LocalCircles

"Make Railways Better"

Collective inputs from over 45,000 Citizens on

"Productivity of Railways in India"

(Current state, Issues, Root Causes and Proposed Solutions)

November 28, 2014

Productivity of Railways in India

Executive Summary

Indian Railways is one of the world's largest railway networks and carries around 23 million passengers daily. Being a Government run organization, there has always been a big question mark on its productivity. Various reports over the years have shown that some small changes in the working of railways can result in big profits and major customer satisfaction.

The subject of 'Productivity in Railways' was covered in the 45,000 strong citizens' community for governance 'Make Railways Better'. With a large number of citizens participating in the discussion, the following reflects how the Citizens of India feel about the current state of Railway Productivity in India.

Issues Identified:

1. Too many people involved in cleaning the toilet waste
2. Bad governance/management of facility
3. Non availability of tickets when one wants to travel
4. Too much time wasted in buying tickets
5. Lack-lustre security and security personnel
6. A lot of areas still have single tracks
7. Old AC coaches used in Shatabdi Express' which are not very energy efficient
8. Limited line capacity for goods train
9. Trains usually do not run on time schedules
10. Expectation of bribes
11. The turn-around time of passenger as well as goods trains is much lower resulting in far lower utilization of its assets
12. The manual cleaning, checking and regular maintenance and loading/unloading operations take longer time
13. FDI not allowed in this sector
14. Private players not allowed
15. Inefficient use of the quota allotted
16. Crowd management on railway stations and inside the trains is bad
17. Cleanliness staff is inefficient
18. The engines of the trains are inefficient and consume a lot of fuel
19. Inefficient use of the railway land
20. The selection of new train routes is illogical

Root Causes Identified:

1. Railways is over staffed
2. Majority of the cleanliness work in not automated and requires manual labour
3. leaning staff is inefficient and untrained
4. Accountability of the railway staff is nil
5. Railways is a cheap mode of travel and hence the demand for tickets is very high
6. Number of people who visit the station is huge
7. A large population does not have internet access and hence queues up at the station counters to buy tickets
8. Safety and security at the stations is not given priority
9. Security personnel are not trained enough to handle the crowd rush
10. Acquiring land for building new tracks is a time consuming process
11. India has never been a country which believes in phasing out certain things. Hence, old and inefficient things (like old AC coaches) are still in use
12. Railways lack modern communication equipment
13. Factors like single tracks, bad condition of tracks, low average running speed etc. makes the trains run behind time
14. Lack of E Signalling causes delay in the running of trains
15. Certain section of railway employees have been used to getting bribes for getting work done on priority
16. The process design is outdated and inefficient
17. New routes are selected based on political agendas and not based on actual need
18. Lack of leadership at different levels
19. Big communication gap between different levels of employees
20. Bad handling of goods by porters is a major cause of low goods booking

Solutions Identified:

1. Toilets in trains should be changed to vacuum toilets so that the large workforce involved in cleaning could be used somewhere else
2. Self-service ticket machines should be installed on stations
3. CCTV cameras should be installed across stations so that an eye can be kept on everything that is happening
4. Security should be given high priority and security personnel should be trained to manage the crowd rush
5. Single tracks should be converted to doubles so that time and fuel could be saved
6. The line capacity for goods trains should also be increased

7. Old AC coaches should be phased out and new, more energy efficient coaches should be inducted
8. On-Time performance of the passenger trains should be improved
9. Average running speed of the trains should be increased
10. Top management should include industry experts and not just politicians
11. KRAs of all the employees should be clearly defined
12. Employees should be made accountable for the work
13. Annual appraisals should be made performance based
14. Managers should make sure that the employees are efficient in what they are doing
15. Regular training and development programs should be organized for the employees
16. Surprise checks and audits should be conducted to keep every rail employee on their toes all the time
17. The cleaning and maintenance works should be outsourced to private contractors
18. The quota allotted for the employees/ministers should be used judiciously and fairly
19. Selection of trains for new routes should be based on need and not political agendas
20. Railway land could be used for advertising, shops etc.
21. Dependency on manual work should be decreased by using modern equipment
22. Automated system should be set up for handling goods at stations
23. Employee recruitment should be done on merit basis and not caste or bribe
24. Appoint a platform manager to assist passengers on every platform
25. FDI should be allowed in Railways

Productivity of Railways in India –A few Citizen quotes:

1. I consider the issues with railways are a simple governance issue. The train network in India is one of the biggest train networks; however the way the whole system is managed can improve if each railway employee is doing their duties as expected. As suggested earlier, there is also a need to even change the processes as well as automate various functions of Railways – *Rahul Choudhary*
2. More frequent 'on board' inspections of senior officials in respect of punctuality; compliance of instructions/directives by travelling ticket examiners, on board AC staff and coach attendants etc. – *Ashok Sharma*
3. The biggest problem in railways is that train do not run on time...I suggest that performance appraisal of every railway employee in a zone should be linked to the percentage of trains running on time in that zone...the higher the percentage of trains running on right time the higher the appraisal – *Shubhadeep Sanyal*
4. The labour unions understand more about productivity than many of the white collard ones. The difficult situations under which certain railway staff works also is not known to many. Bossing alone is not a tool for increasing productivity. Take the

case of way side station staff. They do only a receptivity job day in day out. The other is running staff. – *Venkataraman Vishwanathan*

5. There are strong Departmental biases in the organization. Everyone tries to protect his Department, to the detriment of the goal of the organization. Key top posts need to be filled up from Railway bureaucracy, not with a Departmental bias, but through an independent selection process. The selection committee should not be from either the IAS or Railways, but should contain eminent personalities from the industry, Management institutes, and society. – *Sanjay Chandra*

6. Most officers are comfortably perched in their cabins - just paper-pushers. No supervision, no surprise checks, no initiative, NO INTEREST, just take care of bosses in line with VIP culture prevalent across our country. Technically weak, nobody interested in taking responsibility & decisions unless there is something in it for them, i.e. some consideration. Railways are greatly overstaffed & bureaucratic. Top officials travel by AIR rather than their own Railways & are blissfully ignorant of the conditions in Rlys. BAN SENIOR OFFICERS from using any transport other than Rlys. irrespective of distance – *Sudheer Mehta*

7. RESPONSIBILITY and FEEDBACK. Every employee should feel responsible for his duty with or without supervision of immediate superior using smart cards which are swapped for every job performed during a day. Touch Screen feedback machines at every station should be installed for immediate feedback of travellers Lastly, Social Audit (can also be adopted at later stage) is required in every sphere starting with all government employees(railways) where there actions both social and professional (during service hrs.) are accounted in a defined pattern (developed and available with me) for appraisal, salary reimbursement per month , deductions from salary etc. Decrement of salary or per month salary disbursal – *Dheeraj Kocchar*

8. In every Railway budget new trains are introduced and the frequency of some trains is increased. This should be done considering the average wait list passengers on each route. It will ease the difficulties of passengers of some heavy traffic routes. The current practice of allocating new trains to the Railway Minister's constituency should stop. Mr. Lalu Prasad Yadav endured that most of the new trains touched Patna; and Ms. Bannerji took them to Calcutta. New train allocations / frequency increase should be purely on merit of the route and not the VIP status of it – *John Alexander*

9. Not using the freight carrying potential of railway through lack of dedicated freight corridors and lack of facility of pock up and delivery of freight at point of dispatch and delivery of end user of the consignment – *Chandrasekhar Sharma*

10. What I feel is that the entry to the platform should be restricted and there should be proper checking of ticket at the entry and exit as earlier. Since a large number of people are using railway for comfortable and economical journey, all major railway

stations should have a good shopping floor as seen in the airport. In order to keep the railway station neat and clean, either the loco pilot should be able to lock the toilets or there should be a system to automatically lock the toilets of the trains when they near the stations – *Jayachandran*

11. Railways have become over staffed due to historical reasons & political patronage. Reforms have been overdue & it may take time to clean up things. It needs to change from a bureaucracy to professional management. – *Samarjit Narayan*

12. Automate cleaning toilets and change the type of toilet so that waste matter will not fall on to the track instead will collect to a sewage tank that gets emptied at specific stations (there should be indications once the tank gets filled which then should be emptied the very next station or the tanks should be emptied every 5 station) – *Charumati Vasudevan*

13. Each Station has lot of rusted/wasted casting/forging items strewn all over the area. These are scrap which will fetch immediate money in crores on selling the same back to Foundry/Forging manufacturers as input material for melting – *Bhrammanapalle Murthy*