

Unpopularity of Flexi Fare

3126. SHRIMATI SHANTA CHHETRI: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government has conducted a survey to find out the level of disappointment of the common man after the introduction of flexi fare;
- (b) whether Government is aware that long distance travel in the country by trains is not a luxury but a necessity; and
- (c) whether Government plans to remove flexi fare, if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI PIYUSH GOYAL): (a) to (c) The concept of Flexi Fare has been introduced in Rajdhani, Shatabdi and Duronto trains with effect from 09.09.2016. Under this scheme, the fare increases by 10% with every 10% of berths sold subject to maximum limit of 1.4 times in classes Second AC, Sleeper, Second sitting (reserved), AC Chair Car and 3rd AC class. Flexi fare is not applicable in the fare of 1st AC and Executive class of Rajdhani, Shatabdi and Duronto trains.

Trains with Flexi Fare *i.e.*, Rajdhani, Shatabdi and Duronto constitute only approximately 1.11% of total number of trains over Indian Railways. Number of passengers booked and earning thereon in the trains having Flexi Fare has registered an increase as compared to corresponding period of previous years during Non Flexi Fare period.

Overall occupancy of Rajdhani, Shatabdi & Duronto Express trains during the financial year 2018-19 has been approximately 98%, 76% & 94% respectively. The corresponding occupancy figures during the current financial year 2019-20 (up to May) have been approximately 110%, 83% & 105% respectively for Rajdhani, Shatabdi and Duronto Express trains.

In most of the routes of Rajdhani, Shatabdi and Duronto trains, alternative train facilities are already available over Indian Railways. Therefore passengers can opt for alternative train services over different sections.

Rajdhani, Shatabdi and Duronto trains are highly prestigious trains with better facilities in train, service, speed and punctuality of trains, etc. and highly popular and preferred over other trains on the route. Therefore, Rajdhani, Shatabdi and Duronto

trains have been taken for Flexi Fare. This concept has not been extended on the other regular train services.

Though no specific survey for this purpose was conducted, based on the feedback from different quarters including from Members of Parliament and general public, a committee was constituted to review the Flexi Fare scheme. Based on the committee's recommendations and other representations, the matter has been examined and Flexi Fare scheme has been rationalized w.e.f 15.03.2019 on an experimental basis as under:-

- (i) Discontinuation of Flexi Fare scheme (Rajdhani, Shatabdi and Duronto Express trains) from 15 trains fully and from 32 trains during pre defined lean period of 3 months (February, March and August). Maximum cap of Flexi Fare scheme has been reduced to 1.4 times from 1.5 times earlier in all Flexi Fare applicable classes.
- (ii) Graded discount has been introduced in Flexi Fare trains including Rajdhani Express trains, where class-wise occupancy is less than 60%, 4 days prior to scheduled departure of the train as under:-

Occupancy	Discount
Up to 70%	20% on last fare
70 to 80%	10% on last fare
Above 80%	Nil

As Flexi Fare Scheme has yielded higher revenue and passengers in Flexi Fare trains have increased when compared to Non Flexi Fare period, therefore at present there is no proposal to withdraw Flexi Fare scheme.

High-speed trains plying through Tamil Nadu

3127. SHRI TIRUCHI SIVA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government has introduced any high-speed trains plying to and from Tamil Nadu over the last five years, and if so, the details thereof;
- (b) whether Government plans to increase the connectivity of high-speed trains across the country; and
- (c) if so, the details of the budgetary allocation thereof?