

Chapter 5: Provision of Good Quality and Hygienic Food***Audit Objective 4: Whether the available catering units provided good quality and hygienic food at affordable rates to different classes of rail users?***

One of the main objectives of Catering Policy 2010 was to provide hygienic, good quality affordable food to the travelling public by adopting the best trade and hospitality industry practices. Ensuring hygiene, establishing sufficient number of catering units to ensure availability of food at the required time, nature of Menu and tariff, availability of sufficient quantity of wholesome and tasty food, standards of kitchen and cooking, quality of service rendered by catering personnel employed, observing best trade practices such as e-catering services are some of the factors which determine the standard of quality of catering services rendered. In order to ensure provision of hygienic and quality food to travelling passengers and improve the on board and static catering services, the Catering Policy 2010 also laid down a monitoring and controlling mechanism. A similar monitoring mechanism has also been prescribed in the new Catering Policy 2017, wherein officials of Railway Board, Zonal Railway and Division have been authorized to inspect kitchen units/mobile catering units and taking penal action for the deficiencies noticed in catering services.

Audit selected 74 stations and 80 trains over all Zonal Railways for reviewing the aspects of quality, hygiene and affordability with respect to all types of catering units on the selected trains and stations. On the selected stations, all static catering units including refreshment rooms, food plazas, food stalls, restaurants etc. were jointly inspected with railway officials to review the service provided to the customers on the stations. Mobile catering units of selected trains, were visited along with railway officials to capture the quality, hygiene and other aspects of catering services provided. The units jointly inspected by Audit along with the Railway officials included static units managed both by Zonal Railways as well as by IRCTC. Similarly, the mobile catering units inspected included pantry cars managed both by Zonal Railways as well as by IRCTC. As such, the issues relating to quality, hygiene and unfair practices have been found in catering units managed both by Zonal Railways as well as IRCTC.

In addition, 1800 passengers on 74 selected stations and 1975 passengers on 80 selected trains were administered survey questionnaire by the audit teams to collect their views on the aspects of quality, hygiene, affordability and availability of catering services as perceived/experienced by them. Information on passenger complaints were also reviewed to assess the effectiveness of the complaint redressal mechanism.

Audit findings on the above aspects are discussed below:

5.1 Hygiene and cleanliness

Joint inspections were undertaken by audit teams along with railway officials at 74 stations and 80 trains, during July to October 2016. The following deficiencies related to hygiene and cleanliness in catering units were noticed:

- Purified water was not available on 21 stations¹ in 11 Zonal Railways (September to October 2016).
- Instead of available water purifiers, unpurified water straight from tap was used in preparation of beverages – coffee, tea and soups in 22 trains².
- The base kitchen of licensee of Zonal Railway for catering on board services in train no.12033-34 (Kanpur – New Delhi – Kanpur) of NCR, operation at Kanpur were using general railway water supply instead of separate or additional cleaning of water for cooking purpose.
- Waste-bins of prescribed specification in adequate numbers were not available on 28 stations of 11 Zonal Railways, which included Bhubaneswar, Cuttack, Titlagarh (ECoR), Samastipur (ECR), Sheikhpura, Howrah (ER), Agra Fort, Allahabad, Gwalior (NCR), Jodhpur (NWR), Kharagpur, Rourkela, Bokaro, Tata Nagar, Adra (SER), Gadag (SWR), Jaipur, Jodhpur (NWR), Chennai, Coimbatore, Kanyakumari (SR), Guwahati, New Tinsukia, New BongaigaonJn, Rangapara North Jn. (NFR) and Ludhiana, Lucknow (NR).



Fig 11: Catering Personnel not wearing hand gloves while handling food items in Cell Kitchen/SBC, SWR (05.10.2016)



Fig 12: Purified water not used for Pantry Services in Goa Express, SWR (18.10.2016)



Fig 13: Food items kept at floor at the Chhapra, NER (04.10.2016)



Fig 14: Bucket of Drinking water and beverages kept in the vestibule near toilet area in Pashchim Express, WR (29.10.2016)

¹Karjat (CR), Rajendranagar (ECR), Agra Fort and Allahabad (NCR), Kharagpur, Rourkela, Bokaro Steel City, Tata Nagar, Adra (SER), Gadag (SWR), Jaipur (NWR), Chennai, Coimbatore (SR), KamakhyaJn, New TinsukiaJn, New BongaigaonJn(NFR), Kazhipet (SCR), Ludhiana, Pathankot (NR), base kitchens and Jan Ahaar in Mumbai Central and Churchgate (WR).

²SealdahRajdhani Exp.-12313, Howrah-Ranchi Shatabdi Express- 12019, Kanpur-New Delhi-Kanpur Express - 12033/12034, Swaraj Exp.-12472, YeshwantpurNizamuddinSamparkKranti Exp.- 12629,Nizamuddin-Goa Express-12780, Yashvantpur-Jabalpur Express-12193/94, Howrah New JalpaiguriShatabdi Exp-12041/12042, Bikaner-Coimbatore Express-22475, Ajmer Sealdah Express-12988, Ajmer-Puri Express-18422, Upasana Express-12327, Kolkata Rajdhani Express-12301, SealdahDuronto Exp.-12260, PorvotarSamparkKranti Exp.-12501,Kamakhya Yesvantpur Exp.-12552, NizamuddinMadgaon Rajdhani-22414, Chennai Coimbatore shatabdi express-12243, Chennai Duranto express-12269, Tamilnadu Exp-12622, 12925 – Paschim Express, 12955—Jaipur Superfast Express

- In three trains (12834, 12629, 12193/94), no refuse bins were provided with plastic bags to collect the waste.
- Wastages arising out of static and mobile catering units were not collected in different coloured bins (Green, Black and White) and were disposed of along with other wastages of nominated stations in 13 stations of five Zonal Railways including Rourkela, Tata Nagar, Adra (SER), Chennai (SR), Jodhpur, Jaipur (NWR), Nizamuddin, New Delhi, Lucknow (NR), Mumbai Central, Churchgate, Jamnagar, Nandurbar (WR).
- Waste bins were not found covered, not emptied regularly and not washed, which led to accumulation of garbage in bins in 23 stations in 10 Zonal Railways which include Guwahati, New Tinsukia Jn. New Bongaigaon Jn., Rangapara North Jn. (NFR), Karjat (CR), Bhubaneswar, Cuttack, Titlagarh (ECoR), Samastipur, Sheikpura, Rajendranagar (ECR), Agra Fort, Allahabad, (NCR), Gondia (SECR), Kharagpur, Rourkela, Bokaro Steel City, Tata Nagar, Adra (SER), Gadag, Bangalore (SWR), Jaipur (NWR), Kanyakumari (SR), Ludhiana, Lucknow (NR), Nandurbar, Mumbai Central, Vadodara (WR).
- Hand gloves and/or tower caps were not being used by catering personnel handling the food stuff in various catering units on 32 stations of 13 Zonal Railways, viz. Chhapra, Gorakhpur, Lucknow, Kathgodam, Basti, Salempur (NER), Karjat (CR), Titlagarh (ECoR), Samastipur (ECR), Agra Fort, Allahabad, Gwalior (NCR), Gondia (SECR), Kharagpur, Rourkela, Bokaro Steel city, Tata Nagar, Adra (SER), Gadag, Bangalore Cantt, Bangalore (SWR), Jaipur (NWR), Kanyakumari (SR), Mehboobnagar, Kazhipet, Secunderabad (SCR), Guwahati, New Tinsukia Jn., Kamakhya Jn., New Bongaigaon Jn., Rangapara North Jn. (NFR), Mumbai Central (WR) stations. Catering personnel were also not found using gloves on 15 trains³ during joint inspection.
- Food stuff were not covered to protect them from flies, insects and dust in three stations (Titlagarh-ECoR, Agra Fort-NCR and Pathankot-NR) and in four trains (Yeshvantpur Nizamuddin Sampark Kranti Exp.-12629, Nizamuddin Goa Express-12780, Bikaner Coimbatore Express-22475, Ajmer Sealdah Express-12988). Food stuffs were kept on the floor and near toilet area, vestibule in three trains (Mumbai Central Jaipur Express-12955, Paschim Express-12925, Visaka Express-17015).

³Yeshvantpur Nizamuddin Sampark Kranti (12629), Nizamuddin Goa Express (12780), Jabalpur-Katra-Jabalpur (11449/50), Bikaner Coimbatore Express (22475), Chhattisgarh Exp (18238), Gondia Raigarh Jan Shatabdi (12070), Kanlinur Trivendrum Janshatabdi Express (12081), Calicut Trivendrum Janshatabdi Express (12075), Ajmer-Puri Exp (18422), Upasana Express (12327), Kamakhya Yeshvantpur AC Exp. (12552), Chennai Coimbatore Shatabdi (12243), Chennai Duranto (12269), Tamilnadu Exp (12622)

- Valid medical fitness certificate in respect of catering personnel were not available on some of the catering units checked on stations including LokmanyaTilak Terminal, Karzat, (CR), Samastipur, Barauni (ECR), Agra Fort, Gwalior, (NCR), Gondia (SECR), Gadag (SWR), Chennai (SR), Lucknow (NR), Secunderabad(SCR) and in two trains (12081 Kannur-TrivendrumJanShatabdhi Express and 12313 SealdahRajdhani Express).
- In base kitchen, static units and mobile units, cleaning schedule to be followed was not available at many locations test checkedNo separate sink for washing and proper cleaning of the cooked vessels have been kept in the licensee base kitchen of NCR for catering on board service in Train No. 12033-34 (Kanpur-New Delhi-Kanpur Shatabdi).
- In 10trains (18422 – Ajmer Puri Express, 12565 – Bihar SamparkKranti, 12553 Vaishali Express, 12395 – Rajendernagar Patna to Ajmer, 12501 – Porvotar Sampark Kranti express, 15651/52- LohitExpress12472, 12834, 12863, 12081), no proper storage arrangements for raw materials, packed items and other ingredients at pantry car of trains was seen.
- During joint inspection of Train No. 12583 Lucknow – AnandVihar Terminal Double Decker (NER), it was seen that a passenger who had ordered a cutlet, noticed an iron nail, while consuming it as shown in the photograph.
- As per the Complaint book available at on-board catering service in Train No. 12033-34 (Kanpur-New Delhi-Kanpur Shatabdi) of NCR, a complaint of iron nail in the breakfast was made. But the final remedial action on this complaint was not found recorded in course of joint inspection.
- Cockroaches and rats were seen in Pantry Car in Train No.12260 (Duranto Express-ER) and 12269 (Duranto Express-SR).



Fig. 15: Nail in cutlet served to the passenger in Train no. 12583 Lucknow – AnandVihar Terminal Double Decker (16 October 2016)

Hygiene and cleanliness in respect of the food stuff served was not ensured by the railways on stations and in trains as observed in the joint inspections undertaken by Audit.

During the passenger satisfaction survey conducted by Audit, 75per cent passengers opined hygiene and cleanliness of catering services as average or poor.

5.2 Unfair practices being followed in catering services

During joint inspections audit checked the position on selected stations and trains, the following was observed:

- Bills were not given for the food items served in mobile units in all the selected 80 trains. Printed menu cards with tariff for the list of food items sold in the mobile units were not available with waiters and Catering Managers, in all trains jointly inspected except trains of SER. Non-availability of menu cards enhances the chances of overcharging by the catering staff.
- In SER, however, due to adoption of different criteria for fixation of tariff in the menu, the passengers found it difficult to distinguish between standard items and *a-la-carte* items leading to overcharging. Out of 462 complaints brought to notice of CCM office, during 2015-16, 246 complaints pertained to overcharging. During the passenger satisfaction survey conducted in five stations and in five trains by Audit, 152 out of 250 passengers felt that there was overcharging/forced sales by waiters, bearers and commission vendors. At Agra and Jhansi (NCR), unapproved brands such as Badri Tasty Nut (Namkeen) weighing 36 gram not having FSSAI license was kept for supply to passengers.
- During the passenger satisfaction survey conducted by Audit, 36 *per cent* passengers felt that they were being overcharged for the food served and 21 *per cent* felt that the rates were not reasonable.
- As per Para 2806 Indian Railway Commercial Manual, the quantity of cooked rice, chappatis, vegetables etc. served should be according to the standard measurement prescribed by Railway Board/Zonal Railways. Normally, the price list schedule indicates the measurement (gram for solid food stuff and ml for beverages like coffee, tea and soup) per unit. During joint inspections conducted by Audit during July 2016 to October 2016, it was seen that food stuff served was less than the prescribed scheduled quantity:
 - Weight of one piece paneer was found to be 3 grams against the prescribed standard of 5 grams in licensee base kitchen for catering on board service in Train no. 12033-34 Kanpur - New Delhi Shatabdi (NCR).
 - In the Food Plaza of Gwalior station (NCR), against the scheduled weight of 175 grams, the actual weight of Poori was only 130 grams.
 - Weights of vegetable sandwich was checked and shortage of 25 gm was noticed invariably at all six stalls of licensee at Agra Fort (NCR).
 - Deficiency /shortage in weight of 10 grams each item i.e. dhokla and bread pakoda was found at Gwalior station (NCR).

- Quantity of ice cream (*Vadilal*) served was 90 ml instead of contractual quantity of 100 ml. Likewise, quantity of Curd (*Nova*) was also 90 gms instead of 100 gms. Sachet of 10 gm Tomato Ketchup was served instead of 15 gms. The quantity of *Nutty Grietty* branded almond served was 17 gms instead of 20 gms in Train no. 12313 SealdahRajdhani Express (ER).
- *Parathaweighing* 95 gms was served instead of 100 gms and 90 gms *Dal* instead of 100 gms in Train no.12019 Howrah-Ranchi Shatabdi Express (ER).
- During the passenger satisfaction survey conducted by Audit, 39 per cent passengers stated that they felt that the quantity of food served was less than prescribed. 20 per cent found the quantity to be inadequate.
- ECoR allowed four popular pan-India brands, viz., *Aquafina*, *Kinley*, *Bisleri* and *Bailey* to be sold by the catering units in case of non-availability of RailNeer. However, sale of unapproved brand of water such as *Fress*, *Sanjeevani*, *Amust*, *X-Liant*, *FAM Life* and overcharging of Packaged Drinking Water (PDW) were prevalent in ECoR. Unapproved Packaged drinking water '*Gallons*' was sold by Food Plaza catering unit of IRCTC contractor at Agra Fort Station (NCR).
- The loss due to unauthorised operation of license of platform vending to the Food Plaza on account of deficient fixing of license fee and awarding license without bidding process at Jhansi station (NCR) was ₹ 4.14 crore, as assessed by Audit.
- In New Jalpaiguri Jn. (NFR), out of 56 catering units, 51 were un-authorized units, of which 14 units were yet to be evicted despite cases been decided in favour of NFR and 19 IRCTC licensees were not paying license fees.
- At Agra Fort station, in all the seven licensee stalls and five trolleys it was observed that only petha, pera, dalmuth and gazak PAD items were available as against notified PAD items.
- The PAD articles to be sold at Departmental Units require fixing of rate contract with authorized seller of the PAD articles. The PAD articles would be procured for Departmental Catering Units at rate contract and sold at the MRP with the difference being the margin. It was seen that no rate contract for procurement of the PAD items existed over NCR for the period 22 March 2015 to 15 October 2016. Thus, no PAD items were officially sold at the Departmental Catering Units of NCR during this period. However, these were sold unofficially.
- Para 2807 of Indian Railway Commercial Manual provides that articles to be sold and price of each such commodity will be prescribed by Railway Administration such that articles are being sold at prescribed rates and

passengers are not being over charged. These articles include biscuits, packed products, sweets, etc. are categorized as Proprietary Article Depot (PAD) items which are sold at licensee units as well as departmental catering units. It was seen that in NCR, shortlisting is done for specific brand by the Zonal Railways, but price of the product is not specified. The authorised owners of the brand are permitted to sell the product at MRP subject to the condition that Maximum Retail Price (MRP) is not more than the MRP of the same product sold in the open market. In NCR, it was seen that the PAD articles were sold in the railway stations with MRP with weight and prices different from the open market, wherein per unit cost sale price in railway premises is significantly higher. For example, during joint inspection in Allahabad station, it was found that Chips of the brand 'Lays' weighing 29.5 grams was being sold at Neelam Food Plaza at the price of ₹18. Identical product outside railway premises weighing 30 grams costs only ₹ 10. Also Haldiram chips were being sold⁴ on railway premises, in packets of 35 grams at ₹ 10.00 and 42.5 gram at ₹ 15.00. Similarly, in NFR, it was found that packed items of 'lays chips', 'Vadilal ice-cream' at a higher rate, marked as 'specially packed for selected channel only' were being sold in trains and static units. The weight of 'lays chips' was 29.5 grams and MRP was printed as ₹ 18, whereas, a packet of 30 grams of Lays Chips of same flavour is available in the market at ₹ 10 only. During exit conference NCR Administration stated that they have issued a major penalty charge sheet in the case pointed by Audit. However, the issue has not been controlled as the unauthorized vending operation were going on with the connivance of illegal criminal elements. They further stated that all efforts will be made to control the same.

- It was further seen that in NCR because of sale of PAD items of some companies at a price higher than the MRP the sale of PAD items was banned from 1 May 2015 (Kurkure, Lays Chips, Namkeen Laher, Laher Moong Dal, Butter Bite Biscuits Priyagold, Priyagold CNC Biscuit, Biscuit Elaychi Cremica, Biscuit Orange Cremica, Good Day Biscuit Britannia, Taka Tak Chatpata Masala Haldiram, Chips Haldiram and Frooti) for products of M/s Pepsico India Holding Pvt. Ltd., M/s Surya Food & Agro Ltd., M/s Bector's Food Specialities Ltd., M/s Britannia Industries Ltd. and M/s Haldiram Pvt. Ltd. However, on request of M/s Britannia Industries Ltd. the ban was withdrawn for all companies and without recovering the penalty of ₹25,000 levied on each of the five entities. During exit conference, NCR Administration agreed that despite the levy of penalty, instances of overcharging and exploitation of passengers continued.

⁴ On packet, mentioned as 'Sale for INST'

- Valid police clearance certificate in respect of catering personnel were not available on 26 stations on 12⁵ Zonal Railways and in eight⁶ trains.

The above deficiencies indicated that the contractors compromised on value for money in respect of food items served to passengers and action taken by Railway Administration for the deviation from the quality standards was not effective. As a result, the contractors continue to sell unhygienic and low quality food at stations.

5.3 Quality of food and checks and controls for quality assurance

Joint inspections were undertaken by Audit teams along with railway officials at 74 stations and 80 trains between July 2016 and October 2016. The following deficiencies in respect of quality of food served were noticed:

- In 14 trains (12293, 12153, 18422, 12434, 12472, 22475, 12629, 12780, 11449/50, 15959/60, 12041/42, 15651/52, 12501/02, 12551/52), no periodical checks were done for the foodstuff supplied to the passengers.
- Articles found unsuitable for human consumption, contaminated foodstuffs, recycled foodstuffs, shelf life expired packaged and bottled items, unauthorized brands of water bottles, etc., were offered for sale in station premises/trains on Titlagarh, (ECoR), Samastipur (ECR), Howrah (ER), Agra Fort, Allahabad, Gwalior (NCR), Jodhpur (NWR), Gondia (SECR), New Delhi (IR), New Delhi (IRCTC), Pathankot (NR), Gorakhpur, Rourkela, Bokaro Steel City, Tata Nagar, Adra (SER) Chhapra, Gorakhpur, Lucknow, Basti, Salempur, Manduadih (NER), Gadag (SWR), Guwahati, Kamakhya Jn., New Tinsukia Jn. and New Bongaigaon Jn., Rangapara North Jn. (NFR).
- In NFR, local made biscuits, cakes without any shelf life and date of manufacture were found to be sold in the station premises.
- Some items of cell kitchen i.e. Atta, Besan, Refined soya oil, Red chilly powder was collected for sample and sent to approved laboratory at Allahabad (NCR) during April 2016. Atta was found to be substandard and NCR imposed a fine of ₹ 2000/- against the licensee, but recovery of the same was not made.

⁵Wadi, Karjat (CR) Cuttack, Titlagarh (ECoR), Asansol, Howrah (ER), Agra Fort, Allahabad, Gwalior (NCR), Chhapra, Gorakhpur, Lucknow, Kathgodam, Basti, Salempur (NER), Gadag (SWR), Kanyakumari (SR), Pathankot (NR), Kazipet (SCR), Guwahati, Kamakhya Jn. New Tinsukia Jn. New Bongaigaon Jn. Rangapara North Jn. (NFR) station, Nandurbar and Somnath (WR)

⁶Train No. 18422 (ECoR) and 15959/60, 12041/42, 15651/52, 12501/02, 12551/52 (NFR), TSV unit of Train No. 12195/12196 (Agra Fort- Ajmer Inter City SF Express) run and managed by NWR and Licensee base kitchen of NCR for catering in Train No. 12033-34 (Kanpur – New Delhi- Kanpur Shatabdi), operating at Kanpur

- At Bokaro Steel City station, SER, the shelf life of the flavored milk sold had expired, as seen during joint inspection.
- At Agra, catering units were run and managed by IRCTC Licensee. In these catering units sample for test checks of quality of Petha was collected by NCR Administration during May 2016 and sent to approved laboratory, Allahabad and unsatisfactory result (i.e. fungal growth around the petha pieces) of test check was received. Chief Medical Superintendent/Agra Cantt. has intimated Divisional Commercial Manager/Agra Cantt. to take action against licensee towards unsatisfactory result, but action was yet to be taken.
- In WR, deficiencies in quality of malaipaneer, dressed broiler chicken, and refined oil were pointed out by the designated commercial staff during inspections. However, Railway Administration had not initiated any action against the contractors for these lapses.
- Unsold Parathas around 100 pieces were found in the base kitchen of Zonal Railway for catering in train no.12033-34 (Kanpur – New Delhi – Kanpur) of NCR which can be reused/recycled as the staff could not explain the justification for its further use. Moreover, there is no mechanism to ensure that unsold/waste foods are not recycled.
- Contaminated oil was found in an open state in the inspected base kitchen of train no.12033-34 (Kanpur- New Delhi–Kanpur) of NCR. Accordingly, the chances of its re-use after compromising healthy and hygienic parameters of license contract cannot be ruled out.
- As on date of joint inspection by audit, FSSAI-2006 certification No. 20011909000698 in favour M/s Classic Caterers obtained for TSV unit of Train No. 12195/12196 (Agra Fort- Ajmer Inter City SF Express), run and managed by NWR, was found valid only up to 16 December 2015 and no renewal was done thereafter.
- FSSAI – 2006 certificate for operation of this base kitchen run by M/s Brandavan Food Products of NCR for catering in Train No. 12033-34 (Kanpur – New Delhi-Kanpur Shatabdi) had not been obtained as seen during joint inspection.
- During the passenger satisfaction survey conducted by Audit, 53 *per cent* passengers felt that the quality, taste and condition of food supplied needed improvement and 21 *per cent* felt the same to be poor.



Fig. 16: One item of flavored milk was not within the shelf life at Licensed Catering unit of Bokaro station, SER (20 October 2016)

Clause 20.1.2 of Catering Policy 2010 prescribes that the quality of catering services should be monitored through inspections and quality checks. Railway Board issued instructions (October 2013 and December 2013) for inspection of on-board catering services by officers with a view to ensure perceptible improvement in catering services rendered. The system of food quality checks at departmental and contract catering units of Zonal Railways and IRCTC was checked and the following was noticed:

5.3.1 Checks carried out by Chief Health Inspectors and Assistant Health Inspectors

Rules⁷ prescribe checks to be conducted for ensuring quality control of foodstuff sold by the catering units. During 2013-14 to 2015-16 for static and mobile catering units, shortfalls were noticed in collection of sample by Chief Health Inspectors (CHI) and Assistant Health Officers (AHO), who are also designated as Food Safety Officers (FSO).

Audit reviewed the position of checks conducted by CHI and FSO of Zonal Railways during the period 2013-14 to 2015-16 and noticed that

- Against the total 38489 food samples due to be collected for checks, 41896 food samples were collected.
- Though total number of samples collected was more than the samples due, in ten Zonal Railways (NCR, SCR, SECR, NR, NFR, NWR, ECR, SR, SER and WR) shortfalls in collection of food samples were noticed ranging between 11 samples (SER) and 1233 samples (NR). On these ten Zonal Railways, total shortfall in collection of samples was 4224.
- Out of the total 41896 food samples collected for checking, 1353 samples failed during the test.
- In five Zonal Railways (NR, NWR, SR, WR and NER) action taken against the concerned agencies where samples had failed, were not significant.
- In five Zonal Railways, action were taken against the agencies on failure of samples during the test. However, in two Railways (NFR and ECR), no action was taken against the agency where food samples failed during the test.

Annexure 8

Thus, checks and controls prescribed for check of quality were not used effectively.

5.3.2 Inspections carried out by Commercial Officers of Zonal Railways and IRCTC

⁷Para 1010-B (General Instructions) of Indian Railway Medical Manual (Volume II)

During the inspections of the static and mobile catering units conducted by the commercial officers 2337 observations mainly on hygiene, quantity of food served, Menu & Tariff, cooking & kitchen, e-catering service and service by the catering personnel were observed during 2013-14 to 2015-16:

Category	Departmental	IRCTC
Hygiene	354	33
Quantity of food served	217	8
Menu & Tariff	376	42
Cooking & Kitchen	318	76
E-catering service	10	0
Catering personnel service	903	0
Total	2178	159

Based on these observations, concerned licensees were warned/advised and in respect of IRCTC licensees, Zonal Railways sent these Reports to IRCTC for further action.

During inspection carried out by Railway Officials on 10 October 2014, for the train no. 12625/26 (Kerala Express - Satyam Caterers) overcharging for food served by the catering service provider was noticed. During inspection by the Railway Officials on 17 June 2015 for the Train No. 12621/22 (Tamilnadu Express - Satyam Caterers) overpricing of food items, sale of unapproved water bottles, supply of lesser quantity of food, improper disposal of garbage etc. were noticed. Satyam Caterers were holding 41 contracts for static/mobile catering units over Zonal railways as well as IRCTC. Similar aspects were noticed in respect of IRCTC contractors for Train No. 12625/26 (Kerala Express - K M Musthafa). Show cause notices were issued and fines were imposed.

5.3.3 ISO Certification for catering units

It is envisaged in the Catering Policy 2010 that Zonal Railways should develop the state-of-art technology for rendering catering services to travelling passengers and take steps to get ISO 22000⁸ certification for all major catering units including base kitchens. The ISO certifications should be checked frequently to ensure that those are not outdated. Clause 4 of the Catering Policy 2010 required all major catering units to obtain ISO 22000 certification. Audit observed that only 1.07 per cent of major units managed by Zonal Railways and 70 per cent of units managed by IRCTC were ISO 22000 certified as on 31 March 2016. In 42 IRCTC units, the ISO certification was not updated.

Annexure 9 a and b

⁸ISO 22000 sets out the requirements for a food safety management system and can be certified to. It maps out what an organization needs to do to demonstrate its ability to control food safety hazards in order to ensure that food is safe. It can be used by any organization regardless of its size or position in the food chain.

As per Para 1.2.6 of SBD, 'Licensee shall acquire and hold a valid ISO 22000 certification within 6 months from the date of functioning of kitchen and subsequently for the entire duration of the License'. Review of contract agreement and case files in WR revealed that licensees of 17 pantry cars out of 18 had not complied with the condition of setting up of base kitchen even 25 to 35 months after the date of award of contract. None of the contractors had obtained and submitted ISO 22000 certificates till August 2016 despite three years having elapsed since award of contract.

During Exit Conference, Railway Board stated (February 2017) that in Rajdhani, Shatabdi and Duranto trains, passengers have no option but to accept the food supplied. They stated that trial for optional catering services was started in June 2016 in two trains for 45 days where five *per cent* passengers opted out. The issue of further implementation of optional catering was under examination. They felt that this would improve the performance of the contractors for supply of quality food items. Passengers would also get an option to book catering through e-catering facility or any other catering services.

5.4 Passenger satisfaction surveys conducted by Zonal Railways

The Catering Policy 2010 envisaged conducting of passenger satisfaction surveys by the Zonal Railways. Accordingly, Railway Board instructed (July 2011) to bring in place a system of obtaining feedback from travelling passengers and rate the services provided. Railway Board also instructed that the feedback from the passengers of Rajdhani, Duranto and Shatabdi should be taken once in a month and from the passengers of Mail/Express once in three months.

The feedback given by the passengers during the surveys conducted by the Zonal Railways revealed that out of 37376 passengers, 11 *per cent* graded the service as 'average' or 'poor' and 44 *per cent* graded the services as 'good'. However, as discussed in Para 5.5, a large number of complaints were lodged by travelling passengers during the past three years, mainly due to overcharging, bad quality food, misbehavior by catering staff etc.

It was observed that in ECoR, no survey was conducted by Zonal Railways during the period from April 2015 to June 2015. Further, in 17 trains no survey was conducted and out of 52 trains there was shortfall in survey in case of 46 trains in the year 2015-16. In SECR, no regular schedule was followed and random surveys were conducted.

Annexure 10

As per the new Catering Policy 2017, IRCTC will conduct passenger satisfaction survey by means of third party audit instead of Zonal Railways.

5.5 Complaint Redressal system

As per Clause 20.5 of the Catering Policy 2010, a system for complaint redressal for catering services (static and on board services) should be brought to provide proactive and effective complaint redressal system. The position of complaints relating to catering service over IR for the period from 1 March 2013 to 30 September 2016 was as under:

Table 5.2 – Complaints lodged by passengers regarding catering services during the past four years				
Reason	Year wise number of complaints related to catering services over IR			
	Jan to Dec 2013	Jan to Dec 2014	Jan to Dec 2015	Jan to Sep 2016
<i>Over Charging</i>	955	1162	2333	1686
<i>Quality</i>	2724	2986	1957	1125
<i>Quantity</i>	524	381	218	106
<i>Misbehaviour</i>	148	202	181	80
<i>Hygiene</i>	113	107	106	93
<i>Miscellaneous</i>	1387	1469	1360	994
Total	5851	6307	6155	4084
<i>Fined</i>	1976	2480	3028	1922
<i>Warned</i>	2194	2190	1445	1068
<i>Termination</i>	1	3	2	0
<i>Suitably Advised</i>	528	579	777	302
<i>Not Substantiated</i>	680	405	445	221
<i>Disciplinary action against Railway staff</i>	58	107	26	17
<i>Any Other (Such as withdrawn, not verifiable etc.)</i>	414	543	432	554

Audit check revealed that

- During check of complaints over Allahabad division for the period 2015-16, it was noticed that out of 69 complaints lodged, 59 complaints were towards overcharging.
- During the course of joint inspection carried out for 9 stalls and 14 trolleys at Gwalior Station, it was observed that the bills to the travelling public have not been issued by the vendors of those stalls and trolleys. Thus, under/overcharging from Travelling Passengers in case of above stalls/ trolleys remained un-verified.
- In ER, complaints were lodged in Complaint Books kept in Mobile Units of the trains which included issues such as providing stale and rotten food, iron wire found in omelet etc.
- In CR, out of these 572 complaints, nine complaints related to hygiene, two complaints were with respect to quantity of food served, 49 complaints were

regarding quality, taste, condition etc. of food and 512 cases pertained to catering personnel service.

- In NER, 311 complaints received through various sources during 2015-16 were brought to the notice of CCM/NER Office. Out of these complaints, 70, 22, 20, 32 and 167 complaints pertained to hygiene, quality of food, quantity of food, cooking and kitchens and behaviour of catering personnel respectively. No complaint was pending for redressal as on 31 March 2016 on NER.
- In SECR, during 2015-16, 34 complaints received through Toll free numbers of CSMC (Centralized Catering Services Monitoring Cell), two complaints were received through all India help line numbers and one complaint received through twitter account. Required action was taken for all the complaints and no complaint was pending as on 31 March 2016. Out of these 37 complaints, 29 related to overcharging.
- In SWR, out of the 724 complaints brought to the notice of CCM Office of SWR during 2015-16, 36, 30, 435, 13 and 210 complaints pertain to hygiene, quantity of food, quality of food, cooking and kitchens and behaviour of catering personnel respectively and only one complaint was pending for redressal as on 31 March 2016 on SWR.

Audit observed that though a complaint redressal system has been put in place, there is no reduction in the number of complaints over the years. It was also seen that the major share of complains pertained to overcharging and quality issues.

The new Catering Policy 2017 states that the present complaint redressal mechanism shall be strengthened.

