15. Shri Arvind Sawant
16. Dr. Amar Singh
17. Smt. Sangeeta Kumari Singh Deo
18. Shri Kodikunnil Suresh
19. Shri Gopal Jee Thakur
20. Sadhvi Pragya Singh Thakur
21. Dr. Farooq Abdullah<sup>^</sup>

#### RAJYA SABHA

22. Shri Narhari Amin
23. Shri Chh. Udayanraje Bhonsle
24. Shri H.D. Devegowda
25. Smt. Phulo Devi Netam
26. Ms. Saroj Pandey
27. Vacant<sup>\$</sup>
28. Dr. Sumer Singh Solanki
29. Shri Binoy Viswam
30. Prof. Manoj Kumar Jha<sup>\*</sup>
31. Vacant

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@ Constituted w.e.f. 13.09.2021 vide Lok Sabha Bulletin Part II No. 3192 dated 09.10.2021.

\* Nominated as Member w.e.f. 14.10.2021 vide Rajya Sabha Bulletin Part II No. 61163 dt 18.10.2021

# Nominated to the Committee w.e.f. 01.12.2021 vide Lok Sabha Bulletin Part II No. 3440 dated 01.12.2021 in place of Shri Sunil Kumar Mondal

^ Nominated as Member w.e.f. 07.02.2022 vide Lok Sabha Bulletin Part II No. 4134 dt 07.02.2022

\$ Shri Ashok Siddharth retired w.e.f. 04.07.2022 vide CB-I note dated 03.02.2022

**LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT**

- |    |                        |   |                     |
|----|------------------------|---|---------------------|
| 1. | Smt. Suman Arora       | - | Joint Secretary     |
| 2. | Smt. Maya Lingi        | - | Director            |
| 3. | Shri R.L. Yadav        | - | Additional Director |
| 4. | Smt. Archana Srivastva | - | Deputy Secretary    |

## INTRODUCTION

I, the Chairperson, Standing Committee on Railways (2021-22), having been authorized by the Committee to present the Report on their behalf, this Twelfth Report on Action Taken by Government on the Observations/Recommendations of the Committee contained in their Eighth Report (Seventeenth Lok Sabha) on 'Passenger Reservation System of Indian Railways'.

2. The Eighth Report was presented to the Lok Sabha and laid in the Rajya Sabha on 30.11.2021. The Report contained 18 Observations/Recommendations. The Ministry of Railways furnished Action Taken Notes on all the Observations/Recommendations contained in the Report on 23.02.2022.

3. The Committee considered and adopted the Draft Action Taken Report at their sitting held on 03.08.2022. The minutes of the sitting are given in Annexure.

4. For facility of reference and convenience, the Observations and Recommendations of the Committee have been printed in bold letters.

5. An analysis of the Action Taken by Government on the Observations/Recommendations contained in the Eighth Report of the Standing Committee on Railways (Seventeenth Lok Sabha) is given in **Appendix**.

NEW DELHI:  
03 August, 2022  

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12 Sravana, 1944 (Saka)

**RADHA MOHAN SINGH**  
**Chairperson,**  
**Standing Committee on Railways**

## CHAPTER I REPORT

The Report of the Standing Committee on Railways deals with the action taken by the Government on the Observations/Recommendations contained in their Eighth Report (17<sup>th</sup> Lok Sabha) on "Passenger Reservation System of Indian Railways".

2. The Eighth Report was presented to the Lok Sabha and laid in Rajya Sabha on 30.11.2021. It contained 18 Recommendations/Observations.

3. Action Taken Notes in respect of all the Observations/Recommendations have been received and categorized as follows:-

(i) Observations/Recommendations which have been accepted by the Government:

Para Nos.: 1,2,3,4,5,6,8,9,10,11,12,13,14,15,16,17,18.

Total : 17  
Chapter – II

(ii) Observations/Recommendations which the Committee do not desire to pursue in view of the Government's replies:

Para Nos.: Nil

Total : Nil  
Chapter – III

(iii) Observations/Recommendations in respect of which replies of the Government have not been accepted by the Committee and which require reiteration:

Para Nos.: 7

Total : 1  
Chapter – IV

(iv) Observations/Recommendations in respect of which final replies are still awaited:

Para Nos. NIL

Total : NIL  
Chapter - V

**4. The Committee trust that utmost care will be given to the implementation of the Recommendations accepted by the Government. The Committee desire that final action taken notes to the Observations/Recommendations contained in Chapter-I of this Report should be furnished to them not later than three months of the presentation of this Report.**

5. The Committee will now deal with the action taken by the Government on some of their recommendations/observations.

#### **Recommendation (Para No. 6)**

6. The Committee had noted that presently the PRS processes over one crore transactions per day involving about 5 crore passengers on an average. Though, the system had been empowered to handle a maximum of 28,000 transactions per minute (TPM), yet the average transaction per minute for the year 2019-20 was about 8711. The Committee had, therefore, desired the Ministry to act proactively and take all preparedness to further strengthen the capacity of server/website to yield desired results so that no hardship is faced by the users on this count.

7. In their Action Taken Replies, the Ministry of Railways have stated as under:-

PRS is continuously upgraded for enhancing booking facilitation and infrastructure capacity. In 2014, the Next Generation E-ticketing (NGeT) system was launched to provide seamless e-ticketing services - higher booking loads and better user interface.

While the PRS in its current format is highly efficient, but the volume of data and transactions required to be handled is huge and increasing multi-fold. Indian Railways is committed to the continuous modernization of PRS. Indian Railways has instituted an expert study through IRCTC, for strengthening the core application and backbone infrastructure, for efficient and sustainable aspects to perform adequately by providing facilitation for new functionalities, interoperability among other railway modules, external applications with more maturity. M/s Grant Thornton, which is one of the world's leading advisory firms, has been engaged by IRCTC to study the existing PRS system and provide the recommendations to upgrade the Indian Railway PRS systems.

**8. The Committee note that the Indian Railways are on a continuous and committed path towards modernization of PRS system. The Committee further note that PRS in its current format is highly efficient, but the volume of data and transactions required to be**



handled is huge and increasing multifold. The Committee find that the Ministry has instituted an expert study through IRCTC, for strengthening the core application and backbone infrastructure, for efficient and sustainable aspects, for engaging M/s Grant Thornton, which is one of the world's leading advisory firms, to study the existing PRS system and provide the recommendations to upgrade the Indian Railway PRS systems. The Committee while appreciating the efforts made by the Railways for strengthening the PRS system, desire that a time-frame must be given to M/s Grant Thornton for timely furnishing their recommendations and the Ministry should draw a timeframe to upgrade PRS in order to provide seamless e-ticketing service. The Committee would like to be apprised of the steps taken in the matter.

#### **Recommendation (Para No. 7)**

9. The Committee had found that tickets could be booked online as well as through computerised PRS counters till the preparation of second reservation charts between 30 minutes and 5 minutes before the scheduled time of departure of the train. The Committee had found no logic in booking of tickets between the time of 30-5 minutes before the departure of the train when there were thousands of RAC/waitlisted tickets already booked and waiting to be confirmed. The Committee had opined that since Tatkal facilities were available for passengers who wished to travel at a short notice, all seats of the train found vacant after preparation of the first reservation chart which are being prepared 4-5 hours before the departure time should automatically be allotted to RAC/Waitlisted passengers to facilitate them to travel as per their plan. The Committee had, therefore, desired that the need for preparation of second reservation charts should be reviewed with a view to facilitate the needy passengers and also to refrain the touts from being involved in the probable mal-practice during the last minute rush.

10. In their Action Taken Replies, the Ministry of Railways have stated as under:-

With a view to rationalize computerized PRS, the system of preparation of reservation charts was rationalized in the year 2015 and following provisions were made:

- i. In the computerized PRS of Indian Railways, the reserved accommodation can be booked on first-come-first-serve basis. After exhaustion of available accommodation, Reservation against Cancellation (RAC)/Waiting list tickets are issued.
- ii. The status of RAC/Waiting list tickets gets updated against the cancellation of tickets booked prior to such tickets.
- iii. A provision was introduced to prepare reservation charts at least 4 hours before scheduled departure of train i.e. if reservation charts of the train are not prepared by the Railways, the system will automatically release unutilized reservation quota by updating the RAC/Wait list status of passengers and finalize the reservation charts. These charts were known as First Reservation charts. As such, the provision to update the RAC/Waiting list status of passenger against the vacant accommodation available (at the time of preparation of first reservation chart) is already there.
- iv. After preparation of first reservation charts, the vacant accommodation available, if any, becomes available for booking across computerized PRS counters of Indian Railways as well as through internet. It was done to facilitate passengers in getting confirmed accommodation through both across PRS counters as well as through internet and to reduce the scope of misuse, as earlier this facility was available only as nominated counters at train originating stations only.
- v. It was prescribed that this vacant accommodation can be booked upto preparation of second reservation charts and second reservation charts are prepared between 30 minutes and 5 minutes before the scheduled/rescheduled time of departure of train.
- vi. This provision was made to ensure optimal utilisation of available accommodation, allow passengers to cancel already booked tickets and to make on-board Ticket Checking Staff aware of the cancellation of the bookings made between first reservation charts and second reservation charts.
- vii. It is clarified that in case, there is RAC/Wait list in the train, no accommodation can be booked in between preparation of first reservation charts and second reservation charts i.e. Wait list tickets are not issued after preparation of first reservation charts. As such the question of its updation at the time of preparation of second reservation chart does not arise.
- viii. The time gap of 30 minutes to 5 minutes before scheduled/rescheduled time of departure of train, for preparation of second reservation charts has been kept to give Railways the discretion to take out second reservation charts depending upon the distance between the charting location and the platform from which the train is going to depart.
- ix. At the time of preparation of second reservation charts, vacant accommodation available, if any, gets transferred to next remote location facilitating passengers at that location to book tickets.
- x. It may be appreciated that the above-said system has given the following benefits:
  - a. Brought transparency in the reservation system.
  - b. Facilitated passengers to book ticket online or through PRS till preparation of second reservation charts saving them from the botheration of coming to the nominated train/journey originating station.
  - c. Reduced the scope of misuse of the system by unscrupulous elements.
  - d. Optimal utilization of available accommodation.
  - e. Increased passenger satisfaction.

11. The Committee in their earlier recommendation had deliberated on preparation of second reservation chart and had reasoned about no logic in booking of tickets between the time of 30-5 minute just before the departure of the train to facilitate those passengers who already had RAC or waitlisted tickets and also to refrain the touts from probable malpractices in the last minute rush. The Committee are of the opinion that those passengers having RAC/waitlisted tickets should always be prioritized to those passengers who wish to reserve tickets in last minute rush. The Committee are of the view that if the practice of booking of tickets between the time of 30-5 minutes before the departure of the train is continued, it may burden the PRS system also, as the passenger will wait till last to book a confirmed ticket. The Committee, therefore, reiterate their earlier recommendation and urge the Ministry to re-visit their decision of booking of tickets between the time of 30-5 minutes before the departure of the train with a view to facilitate the needy passenger.

#### **Recommendation (Para No. 14)**

12. The Committee had noted that while senior citizens were granted a fare concession amounting to 40-50 percent of their fare on the other hand, offered 'give up' scheme to forego the concession and pay full fare if he/she so desires. The Committee, while appreciating the scheme, had suggested for giving wider publicity of the scheme to create awareness among the senior citizens so that only deserving passengers could avail the benefit.

13. In their Action Taken Replies, the Ministry of Railways have stated as under:-

In view of Pandemic & Covid Protocol, concession to all categories of passengers (except 4 categories of Divyangjan, 11 categories of Patients and Students) have been withdrawn

from 20.03.2020. Accordingly, at present concession in passenger fare is not admissible to Senior citizen which implies that Give it up scheme is not applicable.

**14. Given the reply of the Government, the Committee note that as of now, the concession to Senior Citizens has been withdrawn in view of the Pandemic & Covid Protocol. The Committee are of the view that since the Railways are heading towards normalcy, they should consider the concessions granted to different categories of passengers judiciously. The Committee desire that concession to senior citizens which was available in pre-COVID times may be reviewed and considered at least in Sleeper Class and III AC urgently, so that the vulnerable and the genuinely needy senior citizens could avail the facility in these classes.**

#### **Recommendation (Para No. 15)**

15. The Committee had found that the Ministry do not maintain any separate data about the number of Privilege Passes/PTOs and complimentary passes issued to railway employees and the number of persons who availed them. They even do not maintain data of revenue lost as a result of such concessions. While concurring with the reasoning of the Ministry, the Committee had impressed to prevent the abuse of such privileges, as well as including the expense in their accounting so that it correctly reflects their revenue expenditure.

16. In their Action Taken Replies, the Ministry of Railways have stated as under:-

The system of issuance of Physical Passes/PTOs has already been switched over to - Pass/PTO mode with the launch of e-Pass/PTO Module as an IT Project of Human Resource Management System (HRMS) on 10.08.2020 and made available to all the employees w.e.f. 24.08.2020. Pursuant to the rolling out of e-Pass/PTO Module, Privilege Pass and PTOs are being issued only electronically. The data of Passes/PTOs issued is also presently captured and available in the system. Post Retirement Complimentary Passes are also issued under e-Pass module as a preferred option.

With reference to the recommendation to take stringent steps to prevent misuse of Passes/PTOs, it is stated that the Railway Servants (Pass) Rules, 1986 provides for imposing punishments including dismissal/ removal from Railway Service on detection of

misuse/fraudulent use of Pass/PTOs which serves as a deterrent against misuses. The Pass/PTO holder is also treated at par with other passengers and subjected to all existing checks by Ticket Checking Staff, Vigilance Squad, etc. during travel. Moreover, consequent to issuance of Pass/PTOs in electronic mode, misuse/re-use of Passes stands prevented to a larger extent.

**17. The Committee had noted that the Railways maintain no data about the details of Privileges Passes, PTOs and complimentary passes issued to their employees and revenue spent thereon. They had impressed upon the Ministry to prevent misuse of such privileges and reflect the amount in their account book. In their Action Taken reply, the Ministry has stated that the system of issuance of Privilege Passes/PTOs has now been switched over to e-Pass/PTO mode and such users would be captured in the system. It would prevent misuse/re-use of Passes to a large extent. The Committee find that they have provided deterrent in 'The Railway Servants (Pass) Rules, 1986' against misuse. However, the Committee find that the reply is silent about maintenance of the data of expenditure incurred on Privilege Passes/PTOs and Complimentary Passes etc. to reflect in their revenue expenditure. The Committee, therefore, reiterate their recommendation and desire the Ministry to take appropriate action to maintain the data of expenditure incurred on such privileges to reflect the actual expenditure made per annum.**

#### **Recommendation (Para No. 18)**

18. The Committee had found that the Railways have initiated a number of steps to de-register the suspected accounts/Ids of malafide users. In this regard, the IRCTC had deactivated 1.15 Lakh Personal User IDs in FY 2018-19, and about 11.20 Lakh Personal User IDs in FY 2019-20. While appreciating this initiative, the Committee had urged to maintain the momentum and weed out such accounts on a day to day basis.

19. In their Action Taken Replies, the Ministry of Railways have stated as under:-

IRCTC continuously monitors the suspects, which involves the following through analysis before deactivation of Personal User IDs.

1	The personal user IDs are deactivated based on the pattern or series noticed in the user IDs involved in CRIS report, RPF report or vigilance report.
2	Search is also conducted on all the user IDs which are booking all 6 tickets in a day or 2 and then similar or same looking ID series are identified.
3	Those user IDs which have been continuously booking all six tickets in Tatkal continuously for last more than 3 months are identified and the tickets booked with name on user ID and passenger are compared and then similar series are found out and deactivated, if required.
4	Analysis is also done on the profile details of personal user IDs registered on previous day on random basis of their profile address if found that the address details provided by user is not correct then all such user IDs are deactivated/suspended.

Practice to weed out suspected users is regularly followed, based on various investigations and analysis carried out by IRCTC in coordination with CRIS and Railway Protection Force. As a result, in the FY 2021-22 (till Nov-21) about 3.60 Lakh user IDs have been deactivated by IRCTC. The details of IDS deactivated in last five is as under:

<b>ID Deactivation Report Financial Year Wise</b>		
<b>S.No.</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Total ID Deactivated (In Lakhs)</b>
1	2015-16	191301
2	2016-17	668913
3	2017-18	127191
4	2018-19	114737
5	2019-20	1120236
6	2020-21	1162493
7	2021-22 (Till Nov,21)	360124
<b>Total</b>		<b>3744995</b>

Moreover, a dedicated ITAF (Internet Ticket Anti-Fraud) cell is instituted in IRCTC, which continuously monitors the suspected User IDs and takes up the deactivation of Personal User IDs, on the basis of extensive analysis.

Regular drives are being conducted by Railway Protection Force (RPF) against persons/agencies found involved in illegally carrying on business of procuring and supplying railway tickets, for reserved accommodation. The offenders are booked under the provisions of Section 143 of the Railways Act, 1989 and action is taken against them as per law. The details of suspected IRCTC User IDs are communicated to IRCTC for its deactivation and further necessary action at their end on regular basis. Special drives are also conducted at regular intervals especially during the peak rush periods i.e. festivals and holidays.

**20. While appreciating the initiatives of the Railways to de-register the suspected accounts of malafide users, the Committee had urged the Ministry to maintain the**

momentum and weed out such accounts on day-to-day basis. They are happy to find that the Railways among other things, have instituted a dedicated 'Internet Ticket Anti-Fraud' (ITAF) Cell in IRCTC to regularly monitor the suspected user IDs besides regular drives by RPF against persons/agencies involved in illegal business of procuring/supplying railway tickets for reserved accommodation. The Committee note with concern that during the year 2019-20, the total number of IDs deactivated were 1120236 which increased to 1162493 in the year 2020-21. The Committee feel that there are some inherent drawbacks in the system which need to be looked into. The Committee, therefore, recommend to take corrective measures and to upgrade the PRS system to avoid increasing number of IDs of malafide users. The Committee would like to be informed of the steps taken in the matter.

## **CHAPTER-II**

### **OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS WHICH HAVE BEEN ACCEPTED BY THE GOVERNMENT**

#### **Recommendation (Para No. 1)**

The Committee note that the Indian railways not only provide the most economical and environment friendly mode of transport but also play a vital role in socio-economic development of the country. They cover a long way to carry about 23 million passengers per day with their 13,500 passenger trains. With this magnitude of passengers it becomes imperative on the part of Railways to facilitate their passengers with a proper system of booking tickets from any station to travel anywhere in the country in their coaches. The Committee find that the Passenger Reservation System (PRS), the main customer facing application of the Indian Railways, has been functional over the last three decades. Moving from the manual mode of PRS to Integrated Multiple Train Passenger Reservation System (IMPRESS), the Indian Railways have now shifted to a new ticketing software i.e. Country Wide Network for Computerized Enhanced Reservation and Ticketing (CONCERT) system duly maintained by the Centre for Railway Information Systems (CRIS). The Committee are of the opinion that the emergence of new software has not only reduced the processing time manifold but also gave the rail users the opportunity to get real time information on all trains on their preferred route/destination as well as current position of waitlisted tickets etc. enabling them greater flexibility in planning their journeys which were not possible with the manual system of ticketing. The Committee are also of the opinion that with the advent of the PRS, mal-practices in ticketing have been curbed to a very large extent.

#### **Reply of the Government**

Passenger Reservation System (PRS) is a nationwide online passenger reservation and ticketing system. PRS handles reservations, modifications, cancellations, and refunds, reserving over 1.6 million seats and berths daily and handling more than 10 crore total transactions per day. PRS has been architected, designed, developed, implemented and being maintained by Centre for Railway Information Systems (CRIS).

PRS is continuously upgraded for enhancing booking facilitation and infrastructure capacity. In 2014, the Next Generation E-ticketing (NGeT) system was launched to provide seamless e-ticketing services - higher booking loads and better user interface.

Moreover, in Dec, 2020, e-ticketing website [www.irctc.co.in](http://www.irctc.co.in) and IRCTC Rail Connect Mobile App, were upgraded which are used for booking of Railway tickets 'online'.



### **Recommendation (Para No. 2)**

Though the Committee appreciate the initiative of the Railways of launching the new software for booking tickets, yet they note that lakhs of passengers are left in lurch per day due to non-confirmation of their waitlisted tickets due to one reason or another. They are forced to opt for other modes of transport like bus and airlines etc. resulting into loss to railway exchequer. The Committee, therefore, recommend that given the current scenario of railway finances coupled with growing customer expectations and conveniences especially in the face of increasing competition from road and low-cost airlines, the Indian Railways should make all out efforts to make their ticketing system more robust and weed out inherent deficiencies that hinder the process of ticketing with the ultimate aim of passenger convenience and passenger satisfaction. The Committee would also like the Railways to address the various technical, financial and resource constraints which hamper the working of its passenger reservation system.

### **Reply of the Government**

Ministry of Railways has taken several steps from time to time to modernise the ticketing process. Next Generation e-Ticketing (NGeT) system, has been upgraded constantly to handle increased load of 15,000 tickets per minute in 2016-17, 18,000 tickets per minute in 2017-18 and 20,000 tickets per minute in 2018-19. Presently, IRCTC Website has a capacity of booking over 25,000 tickets per minute. A record number of 26,458 tickets were booked in a minute on 5 March, 2020.

Ministry of Railways has revamped and upgraded its e-ticketing website [www.irctc.co.in](http://www.irctc.co.in) and Indian Railway Catering And Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) Rail Connect Mobile App, which are used for booking of 'online' Railway tickets on 31st December, 2020. Railway customer has been the focus of the design of the revamped application. Novel user personalization features linked to user log in have been incorporated, along with customizations for seamless travel experience, one stop train selection for booking, and integrated booking for meals and accommodation with tickets.

While the PRS in its current format is highly efficient, but the volume of data and transactions required to be handled is huge and increasing multi-fold. Indian Railways is committed to the continuous modernization of PRS.

### **Recommendation (Para No. 3)**

The Committee would like to stress that while certain deficiencies in PRS like difficult access, lower speed and efficiency are detrimental to its smart functioning, yet grave issues like possibility of unethical practices and blatant contravening of rules by agents etc. may erode the credibility of the Indian railways and dilute their public image. The Committee wish to point out the Ministry that the Indian Railways, being the backbone of the nation-wide transport system in the country carrying millions of passengers every day, any manipulation in reservation system would not only affect their journey but also impact upon their lives

too either directly or indirectly. To this end, the Committee, therefore, would like the Ministry to explore more robust ticketing systems currently in vogue in countries having high rail density/rail users and adopt best practices commensurate to that system to strengthen the Indian Railways passenger reservation system. They also desire the Ministry to explore the possibilities to collaborate with renowned institutions/premier institutes of repute /organizations with a view to upgrade and refine the PRS in Indian Railways.

### **Reply of the Government**

Ministry of Railways has revamped and upgraded its e-ticketing website [www.irctc.co.in](http://www.irctc.co.in) and Indian Railway Catering And Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) Rail Connect Mobile App, which are used for booking of 'online' Railway tickets on 31st December, 2020. Railway customer has been the focus of the design of the revamped application. Novel user personalization features linked to user log in have been incorporated, along with customizations for seamless travel experience, one stop train selection for booking, and integrated booking for meals and accommodation with tickets.

While the PRS in its current format is highly efficient, but the volume of data and transactions required to be handled is huge and increasing multi-fold. Indian Railways is committed to the continuous modernization of PRS. Indian Railways has instituted an expert study through IRCTC, for strengthening the core application and backbone infrastructure, for efficient and sustainable aspects to perform adequately by providing facilitation for new functionalities, interoperability among other railway modules, external applications with more maturity. The study includes the best practices of the ticketing systems around the world. M/s Grant Thornton, which is one of the world's leading advisory firm, has been engaged by IRCTC to study the existing PRS system and provide the recommendations to upgrade the Indian Railway PRS systems. Moreover, CRIS also seeks recommendations of M/s Gartner, which is a leading technology research and consulting company, time to time for the refinement of e-ticketing interface.

### **Recommendation (Para No. 4)**

The Committee find that currently Indian Railways have more than 4043 reservation centres with over 10725 terminals across the country. These include major stations, non-rail heads and other locations such as tourist centres and district headquarters etc. They note that though the Railways have made all out efforts to proliferate the reservation centres all over the network, yet the Committee are not satisfied with these numbers keeping in view the immense length and breadth of the country. The Committee would like the Ministry to take proactive actions to further proliferate these centres across the country and explore the possibilities of mobile PRS etc. to get them reach to non-rail head centres especially in remote locations having poor or no road/internet connectivity till a stable PRS is set up there so that passengers of these areas are also benefited at par with other areas of the country. The Committee would also like to suggest the Ministry to cover the sites of Technical hubs/professional colleges (engineering, medical etc.), large

industrial units, manufacturing plants etc. having sizable migrant population to help them to fulfill their travel needs.

### **Reply of the Government**

The provision of Passenger Reservation System (PRS) at railway stations, defence locations, post offices and other non-rail head locations is made as per the policy issued vide letter No.2008/C&IS/New PRS Policy/15 dated 04.10.2013, in supersession of the earlier guidelines. They are updated from time to time and uploaded on the website of Ministry of Railways.

As regards, exploring the possibilities of mobile PRS, earlier 'mobile ticketing vans' were introduced in selected cities, however, due to very less patronage and high cost of procurement and maintenance, the scheme was discontinued. To provide ticket booking facility for the people in far flung hilly and remote areas of the country, continuous efforts are being made by Indian Railways. Non-conventional ticket booking systems have also been explored, such as Mobile ticketing vehicles. Mobile App for unreserved ticketing and Online Web & Mobile App based e-ticketing of reserved tickets, have also been introduced. These measures are available to people in far flung hilly and remote areas.

As regards providing PRS facility at sites of Technical hubs/professional colleges (engineering, medical etc.), large industrial units, manufacturing plants etc., policy already exist for considering PRS facility in Government Universities & Institute of eminence. Privately owned educational institutes/universities etc. may tie up with IRCTC on the pattern of corporate houses or they may opt for internet kiosks to have internet booking in their premises.

Passengers can book tickets from anywhere using the online e-ticketing through website and Mobile App.

Ministry of Railways has taken several steps to modernise and strengthen the Online - ticketing process, enabling passengers to book tickets from anywhere and at any-time. Next Generation e-Ticketing (NGeT) system, has been upgraded constantly to handle increased load of online tickets. At present, about 80% of the total reserved tickets are being booked online and it is becoming the preferred mode of ticket booking due to the convenience offered.

### **Recommendation (Para No. 5)**

The Committee note that while there are several options available with the passengers for booking of reserved tickets for travelling on Indian Railways such as PRS counters, Postal PRS counters, Yatri

Ticket Suvridha Kendras, etc., yet the majority of tickets are booked online through the IRCTC website/ app which is one of the most convenient modes of passenger reservation. The Committee find that the reserved tickets booked online through IRCTC website/app during 2019-20 is three times greater than that of tickets purchased at physical locations. However, this website is usually slow and particularly during rush hours considerable time is consumed in booking a ticket through it. The Committee would like to point out that e-ticketing facility is not only convenient for the passengers but also helps in decongesting railway counters and eliminates the menace of touts as well as the possibility of receipt of fake currency at counters. Therefore, the Committee would like to impress upon the Ministry the need of regularly strengthening and upgrading the capacity of the IRCTC website/servers so as to make it more robust to handle greater traffic with minimal turnaround time. They would also like to be apprised of the actions taken in this regard.

### **Reply of the Government**

The NGeT System, launched in 2014 for strengthening online ticketing, is continuously being upgraded for its capacity. E-ticketing has reached up to 80.5 % share (till Dec-2021) of total reserved tickets on Indian Railways. The highest online ticket booking was 15,21,323 tickets, with 27,18,561 passengers on 12.11.2021. IRCTC has a user base of more than 10 Crores registered users out of which 7.60 crores are active users. E-Ticket statistics show constant increase in booking of tickets online, which is as under:

<b>FY</b>	<b>E-Ticket share of total reserved tickets on Indian Railways</b>
2016-17	59.9%
2017-18	65.8 %
2018-19	70.1%
2019-20	72.8%
2020-21	79.6 %
2021-22(till Dec- 21)	80.5 %

Further, Ministry of Railways has revamped and upgraded its e-ticketing website [www.irctc.co.in](http://www.irctc.co.in) and Indian Railway Catering And Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) Rail Connect Mobile App, which are used for booking of 'online' Railway tickets on 31st December, 2020. Railway customer has been the focus of the design of the revamped application. Novel user personalization features linked to user log in have been incorporated, along with customizations for seamless travel experience, one stop train selection for booking, and integrated booking for meals and accommodation with tickets.

While the PRS in its current format is highly efficient, but the volume of data and transactions required to be handled is huge and increasing multi-fold. Indian Railways is committed to the continuous modernization of PRS. Indian Railways has instituted an expert study through IRCTC, for strengthening the core application and backbone infrastructure, for efficient and sustainable aspects to perform adequately by providing facilitation for new functionalities, interoperability among other railway modules, external applications with more maturity. M/s Grant Thornton, which is one of the world's leading advisory firm, has been engaged by IRCTC to study the existing PRS system and provide the recommendations to upgrade

the Indian Railway PRS systems. Moreover, CRIS also seeks recommendations of M/s Gartner, which is a leading technology research and consulting company, time to time for the refinement of PRS systems.

Moreover, it is pertinent to mention that the ticket booking during Tatkal periods, takes slightly longer time due to several Checks deployed on IRCTC e-Ticketing Website and IRCTC Rail Connect Mobile App to check the misuse of Tatkal Tickets by touts. The key system 'checks' during Tatkal booking period on online ticketing are -

- Agent booking (except Defence and Paramilitary Forces) completely restricted from 10:00 to 10:15 hours and 11:00 to 11:15 hours for opening Booking in Tatkal Quota.
- Only One Tatkal ticket per day/per train is allowed to Retail Service Providers (agents).
- Individual users are allowed only 2 Tatkal tickets per user-id from 1000 Hrs to 1200 Hrs.
- Individual users are allowed only 2 Tatkal tickets per IP from 1000 to 1200 hours.
- Random Security question has been implemented for Tatkal Ticket bookings.
- Blocking of Foreign IP addresses at peak time has been done at network level.
- Individual users are logged out in case enquiries exceed 25 per session during opening hrs i.e. from 0800 to 1200 hours.
- Only one (1) booking in one user login session except for return/onward journey between 0800 and 1200 hours. To do another booking user needs to logout and login again.
- Individual users are allowed only 6 tickets in a month, unless authenticated through Aadhaar in which 12 tickets can be booked in a month to prevent mass bookings by a single user.

#### **CAPTCHA Related Checks**

- Variable minimum time check has been implemented at passenger input and payment process.
- Captcha has been implemented in IRCTC Rail Connect Mobile App and e-Ticketing Website Login process.
- CAPTCHA Implemented in Registration, Login and Booking Summary Details Page to minimize fraudulent booking through automation software in Website booking process.
- CAPTCHA is in place to check booking in batch mode and through Scripting related tools on the IRCTC e-ticketing website and Mobile App.
- While in the past ARP ticket was allowed to be booked in 35 seconds, now the time limit has been increased to 70 seconds, with the breakup of 50 seconds for passenger form filling and 20 seconds for online payment through banks.
- It is not possible for anybody to book a ticket in less than 70 seconds and no case of breach has been observed in the system.
- Google V3 reCaptcha has been deployed during ARP opening on Website and Mobile App to detect users, who are using machines for fast filling data and using multiple user IDs on single machines. V3 reCaptcha employs Artificial intelligence and Machine Learning techniques and depending upon

the feedback of V3 reCaptcha, a physical captcha of V2 version with increasing difficulty level is given to users. Suspected users are ultimately thrown out of booking system in the midst of the booking process.

#### **Others**

- Individuals are allowed only 2 ARP tickets per user-id from 0800 Hrs to 1000Hrs.
- Agent booking (except Defence and Paramilitary Forces) completely restricted from 0800 hours to 0815 hours for opening ARP Booking in GN quota
- Only 4 passengers allowed in TATKAL ticket.
- 120 Days ARP check for general ticket. ARP booking not allowed before 0800 hours.
- Incoming day TATKAL booking for AC classes not allowed before 1000 hours.
- Incoming day TATKAL booking for Non-AC classes not allowed before 1100 hours.

IRCTC has been continuously putting efforts to check misuse and at the same time taking into the consideration customer satisfaction, convenience and enhanced ticketing experience to the customer.

#### **Recommendation (Para No. 6)**

The Committee note that currently the PRS processes over one crore transactions per day involving about 5 crore passengers on an average. Though the system has been empowered to handle a maximum of 28,000 transactions per minute (TPM), yet the average transaction per minute for the year 2019-20 was about 8711. The Committee, therefore, desire the Ministry to act proactively and take all preparedness to further strengthen the capacity of server/website to yield desired results so that no hardship is faced by the users on this count.

#### **Reply of the Government**

PRS is continuously upgraded for enhancing booking facilitation and infrastructure capacity. In 2014, the Next Generation E-ticketing (NGeT) system was launched to provide seamless e-ticketing services - higher booking loads and better user interface.

While the PRS in its current format is highly efficient, but the volume of data and transactions required to be handled is huge and increasing multi-fold. Indian Railways is committed to the continuous modernization of PRS. Indian Railways has instituted an expert study through IRCTC, for strengthening the core application and backbone infrastructure, for efficient and sustainable aspects to perform adequately by providing facilitation for new functionalities, interoperability among other railway modules, external applications with more maturity. M/s Grant Thornton, which is one of the world's leading advisory firms, has

been engaged by IRCTC to study the existing PRS system and provide the recommendations to upgrade the Indian Railway PRS systems.

### **Recommendation (Para No. 8)**

The Committee note that, as at present, in case a vacancy arises on account of passenger no-show, the same is allotted by on-board ticket checking staff to RAC passenger. The Committee are happy to find that the railways have facilitated the Train Ticket Examinees with the hand held terminals for ease of booking available seats and to ensure automation so as to bring more transparency in their functioning. Sometimes, these staff do not co-operate with the passengers in addressing their queries. Since they have overall control over it and also it is not feasible for them to interact/respond each and every passenger's queries the Committee would like the Ministry to put in place some mechanism in the respective coaches so that passengers could approach straight and witness the current status of seat/berth confirmation. They would also like to update information on real time basis for greater transparency in the allocation of vacant seats/berths onboard trains.

### **Reply of the Government**

System is available on internet which provides the details of vacant berths post charting. Current Booking facility is available over the internet.

### **Recommendation (Para No. 9)**

The Committee note that Tatkal Scheme was introduced to provide reservation to those passengers who have to undertake journey at short notice. Tatkal ticket is booked on payment of premium charges on 'first come-first-served' basis. Currently, this is booked from 1000 hrs. on the previous day of the journey for AC Classes and at 1100 hrs. for non-AC Classes at Passenger Reservation System (PRS) and Indian Railways Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) website. The Committee further note that Tatkal charges are levied at the rate of 10% of basic fare for second class and 30% of basic fare for all other classes subject to minimum and maximum charges. For example, for a minimum distance of 100 kms a second sitting reserved class ticket will accrue a minimum Tatkal charge of Rs.10 and a maximum of Rs.15 over and above base fare. Similarly, in the Executive class for a minimum distance of 250 kms, the Tatkal charges will range between Rs.400 and Rs.500. The Committee while appreciating the scheme which is particularly aimed at meeting the urgent/ emergent travel requirement of passengers, are apprehensive over the possible involvement of touts whose unscrupulous activities may inhibit bonafide passengers to avail the benefits of this scheme. The Committee are of the opinion that Railways should be ever vigilant to threats posed by these elements in both the physical and cyber sphere. They, therefore, recommend the Ministry to

put in place a stringent monitoring mechanism to curb the misuse of the scheme and refrain the unscrupulous elements/touts from being involved.

### **Reply of the Government**

Indian Railways are aware of the scope of misuse Tatkal reservation scheme and has already taken various steps to avoid its misuse. Concerted efforts are also being made by Indian Railway Catering & Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) to provide seamless, safe e- ticketing service and to keep a check on the scope of its misuse. The various steps taken by Indian Railways and IRCTC to improve the working of Indian Railways' reservation system for individual users are as under:

#### **General Restrictions:**

- a. One of the passengers booked on Tatkal ticket has to produce any one of the prescribed proofs of identity (in original) during the journey failing which all the passengers booked on that ticket are considered travelling without ticket and charged accordingly.
- b. The timings of opening of booking under Tatkal scheme on the opening day of reservation have been staggered to 1000 hours & 1100 hours on the previous day of journey from train originating station for AC and non-AC classes respectively.
- c. The facility of change of name is not permitted on the booking made under Tatkal Scheme,
- d. No duplicate Tatkal tickets are issued. In exceptional circumstances, it is issued on payment of full fare including Tatkal Charges.
- e. No refund is granted on the confirmed Tatkal tickets except under certain special circumstances prescribed in the scheme, like late running of trains, running of train on diverted route etc.
- f. Maximum four passengers per PNR for Tatkal Tickets.

#### **Checks deployed on IRCTC e-Ticketing Website and IRCTC Rail Connect Mobile App**

- g. Agent booking (except Defence and Paramilitary Forces) completely restricted from 10:00 to 10:15 hours and 11:00 to 11:15 hours for opening Booking in Tatkal Quota.
- h. Only One Tatkal ticket per day/per train is allowed to Retail Service Providers (agents).
- i. Individual users are allowed only 2 Tatkal tickets per user-id from 1000 Hrs to 1200 Hrs.
- j. Individual users are allowed only 2 Tatkal tickets per IP from 1000 to 1200 hours.
- k. Random Security question has been implemented for Tatkal Ticket bookings.
- l. Blocking of Foreign IP addresses at peak time has been done at network level.
- m. Individual users are logged out in case enquiries exceed 25 per session during opening hrs i.e. from 0800 to 1200 hours.
- n. Only one (1) booking in one user login session except for return/onward journey between 0800 and 1200 hours. To do another booking user needs to logout and login again.
- o. Individual users are allowed only 6 tickets in a month, unless authenticated through Aadhaar in which 12 tickets can be booked in a month to prevent mass bookings by a single user.



### **CAPTCHA Related Checks**

- p. Variable minimum time check has been implemented at passenger input and payment process.
- q. Captcha has been implemented in IRCTC Rail Connect Mobile App and e-Ticketing Website Login process.
- r. CAPTCHA Implemented in Registration, Login and Booking Summary Details Page to minimize fraudulent booking through automation software in Website booking process.
- s. CAPTCHA is in place to check booking in batch mode and through Scripting related tools on the IRCTC e-ticketing website and Mobile App.
- t. While in the past Advance Reservation Period (ARP) ticket i.e. tickets being booked on the opening day of reservation as per ARP) was allowed to be booked in 35 seconds, now the time limit has been increased to 70 seconds, with the breakup of 50 seconds for passenger form filling and 20 seconds for online payment through banks.
- u. It is not possible for anybody to book a ticket in less than 70 seconds and no case of breach has been observed in the system.
- v. Google V3 reCaptcha has been deployed during ARP opening on Website and Mobile App to detect users, who are using machines for fast filling data and using multiple user IDs on single machines. V3 reCaptcha employs Artificial intelligence and Machine Learning techniques and depending upon the feedback of V3 reCaptcha, a physical captcha of V2 version with increasing difficulty level is given to users. Suspected users are ultimately thrown out of booking system in the midst of the booking process.

### **Others**

- w. Individuals are allowed only 2 ARP tickets per user-id from 0800 Hrs to 1000Hrs.
- x. Agent booking (except Defence and Paramilitary Forces) completely restricted from 0800 hours to 0815 hours for opening ARP Booking in GN quota
- y. 120 Days ARP check for general ticket. ARP booking not allowed before 0800 hours.

Regular drives are being conducted by Railway Protection Force (RPF) against persons/agencies found involved in illegally carrying on business of procuring and supplying railway tickets, for reserved accommodation. The offenders are booked under the provisions of Section 143 of the Railways Act, 1989 and action is taken against them as per law. The details of suspected IRCTC User IDs are communicated to IRCTC for its deactivation and further necessary action at their end on regular basis. Special drives are also conducted at regular intervals especially during the peak rush periods i.e. festivals and holidays.

### **Recommendation (Para No. 10)**

The Committee are of the considered view that the Indian Railways as a part of social service obligation, provide the cheaper mode of transport to a huge magnitude of passengers per day. However,

the Tatkal scheme provides much needed relief to the people having urgent need to travel by paying premium charges. In the opinion of the Committee, the charges levied on the tatkal tickets a little unjustifiable and putting a huge burden particularly on those passengers who are financially weak and are forced to travel in urgency to meet their kith and kin or so for a very short distance also. The Committee desire the Ministry to devise a measures for a pro rata fare for the distance travelled. The Committee note that most of the tatkal tickets are booked online. The passengers opting to book tickets at PRS counters physically are facing problems and the accommodation availability exhausted when their turn comes after a long queue. They would like to suggest the Ministry to provide a fix quota for Tatkal reservations at PRS counters so that the passengers having no internet access and visiting PRS counters for the needful could book a ticket. Such a step would let them avail the benefits of Tatkal ticket reservation in a more impartial and just manner.

### **Reply of the Government**

Charges being realized under Tatkal reservation scheme – to be fixed on pro-rata fare basis:

- Charges to be realized for booking tickets under Tatkal scheme in different classes have been kept keeping in view the class of travel viz. for 2S, these charges are nominal varying between Rs. 10 -15 only. While for Sleeper, these are Rs. 100-200 and for other classes, charges are Rs. 125-500.
- It may be appreciated that under Tatkal scheme, confirmed reserved accommodation is being provided approximately one day ahead of the day of journey from train originating station and hence, these nominal charges are justified. Fixing these charges on pro-rata basis will not make much difference specially in lower classes and will make it more complicated.

Fixing of quota for Tatkal reservation at PRS and internet:

- On Indian Railways, reserved accommodation can be booked on first come first served basis both through computerized Passenger Reservation System (PRS) counters as well as through internet.
- Demand for reserved accommodation is not uniform and it varies during lean and peak periods. During peak periods, the reserved accommodation specifically in higher classes and on popular routes gets exhausted within short duration of opening of reservation, whereas in lower classes and on less popular routes, this is available for comparatively longer periods.
- As per present trend, approximately 80% of reserved accommodation (both general as well as Tatkal) is being booked through internet and remaining through computerized PRS. Indian Railways provide its passengers the facility to book reserved tickets on first- come-first-serve basis and no separate demarcation has been done for booking of accommodation through PRS or internet. Earmarking separate accommodation for one mode will deprive the passengers approaching the other modes for booking reserved tickets and will not be desirable and also against the principle of first come first served basis.

### **Recommendation (Para No. 11)**

The Committee are glad to note that the Indian Railways have launched the VIKALP scheme or alternate train accommodation system to help wait listed passengers to get a vacant berth in another train running on the same route whose time of departure is upto 72 hours from the date of journey of the original ticket. The Committee also note that the Vikalp option which has primarily been brought forward to assure a seat on the route selected by the passengers, has been well received by the passengers having not only an option of not only getting a reserved seat/berth but also of securing a higher accommodation in one of the elite trains. The Committee are happy to note with satisfaction that the Railways which were earlier plagued by huge waiting- lists, have found a panacea to this chronic problem. The Committee would, however, like to recommend the Ministry to continue this scheme and find out the rationale behind heavy patronage and utmost importance given to that popular train for travel by the passengers and on the other hand lesser attention given to trains having vacant seats/berths for accommodating VIKALP opting passengers. In their opinion, the arrival/departure timings, punctuality, travel time, station of origin/destination, halts, facilities/amenities etc. may be the factors for popularity of the trains resulting in waitlisted passengers. The Committee feel that if corrective actions are taken to provide similar conditions to Vikalp trains running on the same route, it would not only increase ridership but also reduce the waiting lists on popular trains enabling a larger number of people to travel.

### **Reply of the Government**

Indian Railways (IR) will continue with Alternate Train Accommodation Scheme known as "VIKALP" for the benefit of Wait listed passengers. As far as adjustment of timings of less popular trains is concerned, it is stated that time-table of train services is dependent on various factors which include the nature of service, availability of path enroute, availability of terminals, etc. Besides, subject to operational feasibility, availability of resources, etc, rationalization of time table is a continuous and on-going exercise on Indian Railways.

### **Recommendation (Para No. 12)**

The Ministry have informed that the Flexi fare scheme has been introduced in Rajdhani, Shatabdi and Duronto trains in 2016. Under this scheme, the fare is increased by 10% with every 10% of berths sold subject to a maximum limit of 1.5 times in second AC classes, sleeper, second sitting reserved, AC chair car and 1.4 times in AC third class. The Committee note that while no change has been made in the fare of AC first and executive classes but based on the feedback received on the scheme, the railways have now rationalised the scheme. The Flexi fare scheme has now been discontinued from 15 trains till further review and from 32 trains during a pre-defined lean period of three months (February, March and August). Moreover the maximum gap of Flexi fares has been reduced from 1.5 times to 1.4 times in all Flexi fare

applicable classes. In addition to these measures, the Railways are now offering meaningful discounts where class-wise occupancy is less than 60% four days prior to the scheduled departure of trains. Though the Committee are happy to note that the Indian Railways are now rationalising Flexi fares yet they are constrained to note that flexi/dynamic pricing appears to be somewhat discriminatory given the facts that fares of the Rajdhani, Shatabdi and Durontos are already higher as compared to other mail and express trains and are almost at par and at some instances higher than those of budget airlines. The Committee are of the view that with an enhanced fare structure in place, passengers with modest income or the financially disadvantaged rail users may not be able to afford these fares and may not opt for these trains. The Committee, therefore, recommend that the Ministry should, in greater public interest, review the flexi/dynamic fare mechanism and take a prudent decision of pricing of fares which are balanced and based on equal footing.

### **Reply of the Government**

From many decades, Railways are running different types of train services with different fare structures to cater to the demands of various category of passengers. The important fare structures over Indian Railways as per the category of train services are Suburban locals fare, Non-Suburban local fare, Mail/Express fare, Superfast trains fare, Garib Rath Express fare, Gaatiman fares, Rajdhani fare, Shatabdi fare, Duronto fare, Mahamana Fare, Vande Bharat fare, Humsafar fare, Tatkal fare, Special trains on special charges, etc.,

Passenger fare in most of the classes is very low. Passenger segment over IR has suffered continuous loss however no substantial increase in passenger fare has taken place for last one and half decade. In view of this in order to increase the revenue and to lessen the recurring loss the concept of flexi fare scheme has been introduced.

Moreover, for the year 2019-20, the total loss in Passenger services including Sundry earnings is approximately Rs. 50633 crore.

In view of above the concept of flexi fare has been introduced in Rajdhani, Shatabdi & Duronto trains w.e.f. 09.09.2016. Under this scheme, at present the fare increases by 10% with every 10% of berths sold subject to maximum limit of 1.4 times in all classes (Before 15.03.2019 maximum limit was 1.5 times in 2nd AC, AC chair car, Second and sleeper classes). No change has been made in the fare of 1st AC and Executive class. Other supplementary charges like reservation charges, Superfast charge, Catering charges, Goods and service tax etc., as applicable is levied separately.

Moreover, Railways and Airlines are different modes of transport, which are not comparable in the terms of volume, connectivity as well as convenience.

There is no fixed maximum limit of fare in Airlines whereas Railways have fixed maximum fare throughout the year. Airline fare varies significantly depending on time of operation, stoppages, travel duration, Origin – Destination pair, carrier etc. Railways' fare may or may not be higher than the air fare

depending upon the class of travel as well as factors like peak/ lean periods. It is the choice of the passengers to opt either for Railway or Airlines as per their convenience and requirement.

Apart from above, Alternative train services on normal fare structure are available over Indian Railways on the routes of Rajdhani, Shatabdi and Duronto trains and Railway also serves a large number of passengers boarding/de-boarding at intermediate stations.

### **Recommendation (Para No. 13)**

The Committee note that as part of their Social Service Obligations, the Indian Railways extends concession in passenger fare to more than 50 categories of passengers. The element of concession varies from 10% to 100% and are permitted for certain categories of Divyang passengers, 11 types of patients, senior citizens, freedom fighters, Press correspondents, war widows, sports persons etc. The Committee also find that the Indian Railways also provides concessions to railway employees by way of Privilege Passes /Privilege Ticket Order and complimentary passes. The Committee further find that the quantum of revenue forgone in the passenger earnings segment as a result of concessions was Rs.1,670 cr during 2016- 17, Rs.1,810 cr during 2017-18 and Rs.1,995 cr during 2018-19 which is a substantial burden on the Railway finances. The Committee feel that while concessions are required to maintain social equity, yet given the precarious finances of the Indian Railways and especially in respect of the dismal earnings of their passenger segment, there is an urgent need to assess its impact on their finances. The Committee would like to recommend the Ministry to take proactive steps to review the criterion for granting of concessions with a view to contain the amount of concessions granted. They also desire the Ministry to have an internal mechanism in place to exercise control over the misuse of Privilege Passes /Privilege Ticket Order and complimentary passes by their employees and punitive action taken wherever required.

### **Reply of the Government**

Railway vigilance investigate the complaints and conduct preventive checks on the aspect of misuse privilege pass/PTO, duty pass and other complimentary passes issued to railway employee. In case any misuse is detected, action is taken in accordance with rules.

The Railway Servants (Pass) Rules, 1986 (Second Edition – 1993) provides for imposing punishments including dismissal/ removal from Railway Service on detection of misuse/fraudulent use of Pass/PTOs which serves as a deterrent against misuses. The Pass/PTO holder is also treated at par with other passengers and subjected to all existing checks by Ticket Checking Staff, Vigilance Squad, etc. during travel. Moreover, consequent to issuance of Pass/PTOs in electronic mode, misuse/re-use of Passes stands prevented to a larger extent.

In view of Pandemic & Covid Protocol with effect from 20.03.2020, Indian Railways rationalised the concession in fare and in place of 53, concession is provided to only four categories of Divyangjan, eleven categories of Patients and Students. Cost of granting concessions weigh heavily on Railways, hence scope of concessions has not been extended to other categories of passengers even after restoration of most of the trains.

As regards internal mechanism to check misuse of Privilege pass/Privilege Ticket Orders/Complimentary passes, it is apprised that online tickets can also be booked by Railway employees including pensioners w.e.f. 29.07.2020, using their Privilege Passes/Privilege Ticket Orders which are generated through online system. Online issuance of Privilege Passes/Privilege Ticket Order - ensures transparency of records as there will be no manual intervention.

#### **Recommendation (Para No. 14)**

The Committee note that while senior citizens are granted a fare concession amounting to 40-50 percent of their fare on the other hand, offered 'give up' scheme to forego the concession and pay full fare if he/she so desires. It is seen that those who can afford to pay full fare, are availing the concession. The Committee while appreciating the scheme would like to suggest the Ministry to give a wider publicity of the scheme and create awareness among the senior citizens so that only deserving passengers could avail the benefit. The Committee would like to be kept informed of the action taken in this regard.

#### **Reply of the Government**

In view of Pandemic & Covid Protocol, concession to all categories of passengers (except 4 categories of Divyangjan, 11 categories of Patients and Students) have been withdrawn from 20.03.2020. Accordingly, at present concession in passenger fare is not admissible to Senior citizen which implies that Give it up scheme is not applicable.

#### **Recommendation (Para No. 15)**

The Committee find that the Ministry does not maintain any separate data regarding the number of Privilege Passes/PTOs and complimentary passes issued to railway employees and the number of persons who availed them. They even do not maintain data of revenue lost as a result of such concessions. The Committee do not concur with the reasoning of the Ministry. While fully acknowledging the fact that certain concessions may be granted by the transporter, they would like to point out that the revenue expenditure of the Indian Railways have to be met entirely out of their internal resources and any misappropriation of such

concessions may erode their internal finances. Therefore, the Committee would like to impress upon the Ministry to act proactively and make adequate provisions and take stringent steps to prevent the abuse of such privileges to the extent possible. To this end, the Committee would also like the Ministry to include the expense in their accounting so that it correctly reflects their revenue expenditure.

### **Reply of the Government**

The system of issuance of Physical Passes/PTOs has already been switched over to e-Pass/PTO mode with the launch of e-Pass/PTO Module as an IT Project of Human Resource Management System (HRMS) on 10.08.2020 and made available to all the employees w.e.f. 24.08.2020. Pursuant to the rolling out of e-Pass/PTO Module, Privilege Pass and PTOs are being issued only electronically. The data of Passes/PTOs issued is also presently captured and available in the system. Post Retirement Complimentary Passes are also issued under e-Pass module as a preferred option.

With reference to the recommendation to take stringent steps to prevent misuse of Passes/PTOs, it is stated that the Railway Servants (Pass) Rules, 1986 provides for imposing punishments including dismissal/ removal from Railway Service on detection of misuse/fraudulent use of Pass/PTOs which serves as a deterrent against misuses. The Pass/PTO holder is also treated at par with other passengers and subjected to all existing checks by Ticket Checking Staff, Vigilance Squad, etc. during travel. Moreover, consequent to issuance of Pass/PTOs in electronic mode, misuse/re-use of Passes stands prevented to a larger extent.

### **Recommendation (Para No. 16)**

The Committee note that Indian Railways provides concessions to freedom fighters and their widows. The Committee appreciate this initiative of the Ministry and are of the firm opinion that this noble service of the Railways is an apt tribute for the trials and tribulation borne by our freedom fighters for gaining incredible independence. The Committee note that Complimentary Card Passes are issued on lifetime basis free rail travel in First Class and 2AC along with one companion in the same class by any train over all Indian Railways except Metro Railway, Kolkata. The Committee find that from 2016-18, a total of 10435 Complimentary Card Passes have been issued. The Committee observe that almost 75 years have elapsed since independence and any freedom fighter has to be in the age group of more than 85-90 years. Though, a hefty expenditure of Rs.33,68,21,743 is reimbursed by the Ministry of Home Affairs on this count, the Committee wish to stress the need to have genuine proof for identification of the intended users with a view to prevent the misuse of the Scheme. The Committee, therefore, desire the Ministry to be vigilant and take stringent actions to avoid misuse of these passes and undertake regular audit. They also desire to arrange issuance of smart cards to bona-fide pass holders.

### **Reply of the Government**

As per extant instructions, one of the passengers booked on a ticket has to produce one of the prescribed proofs of identity (in original) during the journey, failing which, all the passengers will be treated as travelling without ticket. These instructions are applicable to all type of passengers. Further, recently, instructions have been issued that any passenger availing concession or booking ticket under the quota earmarked for specific category of passengers will be required to produce a valid proof of his/her genuineness and the claim for facility of concession/reservation quota availed.

Identification of Freedom Fighters is carried out by the MHA under their "Swatantrata Sainik Samman Scheme". All such Freedom Fighters receiving pension and certified as freedom fighters under the "Swatantrata Sainik Samman Scheme" of the Ministry of Home Affairs are eligible for Complimentary Card Passes issued by the Ministry of Railways. Expenditure incurred on this account is reimbursed to Ministry of Railways by the MHA. As such, no audit of the same is required. As regards issuance of smart cards to freedom fighters, it is stated that since smart card is intended to serve as an identity card, the same can be issued by the MHA at the time of certification under the "Swatantrata Sainik Samman Scheme".

### **Recommendation (Para No. 17)**

The Committee find that under the PRS, around three-fourth of the tickets are booked through the IRCTC website or the mobile app. The Committee note that Tickets can either be booked by the individual or by Principal Service Providers/PSPs (Principal agents) or their respective Retail Service Providers/RSPs (Sub agents) who are the license holder agents authorized by the Ministry of Railways to procure Rail tickets on behalf of passengers by charging nominal service charges from passengers fixed by the Railways from time to time. The Committee note that the Railways have taken all out efforts to deter the manipulation. They appreciate the additional measures taken by them to allow the Retail Service Providers (agents) to book only one Tatkal ticket per day/per train. The Committee are of the firm opinion that such an initiative may go a long way in discouraging unauthorized booking agents as Aadhar Number and PAN are unique to each citizen and can not be used many times and any irregularity committed in respect of the PRS, cannot continue without active involvement of touts/connivance of the officials manning the PRS. The Committee, therefore, desire the Railways to investigate all such cases of irregularities in a time bound manner and take deterrent punitive action against those found guilty.

### **Reply of the Government**

Besides various checks in the system, if any Retail Service Provider (RSP) is found involved in touting activities (booking through personal user-ids for commercial gain, overcharging, Electronic Reservation Slip (ERS) manipulation, sharing of agent id credentials), the RSP ID is permanently



deactivated and a penalty of Rs. 20,000 is imposed. In case any Principal Service Provider (PSP) is found indulged in software tampering then a penalty of Rs. 25 lakhs is imposed under major irregularities.

Moreover, in case any RSP is found indulged in improper display of sign board indicating IRCTC instructions, misuse of IRCTC logo, entering incorrect mobile number of passengers at the time of booking etc., then a penalty of Rs. 5,000 is imposed under minor irregularities and warning letter is being issued.

Based on the various checks conducted by the Railway Protection Force (RPF), IRCTC IT Anti Fraud Team (ITAF), Vigilance team, Customer complaints and other agencies, following are the cases wherein penalties have been imposed by IRCTC:

#### **Details of Penalties Imposed by IRCTC against various complaints**

<b>Period</b>	<b>No. of Cases</b>	<b>IDs Deactivated</b>	<b>Penalty Imposed</b>
2018-2019	91	101	3,642,065
2019-2020	108	150	3,161,532
2020-2021	88	86	9,396,849
2021-2022 (till Oct., 2021)	43	43	909,705
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>330</b>	<b>380</b>	<b>17,110,151</b>

IRCTC IT Anti Fraud Team (ITAF) also monitors first 5 minutes transactions of Tatkal intensively and blocks suspicious IDs who use other than normal channel such as cloud service to access the website. From 08.12.2021 to 22.12.2021, 99,283 user IDs have been deactivated and network level blocks of suspected IPs is being done.

#### **Recommendation (Para No. 18)**

In order to strengthen the fight against any malafide in e-ticketing and as a part of its checks and balances, the Committee find that the Railways have initiated a number of steps to de-register the suspected accounts/IDs of malafide users. In this regard, the IRCTC has deactivated 1.15 Lakh Personal User IDs in FY 2018-19, and about 11.20 Lakh Personal User IDs in FY 2019-20. The Committee appreciate this initiative of the Ministry and urge them to maintain the momentum and weed out such accounts on a day to day basis.

#### **Reply of the Government**

IRCTC continuously monitors the suspects, which involves the following through analysis before deactivation of Personal User IDs.

1	The personal user IDs are deactivated based on the pattern or series noticed in the user IDs involved in CRIS report, RPF report or vigilance report.
2	Search is also conducted on all the user IDs which are booking all 6 tickets in a day or 2 and then similar or same looking ID series are identified.
3	Those user IDs which have been continuously booking all six tickets in Tatkal continuously for last more than 3 months are identified and the tickets booked with name on user ID and passenger are compared and then similar series are found out and deactivated, if required.
4	Analysis is also done on the profile details of personal user IDs registered on previous day on random basis of their profile address if found that the address details provided by user is not correct then all such user IDs are deactivated/suspended.

Practice to weed out suspected users is regularly followed, based on various investigations and analysis carried out by IRCTC in coordination with CRIS and Railway Protection Force. As a result, in the FY 2021-22 (till Nov-21) about 3.60 Lakh user IDs have been deactivated by IRCTC. The details of IDS deactivated in last five is as under:

<b>ID Deactivation Report Financial Year Wise</b>		
<b>S.No.</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Total ID Deactivated (In Lakhs)</b>
1	2015-16	191301
2	2016-17	668913
3	2017-18	127191
4	2018-19	114737
5	2019-20	1120236
6	2020-21	1162493
7	2021-22 (Till Nov,21)	360124
<b>Total</b>		<b>3744995</b>

Moreover, a dedicated ITAF (Internet Ticket Anti-Fraud) cell is instituted in IRCTC, which continuously monitors the suspected User IDs and takes up the deactivation of Personal User IDs, on the basis of extensive analysis.

Regular drives are being conducted by Railway Protection Force (RPF) against persons/agencies found involved in illegally carrying on business of procuring and supplying railway tickets, for reserved accommodation. The offenders are booked under the provisions of Section 143 of the Railways Act, 1989 and action is taken against them as per law. The details of suspected IRCTC User IDs are communicated to IRCTC for its deactivation and further necessary action at their end on regular basis. Special drives are also conducted at regular intervals especially during the peak rush periods i.e. festivals and holidays.

**CHAPTER – III**

**OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS WHICH THE COMMITTEE DO NOT DESIRE TO  
PURSUE IN VIEW OF THE GOVERNMENT'S REPLIES**

**-NIL-**

## CHAPTER – IV

### OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS IN RESPECT OF WHICH REPLIES OF THE GOVERNMENT HAVE NOT BEEN ACCEPTED BY THE COMMITTEE AND WHICH REQUIRE REITERATION

#### Recommendation (Para No. 7)

The Ministry have informed that PRS can be used for booking, modification and cancellation of tickets in various categories of trains. They note that rail tickets can be booked 120 days prior to the date of scheduled journey known as the Advanced Reserved Period for almost all long-distance mail express trains/Shatabdi express trains except some short distance/inter-city trains. The accommodation through the PRS is allotted on first come first serve basis and thereafter reservation against cancellation (RAC) and waitlisted tickets are issued. The status of RAC tickets gets updated automatically against cancellation of confirmed tickets. The Committee also find that tickets can be booked online as well as through computerised PRS counters till the preparation of second reservation charts which are prepared between 30 minutes and 5 minutes before the scheduled time of departure of the train. The Committee, however, find no logic in booking of tickets between the time of 30-5 minutes before the departure of the train when there are thousands of RAC/waitlisted tickets already booked and waiting for confirmation. In their opinion, there is no scope of getting these tickets confirmed. The Committee, therefore, are of the opinion that since Tatkal facilities are available for passengers wishing to travel at a short notice, all seats of the train found vacant after preparation of the first reservation chart which are prepared 4-5 hours before the departure time should automatically be allotted to RAC/Waitlisted passengers to facilitate them to travel as per their plan. The Committee, therefore, desire that the need for preparation of second reservation charts should reviewed with a view to facilitate the needy passengers and also to refrain the touts from being involved in the probable mal-practice during the last minute rush.

#### Reply of the Government

With a view to rationalize computerized PRS, the system of preparation of reservation charts was rationalized in the year 2015 and following provisions were made:

- i. In the computerized PRS of Indian Railways, the reserved accommodation can be booked on first-come-first-serve basis. After exhaustion of available accommodation, Reservation against Cancellation (RAC)/Waiting list tickets are issued.
- ii. The status of RAC/Waiting list tickets gets updated against the cancellation of tickets booked prior to such tickets.

- iii. A provision was introduced to prepare reservation charts at least 4 hours before scheduled departure of train i.e. if reservation charts of the train are not prepared by the Railways, the system will automatically release unutilized reservation quota by updating the RAC/Wait list status of passengers and finalize the reservation charts. These charts were known as First Reservation charts. As such, the provision to update the RAC/Waiting list status of passenger against the vacant accommodation available (at the time of preparation of first reservation chart) is already there.
- iv. After preparation of first reservation charts, the vacant accommodation available, if any, becomes available for booking across computerized PRS counters of Indian Railways as well as through internet. It was done to facilitate passengers in getting confirmed accommodation through both across PRS counters as well as through internet and to reduce the scope of misuse, as earlier this facility was available only as nominated counters at train originating stations only.
- v. It was prescribed that this vacant accommodation can be booked upto preparation of second reservation charts and second reservation charts are prepared between 30 minutes and 5 minutes before the scheduled/rescheduled time of departure of train.
- vi. This provision was made to ensure optimal utilisation of available accommodation, allow passengers to cancel already booked tickets and to make on-board Ticket Checking Staff aware of the cancellation of the bookings made between first reservation charts and second reservation charts.
- vii. It is clarified that in case, there is RAC/Wait list in the train, no accommodation can be booked in between preparation of first reservation charts and second reservation charts i.e. Wait list tickets are not issued after preparation of first reservation charts. As such the question of its updation at the time of preparation of second reservation chart does not arise.
- viii. The time gap of 30 minutes to 5 minutes before scheduled/rescheduled time of departure of train, for preparation of second reservation charts has been kept to give Railways the discretion to take out second reservation charts depending upon the distance between the charting location and the platform from which the train is going to depart.
- ix. At the time of preparation of second reservation charts, vacant accommodation available, if any, gets transferred to next remote location facilitating passengers at that location to book tickets.
- x. It may be appreciated that the above-said system has given the following benefits:
  - a. Brought transparency in the reservation system.
  - b. Facilitated passengers to book ticket online or through PRS till preparation of second reservation charts saving them from the botheration of coming to the nominated train/journey originating station.
  - c. Reduced the scope of misuse of the system by unscrupulous elements.
  - d. Optimal utilization of available accommodation.
  - e. Increased passenger satisfaction.

**CHAPTER – V**

**OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS IN RESPECT OF WHICH FINAL REPLIES ARE STILL  
AWAITED**

**-NIL-**

New Delhi;  
03 August, 2022  
12 Sravana, 1944 (Saka)

**RADHA MOHAN SINGH**  
**Chairperson**  
**Standing Committee on Railways**

## **ANNEXURE**

### **MINUTES OF THE EIGHTH SITTING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON RAILWAYS (2021-22)**

The Committee met on Wednesday, the 3<sup>rd</sup> August, 2022 from 1500 hrs. to 1530 hrs. in Committee Room 'B', Parliament House Annexe, New Delhi.

#### **PRESENT**

**Shri Radha Mohan Singh** - **Chairperson**

#### **MEMBERS**

##### **LOK SABHA**

2. Shri A. H. Khan Choudhury
3. Ms. Diya Kumari
4. Smt. Jaskaur Meena
5. Smt. Keshari Devi Patel
6. Shri Mukesh Rajput
7. Shri N. Reddeppa
8. Shri Achyutananda Samanta
9. Dr. Amar Singh
10. Smt. Sangeeta Kumari Singh Deo
11. Shri Kodikunnil Suresh
12. Shri Gopal Jee Thakur
13. Sadhvi Pragya Singh Thakur
14. Dr. Farooq Abdullah

##### **RAJYA SABHA**

15. Shri Narhari Amin
16. Smt. Phulo Devi Netam
17. Ms. Saroj Pandey
18. Prof. Manoj Kumar Jha

#### **SECRETARIAT**

1. Smt. Suman Arora - Joint Secretary
2. Smt. Maya Lingi - Director
3. Shri Ram Lal Yadav - Addl. Director
4. Smt. Archana Srivastva - Deputy Secretary

2. At the outset, the Chairperson welcomed the Members to the sitting of the Committee. Thereafter, the Committee took up for consideration the draft Report on Action Taken by the Government on the recommendations of the Committee contained in their 8<sup>th</sup> Report on the "Passenger Reservation System of Indian Railways".

The Committee adopted the above-mentioned Report without any modifications.

3. The Committee authorized the Chairperson to finalize and present the Report to the Parliament.

**The Committee then adjourned.**

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**ANALYSIS OF ACTION TAKEN BY THE GOVERNMENT ON THE  
RECOMMENDATIONS/OBSERVATIONS CONTAINED IN THE 8<sup>TH</sup> REPORT  
(17<sup>TH</sup> LOK SABHA) ON "PASSENGER RESERVATION SYSTEM OF INDIAN RAILWAYS"**

Total number of Recommendations/Observations	18
(i) Recommendations/Observations which have been accepted by the Government –	
Para Nos. 1,2,3,4,5 6,8,9,10,11,12,13,14,15,16,17 and 18	17
Percentage of total	94.4%
(ii) Recommendations/Observations which the Committee do not desire to pursue in view of the Government's replies –	
Para No. NIL	NIL
Percentage of total	00%
(iii) Recommendations/Observations in respect of which replies of the Government have not been accepted by the Committee and which require reiteration –	
Para No. 7	01
Percentage of total	5.5%
(iv) Recommendations/Observations in respect of which final replies are still awaited -	
Para No. NIL	NIL
Percentage of total	00%