

Assessment of Passenger's Satisfaction in Himachal Road Transport Corporation Ltd. (HRTC)

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Abstract: Transportation in general, among other modes, and road transport in particular is the most widely used transport sector all over the world. Road Transport plays a vital role in the process of economic development of any state. In hilly state it is considered to be the life line of people. A large number of people in Himachal use road transport system every day to get to work etc. In Himachal Pradesh where the other transportation means are negligible, the road transport acquires added significance, which has changed the life of people. But Himachal road transport sector is facing certain challenges. There is also a prevalence of poor quality of services in the sector which makes the road transport passengers of the nation dissatisfied. Therefore, objective of study deals with passenger's satisfaction with regards to Himachal Pradesh road Transport Corporation. To attain this objective, a descriptive survey research design was used. The probability sampling was used. The data sources included primary and collected from the 400 respondents. Eight service quality instruments were constructed: "Passengers comfort, punctuality and regularity, safety and reliability, satisfaction with driver/conductor and social responsibility" to determine the passenger's satisfaction. The findings imply that passengers are not acquainted with basic services. In conclusion, the quality of services and knowledge and skill of drivers and the ethics of service providers need to be intervened. Therefore, limited service in quality dimensions lead to customers' dissatisfaction at transport sector.

Keywords: Passengers Satisfaction, HRTC Ltd., Road Transport, Service Quality Instruments, Transport Sector.

1. INTRODUCTION

Transport plays greater roles for economic growth and social development of nations. Transportation in general, among other modes, and road transport in particular is the most widely used transport sector all over the world. The transport is playing an important role in the economic development of the country by creating employment opportunities and performing national economic activities. Transport is the channel of social and economic interaction involving the physical movement of people and goods. Transport is the life-blood of civilization and constitutes an important item of infrastructure for economic growth. "The significance of the Transport Sector lies not only in the specific services it renders, but even more, in unifying and integrating influence it exerts upon the economy, enhancing productivity, widening the market and introducing new stimuli to economic activity."

Customer satisfaction is defined as a judgment that a product or service is provided at a pleasurable level of consumption-related fulfillment. Also there are two levels of individual consumer's satisfaction: transaction-specific satisfaction and cumulative satisfaction. Transaction-specific satisfaction or encounter satisfaction is identified as a fulfillment response to a single transaction or encounter, whereas cumulative satisfaction is a judgment based on many occurrences of the same experience and not just one-time experience.

As customer satisfaction plays a significant role in measuring service quality of the service provider.

In order to measure how passengers perceive about the quality of public transport, there is some evidence from the literature that customers (passengers) perceive: that reliability, timing, frequency and fare, cleanliness and comforts, transport network and coverage which also includes the stoppages, safety issues and information system are considered to be important factors in order to evaluate the service quality. This trend of evaluating the customer requirements and delivering services according to customer requirements is now seen in the developing countries. This study aims to investigate the customers (passengers) perceptions about the service quality of only available public road transport system in Himachal Pradesh India

The growth of the passenger road transport and the adequacy of transport sector focus more on the supply and demand situations. The demand can be seen from the passengers' side and the supply is from the side of operators. On the other hand, it shows the ease of use of the supply and demand of transport and other related issues in the sector. Here, between the two, customers' satisfaction is one of the important issues and it may be challenged by different factors. Identifying these factors from both sides and forwarding intervention mechanisms for the problems are necessary to provide quality transportation service.

HIMACHAL ROAD TRANSPORT CORPORATION ORIGIN:

Himachal Road Transport Corporation, also referred to as **HRTC**, is the state run bus service of Himachal Pradesh, India. Himachal Road transport came into existence as a Govt. Transport in July, 1949 and continued to function as such till 1st October, 1974. During the year 1958, a Corporation was floated jointly by the Govt. of Punjab, Himachal and Railways under the Road Transport Corporation Act, 1950 with a name and style as "Mandi-Kullu road Transport Corporation" basically to operate on the joint routes in the States of Punjab and Himachal. With the re-organization of Punjab State in 1966, few hilly areas of Punjab were merged in Himachal and operational areas of Mandi-Kullu Road Transport Corporation came entirely in the expanded State of Himachal. This Corporation also continued to function as such till 01.10.1974. On 02.10.1974, Himachal govt. Transport was merged with Mandi- Kullu Road Transport Corporation and was renamed as Himachal Road Transport Corporation under the Road Transport Corporation Act, 1950. Since then it is functioning as such. After the formation of Himachal on 15th July, 1948 the network of roads had received topmost priority of the Government as there were very limited roads in the State at that time. On the formation of Present Corporation on 02.10.1974, the total routes operated by HRTC were 379 which have grown to 2176 routes in 2010-2011 and the fleet strength has grown from 673 to 1921 in 2010-2011. As the road length increased and basic infrastructure for development also kept pace with it, this had direct relation on the growth of the HRTC. The strength of buses in 1974-75 was 673 and total sanctioned posts were 4967, which has now increased to 1921 and sanctioned posts have increased to 10730. The process of nationalization started long after the framing of the Road Transport Corporation Act, 1950.

HRTC with its 2100 buses serves routes to towns and cities within Himachal Pradesh and adjoining states of Uttarakhand, Chandigarh, Punjab and Delhi. HRTC is one of the first RTC's in India to offer a facility for online booking of tickets for all types of buses. Other than regular services connecting Himachal to Chandigarh, Delhi and Haridwar; HRTC operates buses on some of the highest motorable roads in the world. These routes include Leh-Delhi, Shimla-Kaza, Kullu-Kaza, Manali-Killar and others. The Leh-Delhi routes operated by HRTC is 1203 km long and is the longest route by any RTC in India with a travel time of approx. 35 hours. The roads to Kaza are also termed as the world's most treacherous roads

IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY:

The survival of any service industry depends on how well they serve and satisfy their passenger. A satisfied passenger is always the biggest asset of any service industry. Especially, with the advent of private and global players into this market, the competition has become still more shift. Therefore Himachal Road transport corporation Ltd. also has to improve its services in order to survive.

NEED OF THE STUDY:

Transport industries which undertake nothing more than the mere movements of persons and things from one place to another have constituted one of the most important activities of men in every stage of advanced civilization". The importance of transport is increasing every day with the new development in the fields of ways, means, motive power, engineering techniques, organizations, legal enactment and social, economic and political factors. Hence the scope of the study of transport is **much** wider today.

Road Transport plays a vital role in the process of economic development of any state. In hilly state it is considered to be the life line of people. India has registered an astonishing progress in the area of bus transport. It is seen that the State

Transport Undertakings had extended their services to every region having metal or pukka roads, to the maximum extent.. However, the maximum of social benefit cannot gain from STUs, which are deplorably poor in performance taking profitability as the index of efficiency. There is a big hue and cry for privatization of public undertakings all over the world on the plea that they are wasted scarce resources due to operational inefficiency. The rural passengers need to go to the nearby towns for various purposes. At present, the transport services in rural areas do not meet all the requirements of the passengers up to the expected level due to many reasons for example inadequate services, poor condition of buses and undue waiting time at bus stops. Eventually these problems dissatisfy the rural passengers very much. Sometimes the rural passengers have to face a belated or no bus arrival. Similarly the Corporation has to encounter a lot of problems in running rural services. The rural road conditions are not as good as towns. Moreover, plying of services in rural areas results in low efficiency and uneconomical return to the Corporation. Generally, private transport operators do not come forward to operate buses in rural areas due to these reasons. Another problem is that most of the State Road Transport Corporations are running in heavy losses. The major causes of these losses are: absence of a cost based fare structure and lack of timely adjustment of fares in response to changes in input prices, operation of uneconomic routes for social reasons etc., Inefficiency in operations is also an important contributory factor. This is due to constraints of financial resources, organizational inadequacies.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY:

The study is specific only public sector undertaking of Himachal Pradesh which is Himachal Road Transport Corporation. The Shimla division of HRTC was taken which has eight regions. The study revolves around customer satisfaction.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

The present study has been taken up with the following objectives

- To determine the satisfaction level of passengers with Himachal Road Transport Corporation.
- To examine the problems of the bus passengers during traveling in the buses of Himachal road Transport Corporation.
- To make suggestions to ensure satisfactory bus services by improving the functioning of the Himachal Road Transport Corporation ltd.

SAMPLING DESIGN:

The present study is an empirical research based on survey method. The present study is confined to Shimla Division of Himachal Road Transport Corporation (HRTC). Convenient sampling technique is used to draw sample respondents passengers. The sample passengers are mobile population and they remain busy in reaching their stations, waiting for buses, listening to announcement, making enquiry and looking at display charts. Hence, sample size is chosen as 400 and it is considered to be adequate and representative

2. METHODOLOGY

The demographic characteristics of the respondents are shown in table 1. The gender distribution of the respondent passengers groups was quite uneven, with 60 per cent male respondents and 40 per cent female respondents. The modal age group of the respondents was 20- 40 years (69.5 per cent), followed by above 40 years (11.3 per cent).

Table.1: 1 Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents (N= 400)

Sr. No	Variable	Frequency	Percentage
1	Gender		
	Male	240	60
	Female	160	40
2	Age		
	0-20	32	8.0
	20-40	278	69.5
	40-60	45	11.3
	Above 60	45	11.3

3	Place of resident		
	Urban	150	37.5
	Rural	250	62.5
4	Education		
	Illiterate	30	9.8
	School	76	19
	College	75	18.8
	Higher	160	40
	Professional	50	12.5
5	Occupation		
	Laboure	11	2.8
	Business	35	8.8
	Agriculture	66	16.5
	student	207	51.8
	Employees	12	3.0
	Housewives	69	17.3
6	Total house hold income		
	Below \$1,00,000	172	43
	1,00,001-1,50,000	70	17.5
	1,50,000-2,00,000	56	14
	2,00,001-2,50,000	28	7
	Above \$ 2,50,001	74	18.5

Source: Field Survey, 2015

Most of the respondents (62.5 per cent) reported that they came from rural area and 37.5 per cent from urban area of Himachal Pradesh India. In terms of level of education, 40 per cent of the respondents are highly educated. Number of respondents from school and colleges are almost equal. Only 12.5 per cent are Professionals, The results show that sample respondents have relatively high educational attainment. In terms of occupation, 51.5 per cent respondents are students, 8.8 per cent respondents are businessmen (contractors, realtors, etc.) and 16.5 agriculturists (includes formers, landlords, etc.). And 172 people from income group below \$ one lakh which shows most of the passengers are from low income group.

3. DATA COLLECTION

The present study is largely based on primary data. The required primary data are collected using pre-tested and well structured interview schedule. The primary data for the study were collected through personal questionnaire of the passenger respondents during the period January 2015 to June 2015. The questionnaire was divided into three parts. Part I elucidates the personal data of the respondents. Part II. Transport usage profile, part III. Passengers Satisfaction Scale. The present research work is a descriptive and analytical study based on empirical observations and comprehensive survey.

ANALYSIS:

In order to achieve the objectives of the study an analysis is made to understand the factors influencing the passenger's satisfaction the statistical tool used is factor analysis and descriptive statistics is also shown.

DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS:

Descriptive statistics are very important because if we simply presented our raw data it would be hard to visualize what the data was showing, especially if there was a lot of it. Descriptive statistics therefore enables us to present the data in a more meaningful way, which allows simpler interpretation of the data.

Table 1.2 explains the, descriptive statistics for factor affecting the passenger's satisfaction. Description of table shows the values of mean, standard deviation, skewness, kurtosis for 27 variables.

Table 1.2 DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF FACTORS INFLUENCING PASSENGERS SATISFACTION

Statements	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
CLEANLINESS	400	1	7	4.94	1.803	-.883	-.089
SEATING ARRANGEMENTS	400	1	7	4.94	1.659	-.990	.379
VENTILATION	400	1	7	4.93	1.677	-.833	.046
TRAVELLING WITH LUGGAGE	400	1	7	4.41	1.953	-.411	-.970
EASY BOARDING	400	1	7	4.93	1.715	-.780	-.161
TIMMING OF STOPPAGE DURING JOURNEY	400	1	7	5.16	1.789	-1.054	.304
DEPARTURE TIME	400	1	7	5.49	1.518	-1.245	1.317
ARRIVAL TIME	400	1	7	5.12	1.578	-.954	.563
WAITING TIME	400	1	7	5.11	1.561	-1.058	.827
FREQUENCY of SERVICES	400	1	7	4.96	1.549	-.795	.368
CANCELLATION of TRIPS	400	1	7	4.92	1.587	-.816	.214
BREAK-DOWN OF VEHICLES	400	1	7	4.70	1.597	-.622	-.161
BUS DRIVER FOLLOWING TRAFFIC	400	1	7	5.33	1.487	-1.219	1.111
SAFETY PROVISIONS	400	1	7	4.91	1.766	-.737	-.211
SMOOTHNESS OF RIDE	400	1	7	4.82	1.554	-.653	-.075
NOISE LEVEL OF THE BUSES	400	1	7	4.52	1.642	-.571	-.302
ATTENDING COMPLAINTS	400	1	7	4.33	1.807	-.385	-.705
BEHAVIOUR OF THE CONDUCTOR TOWARDS PASSENGERS	400	1	7	4.85	1.675	-.678	-.037
RETURNING THE BALANCE AMOUNT	400	1	7	5.15	1.553	-.721	.084
TIME ALLOWED FOR BOARDING AND DEBOARDING	400	1	7	5.43	1.356	-1.001	1.040
DELAY DUE TO TICKET CHECKING	400	1	7	5.01	1.624	-.846	.313
OVERLOADING OF PASSENGERS	400	1	7	4.46	1.935	-.564	-.745
FESTIVAL SERVICES	400	1	7	4.91	1.729	-.918	.142
RUSH HOUR SERVICES	400	1	7	4.74	1.706	-.864	.040
LEAN HOUR SERVICES	400	1	7	4.83	1.677	-.950	.304
LATE NIGHT SERVICES	400	1	7	4.79	1.810	-.824	-.198
EARLY MORNING SERVICE	400	1	7	5.57	1.447	-1.324	1.750

Source: Data Collected through Interview Schedule

It is clear from the table given above that the factor „early morning services“ has the first highest mean value of 5.57 followed by the factor „Departure time“ with the second highest mean value of 5.49. It can also be observed that the factor „time allowed for boarding and deboarding“ has the third highest mean value of 5.43.

The table also shows that the first least mean value of 4.33 has been obtained by the factor „attending complaints“ followed by the second least mean value of 4.41 obtained by the factor „travelling with luggage“. The table also reveals that the factor „Overloading of passengers“ has the third least mean value of 4.46.

Further, the calculated values of standard deviation reveal moderate variation in the response of all designed variables. In case of skewness, most values are concentrated on the left of the mean with extreme values to the left, so it can be said that distribution is negatively skewed.

In case of kurtosis, the calculated values are negative which depicts that distribution is platykurtic i.e. flatter than normal distribution with a wider peak. The probability for extreme value is less than for normal distribution and the values are wider around the mean.

FACTORS ANALYSIS OF PASSENGERS PERCEPTION:

Factor analysis is used for data analysis. It is applied on several variables to reduce them into predominant factors. It explains the variables on individual factors and respective variables loaded in the form of correlation coefficient value.

The main purpose of this exploratory factor analysis is to extract predominant factors of passenger's perception towards service quality in HRTC. The application of Principal Component Factor Analysis is presented below.

Table 1.3 KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.837
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	3952.813
	Df	351
	Sig.	.000

Source: Computed from primary data.

From the Table 1.3 of KMO and Bartlett's Test it is found that the sampling adequacy value 0.837 and the Chi-Square value for Bartlett's Test of Sphericity 351 are statistically significant at 5% level. In this case p value must be less than 0.001. Table shows that Bartlett's test of sphericity is significant its associated probability is less than 0.001 that is 0.000 so it is rejecting the null hypothesis. This means there is no correlation among factors.

This means that the 27 variables relating to passengers perception scale are adequate in demonstrating its concept and the sampling distribution is also normal to explain the characteristic features of the different scale.

Communalities:

The extraction communalities are useful as these are obtained using the extracted factors. Extraction communalities for a variable give the total amount of variance in that variable, explained by the all the factors. If a particular variable has more communality, it means that the extracted factors are able to explain low variance in that variable may be more concentrated. If a particular variable has low communality, it means that the extracted factors are not able to explain much variance in that variable. Such variable may be dropped from analysis.

Total Variance Explained:

The "Total Variance Explained" table below shows the *eigen values*, which are the proportion of total variance in all the variables which is accounted for by that factor.

Table 1.4 Total variance explained

Component	Initial Eigen values			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	7.149	26.478	26.478	7.149	26.478	26.478	3.139	11.627	11.627
2	2.244	8.311	34.790	2.244	8.311	34.790	2.661	9.854	21.481
3	1.734	6.424	41.213	1.734	6.424	41.213	2.473	9.159	30.640
4	1.590	5.890	47.103	1.590	5.890	47.103	2.234	8.275	38.915
5	1.444	5.348	52.451	1.444	5.348	52.451	2.165	8.017	46.932
6	1.204	4.458	56.909	1.204	4.458	56.909	1.987	7.358	54.289
7	1.078	3.991	60.900	1.078	3.991	60.900	1.785	6.611	60.900
8	.998	3.696	64.596						
9	.888	3.289	67.885						
10	.835	3.092	70.977						
11	.778	2.880	73.857						
12	.759	2.810	76.666						

13	.656	2.430	79.096					
14	.625	2.315	81.411					
15	.559	2.069	83.480					
16	.516	1.911	85.391					
17	.497	1.841	87.232					
18	.445	1.649	88.881					
19	.426	1.578	90.459					
20	.408	1.511	91.970					
21	.390	1.443	93.413					
22	.378	1.399	94.812					
23	.353	1.306	96.118					
24	.306	1.132	97.250					
25	.279	1.033	98.283					
26	.251	.930	99.213					
27	.212	.787	100.000					

Source: Computed from primary data.

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis:

From the above table, it is found that 27 variables are reduced in to 7 predominant factors with cumulative variance 60.900 and the individual variances 11.627, 9.854, 9.159, 8.275, 8.017, 7.358, 6.611. This leads to factor segmentation through variable loading process. This clearly indicates the very existence of 7 major factors with their respective variable loadings as expressed in the table given below with their communalities

TABLE 1.5 ROTATED FACTOR LOADINGS and COMMUNALITIES

S. No	Variables	Factors							Communalities
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
1	Cleanliness						.729		.654
2	Seating arrangements						.814		.749
3	Ventilation				.691				.592
4	Travelling with luggage				.689				.598
5	Easy boarding				.517				.608
6	Timing of stoppage during journey					.705			.623
7	Departure time					.639			.555
8	Arrival time	.544							.585
9	Waiting time	.736							.703
10	Frequency of services	.708							.630
11	Cancellation of trips	.814							.713
12	Breakdown of vehicles	.723							.618
13	Bus driver following traffic						.530		.523
14	Safety provisions								.473
15	Smoothness of ride			.606					.556
16	Noise level of buses			.520					.509
17	Attending complaints				.519				.593
18	Behavior of conductor towards passengers							.848	.797
19	Returning the balance amount							.782	.698
20	Time allowed for boarding and deboarding			.558					.500
21	Delay due to checking tickets			.576					.495
22	Overloading of passengers			.672					.571

23	Festival services		.706					.598
24	Rush hour service		.822					.755
25	Lean hour services		.747					.626
26	Late night services		.586					.509
27	Early morning services					.573		.613

Source: Computed from primary data

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis:

From Table 1.5 it is clear that there are seven factors to be considered for Passengers Perception towards service Quality in Himachal Road Transport Corporation Ltd. (HRTC) and the above communality table indicates the range of variables of all the 27 variables from 0.473 to 0.797 and implies that the variances range from 47.3% to 79.7%. This forces to reduce 27 variables in to 7 predominant factors.

4. INTERPRETATION OF FACTORS

By looking the highest correlation value between early variables with latent factors, it will get a new factor that is the aggregation of previous variable. In other words, from 27 variables, after the initial stages of factoring and rotation 7 factors are left. Next steps, by looking at the variables that make up each of these latent factors, then it can be given a new name to simplify the interpretation process. According Dillon (1984), naming of factor is based on value (λ) of the largest variable factor. If two or more variables have the same value (λ), then the process for giving the name is based on priority (1,2,3...), but if the variable is derived from the same attributes, the naming of factor is equal with the name from attributes factor.

Punctuality and regularity (F1):

This name was given to factor 1. The items that strongly correlated with factor 1 are:

Arrival time (.544)

Waiting time (.736)

Frequency of services (.708)

Cancellation of trips (.814)

Breakdown of services (.723)

This is the first factor which consists of five predominant variables which concentrate on taking up the responsibility of transfer of passengers from the boarding points or from bus terminus to reach their destination at quick intervals, punctuality in the timings of departure and arrival of fleet of buses that facilitate the passenger to get frequent information about the arrival and departure of buses, sign boards and display screens at the bus terminus and working quality and conditions. These kinds of questions are discussed in a constructive way to confirm the service quality. This factor mainly focuses on possibility and practices followed to transfer the passengers from one bus to other bus while the earlier one gets breakdown, at the time of travel

Social responsibility (F2):

This name was given to factor 2. The items that strongly correlated with factor 2 are

Festival services(.706)

Rush hour services(.822)

This is the second factor which consists of four predominant variables which concentrate on services provided in festivals, rush hour, lean hour and public bus transport services offered at late night hours therefore These kinds of questions are discussed in a constructive way to confirm the service quality.

Convenience (F3)

This name was given to factor 3. The items that strongly correlated with factor 3 are

Smoothness(.606)

Noise level of buses(.520)

Time allowed for boarding and deboarding(.558)

Delay due to ticket checking (.576)

Over loading of passengers(.672)

The factor “ *Convenience*” means how the passengers are comfortable with the availability of the seats and smoothness, getting bus tickets either at ticket counter or through online , how they feel comfortable with the existing security system which was already installed at buses. bus drivers to reach the required destinations within the scheduled time.

Level of comfort(F4)

This name was given to factor 4. The items related are:

Ventilation (.691)

Travelling with luggage(.689)

Easy boarding(.517)

Attending complaints(.519)

The factor ‘Level of Comfort’ means, how the passengers are comfortable with the availability of physical feature of the buses, how they feel comfortable with the existing security system which was already installed at bus terminus or at buses. This factor mainly focuses on 4 important variables which may also decide the passengers’ satisfaction and also lead to enhance the service quality in the bus transport sector. It also includes the facilities which are connected with luggage storage, easy boarding, attending complaints by department.

Accessibility (F5)

The name was given to factor 5. The items that strongly correlated with factor 5 are:

Timing of stoppage during journey(.705)

Departure time(.639)

Early morning services(.573)

In addition to the entire above mentioned factor, it is also an important factor which may play the vital role in the field of public bus transportation. This factor includes three important variables such as what time bus departs how far the terminus is from the respondents’ house or work place, how much time it takes for stoppage, and are they providing early morning services.

Comfort and Safety (F6)

This name was given to factor 6. The items that strongly correlated with factor 6 are:

Cleanliness(.729)

Seating arrangements(.814)

Bus driver following traffic(.530)

The factor Comfort and Safety means, how the passengers feel safe during travel and in the bus, safety tools installed in the bus, driving quality. This factor primarily includes the following important aspects such as keeping the buses clean, maintaining seating arrangement, In addition to it, comfort level includes how the passengers feel at bus terminus as well as within the bus which may also lead the passenger to get enough satisfaction and feel safe while they wait at terminus Comfort may also come only by way of effective response of a service personnel either at terminus or at bus, security

system which was practiced at bus terminus etc.

Responsiveness(F7)

This name was given to factor 7. The items that strongly correlated with factor 7 are:

Behavior of conductor towards passengers(.848)

Returning the balance amount(.782)

The seventh important factor which consists of only two variable that is 'responsiveness' which means response of work force of the service providers i.e. Service Personnel at enquiry reservation counters , enquiry and ticket sales counters and other authorities who are responsible for the department of concerned sectors. In simple words, this factor is connected with, how the service personnel's of a particular service provider respond to others or passengers in all aspects. How they behave with passengers, are they able to return the balance amount of passengers.

5. SUGGESIONS

- There should be uniformity in the frequency of buses.
- Proper maintenance of buses and bus stands should be required to retain the existing and attracting the new passengers for the survival of transport industries in the long run.
- First aid facilities have to be made both in bus stations and in buses.
- The conductors need to bring more "coins /change" to return to the passengers.
- The time table boards showing timings of arrivals and departures of buses should be carefully displayed. The boards should be clear and simple so that there will be no confusion to passengers.
- More security personnel have to be deployed where there is more of passenger traffic.
- Provision of more number of buses to cover interior places and village areas, this also should be done during peak hours of travel to avoid over crowd and accidents due to that.
- Certain seats have to be reserved for the aged people and also for physically challenged persons. The seats have to be painted to indicate that the seats meant for them.

6. CONCLUSION

The effect of present study shows that the performance of Himachal roadways is not up to the mark and the passengers' preferences and needs are not fully satisfied. Road transport system has to pay more attention to improve the factors such as comfort level, luggages, concessions, punctuality and cleanliness etc., Service quality of and the road transport system could be enhanced by paying attention to the preferences and needs of the passengers. Passengers claim that buses do not depart on time from stations, buses carry beyond the specified capacity. On the other hand, some drivers and conductors lack professional ethics in serving customers and they also not obey the speed limit set according the nature of the roads. Lastly, passengers worried about the lack of appropriate responses for their complaints from concerned personnel in the bus stations and public transport departments.

The study reveals that there should be a lot to be done to increase the satisfaction level of passengers in public transport sector in the region. If all the suggestions of the study are considered by the roadways, then it is hope that it will excel in the near future.

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