

Service (IRMS) Group 'A' is 2595, out of which there are 484 vacancies as on 01.07.2018. However, these vacancies are filled by engaging Contract Medical Practitioners (CMPs) as a stop gap arrangement till regularly selected Assistant Divisional Medical Officers (ADMOs) join Railways.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) In view of low joining rate of Assistant Divisional Medical Officers (ADMOs), the indents for the Combined Medical Services Examination (CMSE) conducted by UPSC had been increased substantially from 250 to 600 in 2013, 650 in 2014, 600 in 2015 and 600 in 2016. This has improved the joining rate of doctors on Indian Railways. Action has also been taken to fill up the posts of Specialist Divisional Medical Officers (DMOs) in Senior Scale in different specialities by placing indents with UPSC and about 50 such DMOs have already joined. Offer letters have also now been issued to the candidates recommended from the reserve panels by UPSC against the shortfall of DMOs who got offer of appointments but did not join. Zonal Railways are also empowered and are regularly engaging Contract Medical Practitioners as per requirement.

Lower occupancy due to flexi-fare scheme

2856. SHRI N. GOKULAKRISHNAN: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the flexi-fare scheme introduced by the Railways has resulted in lower occupancy;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is also a fact that though the scheme has benefited Railways by more than ₹550 crore, the scheme has forced passengers to look at the option of air travel; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAJEN GOHAIN): (a) and (b) The concept of flexi fare was introduced with effect from 09.09.2016. An analysis of number of passenger booked in Rajdhani, Duronto and Shatabdi Express trains (having flexi fare) during the period from September, 2016 to June, 2018 has revealed that there has been an increase of 0.20% in the number of passengers booked in these trains as compared to corresponding period of previous year.

(c) and (d) During the period from September, 2016 to June, 2018, Railways has been benefited by an additional earnings of approximately ₹1500 crore due to flexi fare.

However, Railways and Airlines are different modes of transport system, which are not comparable in the terms of volume as well as convenience. There is no fixed maximum limit of fare in Airlines whereas Railways have fixed maximum fare throughout the year. Hence Railways fare may or may not be higher than the air fare depending upon the class of travel as well as the peak or lean periods. It is the choice of the passengers to opt either Railway or Airlines for travelling as per their convenience. Alternative train services on normal fare structure are also available over Indian Railways on the routes of most of the Rajdhani, Shatabdi and Duronto trains.

Additional revenue generated due to implementation of flexi-fare

2857. SHRIMATI SHANTA CHHETRI: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether implementation of flexi-fare has resulted in additional pressure on passengers' pocket;
- (b) whether there has been an increase in revenue generated for Railways and if so, the details of increase in percentage; and
- (c) whether flexi-fare implementation and additional revenue generated, if any, has led to better safety standards and passengers comforts and if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAJEN GOHAIN): (a) Under flexi fare scheme, first 10% berths are sold on normal fare, thereafter fare increases by 10% with every 10% of berths sold, subject to maximum limit of 1.5 times in classes Second AC, Sleeper, AC Chair Car and 1.4 times in 3rd AC class. No change has been made in the fare of 1st AC and Executive class.

(b) Yes, Sir. An analysis of earnings in trains having flexi fare, during the period from 9th September, 2016 to 30th June, 2018 has revealed that there has been an increase of 19.22% in the earnings as compared to corresponding period of 9th September, 2014 to 30th June, 2016 (Non-flexi period).

(c) It is a continual endeavour of Indian Railways (IR) to improve safety features and passenger amenities in train coaches. Some of the measures undertaken recently in this regard are: