

## Passenger Responses on Kerala State Road Transport Corporation, Thrissur District

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Mobility is an important behavioural trait of modern man. Provision for continuous uninterrupted mobility of man and materials is a basic necessity of the society. Transport service bridges places and reduces distance. Easy mobility saves time and energy. It triggers economic activities and provides for employment and livelihood. It links up villages, towns, countries and continents. It broadens the market, fosters greater factor utilization, promote greater methods of outsourcing, recreations, civilization etc. In fact transportation services are part and parcel of modern life. It is hardly tough to think of a day without mobility. The infrastructure facility particular the quality of transportation facility plays an important role in assessing the economic growth of any country. The Government of India recognised in its planned development programmes that roads are an inevitable infrastructure for the socio- economic development of the country.

Public road transportation system is one of the most demanded facilities in Kerala. In Kerala public passenger road transportation system means Kerala State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC). KSRTC is owned by Government of Kerala. It makes it more appealing and trustworthy for men and women round the clock. KSRTC is known well for its dedicated, selfless, reliable service. People attach lot of trust with the organisation considering the loyalty of its staff over decades. It was established half a century ago to cater to the needs and requirements of modern life and to provide quality services to the community at reasonable rate. It was officially converted into the present form and modality during 1965. Till then we had a princely managed one in its place. Today KSRTC is having more than 6000 busses and schedules, more than 34000 employees, and operates more than 16 lakh kilometers a day. KSRTC is the biggest Passenger Road Transportation System in Kerala.

**Statement of the Problem:** It was about five decades ago that the KSRTC was formed to serve the country. Transportation system is one among the various facilities which had undergone tremendous changes in technology and quality of services across the country. Moreover increase in international transportation and movement of men and material made it mandatory to make services comparable with the one available in other parts of the globe.

KSRTC is one of the most trusted and accepted mode of transport system in Kerala and neighboring States. It operates round the clock, seven days a week and caters to the needs of travellers. Still some people murmur about its cleanliness, timings, cleanliness of bus stand, toilets etc. It is also alleged that, some staff are not cooperative and supportive. The success of any organisation is depended on the level of its customer satisfaction. It is in this context that the present study has been initiated to bring to light the responses of the passengers of KSRTC at the grass root level. Though it is doing well in the society, real measurement could be made only after making a realistic study in the field. For the purposes of this study the term ‘customer’ is defined to mean one who makes use of KSRTC vehicles and other facilities.

**Objectives of the Study:**The Specific objectives of the study are:

1. To evaluate the responses of KSRTC passengers on services.
2. To assess the quality of vehicles and other facilities offered and
3. To study the behavioural aspects of KSRTC staff.

**Scope of the Study:** This study focuses on the passenger's satisfaction level in KSRTC buses. The study is conducted in Thrissur District, Kerala. Responses are collected from passengers residing in Thrissur district and neighboring places. The scope of the study is limited to the responses collected from the passengers who have travelled in KSRTC buses frequently. All staff are amenable to state level transfers and no station is permanent for any, it is contented that all place in Kerala will have similar responses. The quality of buses is same across the state. It is administered equitably centrally from head office.

Thus scope of the study is limited to the respondents from within the geographical limits of Thrissur districts, Kerala. The present study is conducted to assess primarily factors like driving quality of buses, speed, cleanliness, utilities, emergency equipment's/facilities, behavior of conductor, fare, technology adaptation and facilities for physically challenged and age old passengers.

**Methodology:** The study is descriptive and analytical in nature. Both primary and secondary data has been used for the study. The data required for this study are collected from primary and secondary sources. The primary data are collected using structured questionnaires from KSRTC passengers. The study also made use of information from published works like annual reports, publications, journals and reports. The collected data are processed using software's and assessed with percentages and averages. Chi square test is used to test hypothesis.

**The Population, Sampling and the Sample:** The passengers living in the geographical limits of Thrissur district makes the population for the purposes of this study. Only those who use KSRTC as a means of transportation on a regular mode are included in the definition of population for the purposes of this study. Casual travellers and occasional travellers are excluded to ensure matured responses.

Considering population characteristics, population is primarily classified according to gender and age. Samples are ensured from all such sub groups. The study made use of stratified random sampling method on a five point rating scale. Samples are identified on a snow-balling process. Samples are collected equitably from male and female respondents. A

sample of 60 each was collected from male and female components making a totalsample of 120. The study is constrained by the hesitation of respondents and lack of appropriate tools to assess/judge human responses.

### **Analysis and interpretation:**

1. **Seating:** From the study it is learnt that 65% of the respondents are satisfied with the seating position of the buses while 35% are not happy with the seats and seating position available in the busses.
2. **Reservation:** it is learnt that 42% of the respondents are satisfied with the seat reservation system followed by the corporation the rest are of the view that seat reservation mechanism is to be reworked.
3. **Working Conditions of Buses:** It is learnt that 30% of the passengers are satisfied with the working conditions of the serviced buses. 70% are of the view that it is not up to the standard.
4. **Staff Attitude on theft:** 25% of the passengers opined that the staff were cooperative on theft occurred in the buses, while 75% opined that staff reacted passively and showed disregard when approached with a complaint of loss of valuables in the buses.
5. **Driving Quality:** Regarding driving quality and speed 43% of the passengers responded positively and 57% responded against.
6. **Emergency/Utility Facilities:** 13% of the passengers are satisfied with facilities like, First Aid Box, Fire Extinguishers and Drinking Water. 87% of the passengers were highly dissatisfied on these facilities.
7. **Cleanliness:** 28% of the passengers are happy with the present cleanliness of the buses. 72% opined that it is yet to be improved.

8. **Facilities for Physically Challenged and Age Old Passengers:** Regarding facilities for physically challenged and age old passengers, 92% of the respondents opined that the facilities are to be improved.
9. **Fare:** 90% of the passengers are satisfied with the rates charged for travelling. 10% opined that it is little high.
10. **Time Schedules and Punctuality:** 90% of the passengers are happy with the timing, schedules and punctuality of services. While 10% opined against.
11. **Online Facilities:** Regarding online reservation, online reservation status, online updates, online travel particulars, online bus position information, online schedule cancellation information, online payment etc., and 80% of the respondents opined that it is yet to be more digital.
12. **Overall Assessment:** 74% of the passengers are satisfied with the conduct and treatment of bus conductor. 26% are unhappy with it.
13. **Homogeneity of Opinion:** It is understood that both males and females have homogeneity in opinion. The significance of identity in the responses by male and female passengers was tested using  $\chi^2$  and proved that it is significant at 5%.

**Suggestions:** There is a need for more concentration on safety and security, maintenance, time management, level of comforts, technology adaptation, online facilities and behavioral aspects of staff to attract new passengers and to retain the existing passengers. KSRTC should concentrate more on giving quality services at affordable rates with precook in schedules coupled with strict time management. Utility boxes, drinking water facility, emergency equipment's etc. are necessary to meet the unexpected events.

It is too difficult for any service sector to satisfy customers and everyone is aware of the fact that satisfying the bus passengers is a complex task. But it is highly inevitable to satisfy and retain passengers for survival and growth. The corporation may try to understand the

attitude, psychology, expectation and opinion of the passengers and redefine strategy and approaches to maintain existing customers and attract more customers. It is very positive to learn that public place much trust in KSRTC even in the midst of highly sophisticated and air conditioned private buses. It is highly commendable to learn that despite several shortcomings large amount of public opine positively on KSRTC on an average.

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