



Minister of Railways Chairs Round Table Conference To Improve The Quality of Catering Services on Indian Railways

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Minister of Railways Shri Suresh Prabhakar Prabhu chaired the Round Table Conference on improving the Quality of Catering Services provided over Indian Railways. Chairman, Railway Board, Shri A. K. Mital, Member Traffic Railway Board Shri Mohd Jamshed, other Railway Board Members, Representatives from the Food and beverage industry, other Govt. agencies viz FDA, QCI, NABCB, Food craft institute etc., SHGs and IRCTC were also present on the occasion.

Speaking on the occasion, Shri Suresh Prabhakar Prabhu said, "The whole idea behind Round Table Conference is to take along the experts of the field. We have the responsibility of implementing policies for which we require experts and professionals to provide best services. Railways is a big entity. All Socio Economic aspects are being covered by Railways. Reach of Railways is very large from education to sports to biodiversity. Railways is immensely benefitted from these Round table Conferences by experts from different fields. Indian Railways want to get your ideas. The criterions of the policy are transparency, participative, durable and friendly to passengers and good quality. He also said that, All these activity should result in win win policy. Railways should think of solutions in Indian Context and have roadmap for future. Indian Railways is also open for professional in catering sector throughout India.

Background:

Indian Railways provide 11 lakh meals (approx) to passengers every day. The catering service in Railways is provided either through departmentally managed catering arrangements or through private licenses - Pantry Cars, Train Side Vending, E-Catering and through static units such as Food Plaza, Fast Food Units, AVMs etc.

Approximately 90% of mobile unit and 96% of static units are operated through private licenses. The licenses are given to the highest technically eligible bidder. The license model generates high license fee, however, there have been number of complaints by the end users i.e. passenger on account of poor quality, inadequate quantity, over-charging, staff misbehavior etc. In order to achieve the objective of improving quality of catering services in Indian Railways and establishing good governance standard railways proposes to tackle the problems identified through unbundling of catering services by distinguishing between food preparation and food distribution and by partnering with reputed players in the food and beverage industry.

Agenda of round table conference

- Brief on current state of catering services over Indian Railways
- Presentation by IRCTC entailing the road map that it proposes to follow in order to address the issues of catering services over Indian Railways.
- Mechanism in which Railways and IRCTC shall partner with reputed players in the food and beverage industry to improve the quality of catering service and enhance customer satisfaction.
- Proliferation of e-catering by integration of reputed food chain.
- Infusing modern technology in food preparation and food distribution by working out the complete supply chain model.
- Evolving mechanism to actively engage end users i.e. rail passengers in up-gradation of catering services through a robust feedback system. The feedback of passengers shall be linked to the performance report of the Agency managing the catering services.
- Discussion on new catering policy 2017

Participants

- Representatives from the Food and beverage industry
- Representatives of other Govt. agencies viz FDA, QCI, NABCB, Food craft institute etc.
- Representatives from SHGs.
- Railway board members and officials.
- IRCTC

Outcome

- To integrate and collate the ideas emerging out of this immersive session and crafting an action plan to implement them.
- To come up with suggestions/feedback to ensure provision and availability of quality, hygienic and wholesome food to passengers on Indian Railways
- New Catering Policy segregates making of food and distribution of food. Railways wishes to set up base kitchens in different locations at a distance of two to three hours so that train may pick up warm food. The distribution of food shall be looked by experts in Hospitality. Railways shall also devise foolproof system of catering because some black sheep spoil the entire exercise.

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