

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL FOR LEGAL RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS



Open Access, Refereed Journal Multi-Disciplinary
Peer Reviewed

www.ijlra.com

DISCLAIMER

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored, transmitted, or distributed in any form or by any means, whether electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without prior written permission of the Managing Editor of the *International Journal for Legal Research & Analysis (IJLRA)*.

The views, opinions, interpretations, and conclusions expressed in the articles published in this journal are solely those of the respective authors. They do not necessarily reflect the views of the Editorial Board, Editors, Reviewers, Advisors, or the Publisher of IJLRA.

Although every reasonable effort has been made to ensure the accuracy, authenticity, and proper citation of the content published in this journal, neither the Editorial Board nor IJLRA shall be held liable or responsible, in any manner whatsoever, for any loss, damage, or consequence arising from the use, reliance upon, or interpretation of the information contained in this publication.

The content published herein is intended solely for academic and informational purposes and shall not be construed as legal advice or professional opinion.

**Copyright © International Journal for Legal Research & Analysis.
All rights reserved.**

ABOUT US

The *International Journal for Legal Research & Analysis (IJLRA)* (ISSN: 2582-6433) is a peer-reviewed, academic, online journal published on a monthly basis. The journal aims to provide a comprehensive and interactive platform for the publication of original and high-quality legal research.

IJLRA publishes Short Articles, Long Articles, Research Papers, Case Comments, Book Reviews, Essays, and interdisciplinary studies in the field of law and allied disciplines. The journal seeks to promote critical analysis and informed discourse on contemporary legal, social, and policy issues.

The primary objective of IJLRA is to enhance academic engagement and scholarly dialogue among law students, researchers, academicians, legal professionals, and members of the Bar and Bench. The journal endeavours to establish itself as a credible and widely cited academic publication through the publication of original, well-researched, and analytically sound contributions.

IJLRA welcomes submissions from all branches of law, provided the work is original, unpublished, and submitted in accordance with the prescribed submission guidelines. All manuscripts are subject to a rigorous peer-review process to ensure academic quality, originality, and relevance.

Through its publications, the *International Journal for Legal Research & Analysis* aspires to contribute meaningfully to legal scholarship and the development of law as an instrument of justice and social progress.

PUBLICATION ETHICS, COPYRIGHT & AUTHOR RESPONSIBILITY STATEMENT

The *International Journal for Legal Research and Analysis (IJLRA)* is committed to upholding the highest standards of publication ethics and academic integrity. All manuscripts submitted to the journal must be original, unpublished, and free from plagiarism, data fabrication, falsification, or any form of unethical research or publication practice. Authors are solely responsible for the accuracy, originality, legality, and ethical compliance of their work and must ensure that all sources are properly cited and that necessary permissions for any third-party copyrighted material have been duly obtained prior to submission. Copyright in all published articles vests with IJLRA, unless otherwise expressly stated, and authors grant the journal the irrevocable right to publish, reproduce, distribute, and archive their work in print and electronic formats. The views and opinions expressed in the articles are those of the authors alone and do not reflect the views of the Editors, Editorial Board, Reviewers, or Publisher. IJLRA shall not be liable for any loss, damage, claim, or legal consequence arising from the use, reliance upon, or interpretation of the content published. By submitting a manuscript, the author(s) agree to fully indemnify and hold harmless the journal, its Editor-in-Chief, Editors, Editorial Board, Reviewers, Advisors, Publisher, and Management against any claims, liabilities, or legal proceedings arising out of plagiarism, copyright infringement, defamation, breach of confidentiality, or violation of third-party rights. The journal reserves the absolute right to reject, withdraw, retract, or remove any manuscript or published article in case of ethical or legal violations, without incurring any liability.

**AN EMPIRICAL STUDY ON AWARENESS, MISUSE
AND CRIMINAL LIABILITY IN RAILWAY
TICKETING OFFENCES**

AUTHORED BY - R. VARSHIGA

CLASS: BA.LL.B (Hons) 5th year

The Tamil Nadu Dr. Ambedkar Law University, School of Excellence in Law

CO-AUTHOR - MS.T. VAISHALI

B.A., B.L (Hons)., L.L.M.

Department Of Criminal Law And Criminal Justice Administration

The Tamil Nadu Dr. Ambedkar Law University, Chennai

S.NO.	TABLE OF CONTENTS
1.	ABSTRACT
2.	INTRODUCTION
3.	OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY
4.	RESEARCH QUESTIONS
5.	HYPOTHESIS
6.	SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY
7.	LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY
8.	REVIEW OF LITERATURE
9.	RESARCH METHODOLOGY
10.	RESEARCH ANALYSIS
11.	FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS
12.	SUGGESTIONS
13.	CONCLUSION
14.	REFERENCES

ABSTRACT

Indian Railways had always been the convenient, cheap and fastest mode of land transport. The ticketing system and regulations were governed under the Railways Act, 1989. Minor offences have always been prevalent in relation to offline ticketing system. When Railways introduced digital ticketing system, it has not only improved accessibility but also introduced vulnerabilities which are easily exploited by offenders. Moreover, a notable segment of the population exhibited a lack of familiarity with, or disregard for, railway rules and regulations. Being unaware of those regulations, some unintentionally commit crime and few misuse their ignorance. This paper discusses the wreaked havoc faced by the passengers while booking tickets. This study further analyses the principle of “ignorantia juris non excusat” with regard to passengers. This study highlights that the rise of digital technology should not pave way for Railway ticketing offences and also tend to create awareness among the society about the existing rules and regulations.

Keywords: Indian Railways, Railway ticketing offences, Lack of familiarity, Ignorance.

INTRODUCTION

Indian Railways is a complex system reflecting India’s diversity, making safety and reliability a significant challenge. The Constitution of India grants Parliament exclusive power to make laws on rail transport. Using this power, Parliament passed the Railways Act 1989, which brings together all laws related to railways in India, covering infrastructure and operations. It was established during the colonial era by the Great Indian Peninsular Railway and the East India Company, and it is essential for commercial activity as it enables cost-effective and efficient transportation. Indian Railways has a vast infrastructure, including a significant staff, electrified routes, numerous stations, and substantial profits and assets, as shown in the Statistical Summary Sheet-2016.

The Railways Act, 1989 lists a number of ticket-related offences, such as travelling without a valid ticket, exchanging or misusing concession tickets without authorisation travelling without a ticket, violating station rules, and engaging in fraudulent activities. These rules are meant to preserve discipline and public order on railway property in addition to safeguarding railway revenue. Ticketing violations are quite common in practice even with explicit legislative provisions. Many travellers engage in such conduct, either on purpose to avoid paying tickets

or unknowingly because they are unaware of the legal requirements.¹

The principle of *ignorantia juris non excusat*, which states that “ignorance of law is no excuse,” is applicable to railway offences as well. Nevertheless, a significant proportion of the public is still unaware that ticketing violations are offences and are subject to criminal penalties. While technological advancements like online and mobile ticketing have decreased some old types of misuse, they have also given rise to new offences such false cancellations, impersonation, and misuse of digital tickets. As a result, while repeat offenders continue to take advantage of system flaws, legitimate users may unintentionally break the law.

Considering these circumstances, an empirical study is required to evaluate public knowledge, usage patterns, and comprehension of criminal responsibility in railway ticketing offences. The study intends to reduce the gap in the legal provisions of Railways Act,1989 by examining responses from railway users. It also assesses the necessity for improved awareness campaigns or changes in the legislation.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To examine the level of public awareness regarding railway ticketing rules and offences under the Railways Act, 1989.
- To study the reasons behind ticketing violations, including ignorance, negligence, and intentional evasion and assess passengers’ understanding of criminal liability in railway ticketing offences.
- To examine the effectiveness of existing enforcement mechanisms in controlling ticketing offences.
- To evaluate the application of the principle “*ignorantia juris non excusat*” in railway ticketing violations.
- To understand the impact of digital ticketing systems on misuse and compliance.
- To study the role of awareness and legal literacy in reducing ticketing offences.
- To suggest measures for improving awareness and preventing misuse of railway ticketing facilities.

¹ Crime Manual(2019), Railway Protection Force, <https://rpf.indianrailways.gov.in/RPF/uploads/directcontent/1715581232110-1684473200925-CrimeManual.pdf> (last viewed on 09.30 am, January 28,2026)

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What is the level of awareness among passengers about railway ticketing rules and offences?
2. What types of railway ticketing offences are commonly committed by passengers?
3. How effective are the existing enforcement measures in preventing ticketing offences?
4. What role does digital ticketing play in reducing or increasing misuse?
5. How is the principle of *ignorantia juris non excusat* applied in railway ticketing offences?

HYPOTHESIS

H1: A substantial number of passengers commit railway ticketing offences unknowingly due to ignorance of legal provisions (*ignorantia juris non excusat*).

H2: Reporting crimes are seen as an exercise in futility.

H3: Weak enforcement and lenient penalties contribute to the continuation of railway ticketing offences.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

- The study provides empirical data that can assist railway authorities in improving enforcement mechanisms.
- The study helps in assessing the level of public awareness regarding railway ticketing offences under the Railways Act, 1989.
- The research emphasizes the principle of *ignorantia juris non excusat* in the context of railway ticketing offences.
- It aids in understanding the relationship between awareness and criminal liability among railway passengers.
- The findings may help policymakers review the adequacy of penalties and deterrent measures.
- The study assists in identifying vulnerable groups who unknowingly commit ticketing offences.
- It promotes better compliance with railway laws, thereby reducing offences and improving public order.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

- This study is confined to railway ticketing offences not other railway offences under the Railways Act, 1989.
- This study does not include the perspectives of railway officials and enforcement authorities.
- The study's primary focus is on public awareness and opinion rather than official railway data or actual recorded crimes.
- The validity of results might be influenced by researcher bias when interpreting qualitative data.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

- **Eastern Railway** in “*No Respite for Ticketless Travellers*” saw a 2.1% rise in apprehensions for ticketless travel/unbooked luggage (1.868 lakh in Oct 2024 vs 1.829 lakh in Oct 2023), indicating ongoing efforts to curb the issue.²
- According to *Crime in India (2013)*, offences under the Indian Railways Act showed a fluctuating trend between 2011 and 2013, with 156 cases in 2011, a decline to 144 cases in 2012 (7.7% decrease), and a rise to 166 cases in 2013 (15.3% increase), resulting in an overall increase of 6.41% during the period.³
- **South Western Railway** in “*Addressing Ticket Touting: The Role of the Railway Protection Force in Combating Black Marketing*” observed that Ticket touting and black marketing persist in Indian Railways, compromising access and public trust, especially during peak periods. The RPF has implemented strategies to curb these issues and ensure fair access.⁴
- **Ravi, Ashvini, and Lekshmi Rs (2014)** investigated difficulties that users encountered when accessing the IRCTC online reservation system, including service fees, network problems, automatic cancellation of waiting lists tickets, modification of names, and station selection. The study's objectives were to evaluate how these problems affected users and offer alternative solutions. The results indicated that those under 30 make the

² Eastern Railway, “*No Respite for Ticketless Travellers*” https://er.indianrailways.gov.in/cris/view_detail.jsp?lang=0&id=0,4,268&dcd=10098&did=173131402130847F08796955AD6FC7F5D098A4551467D (last viewed on 09.30 pm, January 29,2026)

³ Crime in India (2013). Crime in Railways. Crime in India 2013, pp. 181-186.

⁴ South Western Railway, *Addressing Ticket Touting: The Role of the Railway Protection Force in Combating Black Marketing*, https://swr.indianrailways.gov.in/cris/view_detail.jsp?lang=0&id=0,4,268&dcd=8226&did=173755528833459AB84341488B9D42A5C4AFD00C747AE (last viewed on 10.10 pm, January 29,2026)

majority of online reservations, while people over 50 had less experience with the system.⁵

- **Krishnadas Rajagopal (2025)** observed that in the case of *Mathew K. Cherian v. Union of India (2025)*, the Supreme Court ruled that unauthorized e-ticket procurement is a social crime, interpreting Section 143 of the Railways Act, 1989, to cover digital ticketing, citing *Comdel Commodities Ltd. v. Siporex Trade SA (1990)* to affirm the law's adaptability to technology.⁶
- **Salil Tiwari (2025)** observed that the Supreme Court in the case of *Inspector, Railway Protection Force v. Mathew K. Cherian (2025)* held that Section 143 of the Railways Act, 1989 only applies to unauthorised agents engaged in the unlawful buying and selling of train tickets, including through fraudulent IRCTC user IDs. The Court held that this law is still applicable in the digital age since it includes both online and offline unauthorised ticketing actions, despite the fact that the section does not expressly reference multiple user IDs.⁷

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The primary aspect which determines the research's conclusion is methodology. It guides the researcher to carry out the study in an organised manner that guarantees and promotes the accuracy of the result. Any research study's validity is determined by the systematic approach to collect and analyse facts.

The study's primary goal was to learn about the issues that users had encountered. For this study, a descriptive research design was used. In this study, convenience sampling procedures were used. The primary data was collected from forty-five individuals. The non-probability sampling method was the collection strategy used in this investigation. An online survey was used to gather data (Google form).

⁵ Majduddeen Al Jalaliya P.P, Dr. Gajraj Singh Ahirwar, A Study of E-Ticketing System and Its Value in Indian Railways, https://ijariie.com/AdminUploadPdf/A_Study_of_E_Ticketing_System_and_Its_Value_in_Indian_Railways_ijariie14794.pdf?srsltid=AfmBOoobnve4jQZxI9-TMVYCr7-jp97AXfbyUe_X8yxRultXFya2-gBw (last viewed on 10.30 pm, January 29,2026)

⁶ Krishnadas Rajagopal, THE HINDU, *Unauthorised procurement, supply of railway e-tickets a 'social crime', says Supreme Court*, (Published on January 10,2025), <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/unauthorised-procurement-supply-of-railway-tickets-a-social-crime-affecting-national-economy-sc/article69081969.ece> (last viewed on 10.40 pm, January 29,2026)

⁷ Salil Tiwari, Any effort to disrupt integrity, stability of Railway ticketing system must be stopped: SC (Published on 27 January 2025) <https://lawbeat.in/supreme-court-judgments/any-effort-disrupt-integrity-stability-railway-ticketing-system-punished-supreme-court> (last viewed on 11.00 pm, January 29,2026)

RESEARCH ANALYSIS

1. Data Analysis

Data analysis plays a crucial role in non-doctrinal research, as it helps in systematically examining the responses collected from railway passengers to draw meaningful conclusions. In the present study on awareness, misuse, and criminal liability of railway ticketing offences, the data collected through questionnaires and surveys is carefully analyzed to understand passengers' level of legal awareness, common forms of ticket misuse, and their perception of punishment under the Railways Act, 1989. By analyzing the responses, patterns and trends relating to ignorance of law, intentional violations, and the effectiveness of enforcement mechanisms can be identified.

2. Interpretation of Data

Source: Primary Data

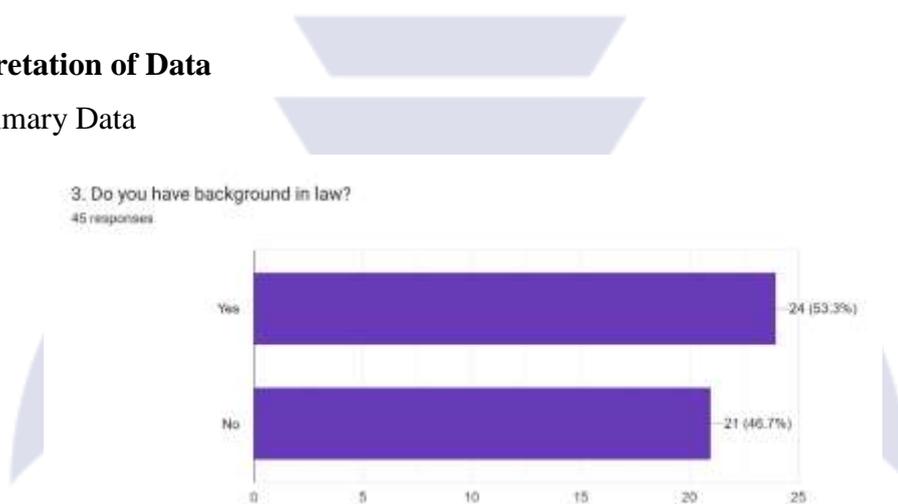


Figure 1

Interpretation:

From the above chart, it is observed that:

- 53.3% respondents have law background
- 46.7% respondents do not have law background.

Interference: From this study, we can conclude that out of 45 respondents, 53.3% respondents have law background.



Figure 2

Interpretation:

From the above chart, it is observed that:

- 44.4% respondents have read terms and conditions before booking tickets.
- 57.8% respondents have not read terms and conditions before booking tickets.

Interference: From this study, we can conclude that out of 45 respondents, 57.8% respondents have not read terms and conditions before booking tickets.

8. Which ticketing offence do you think is most common?
45 responses

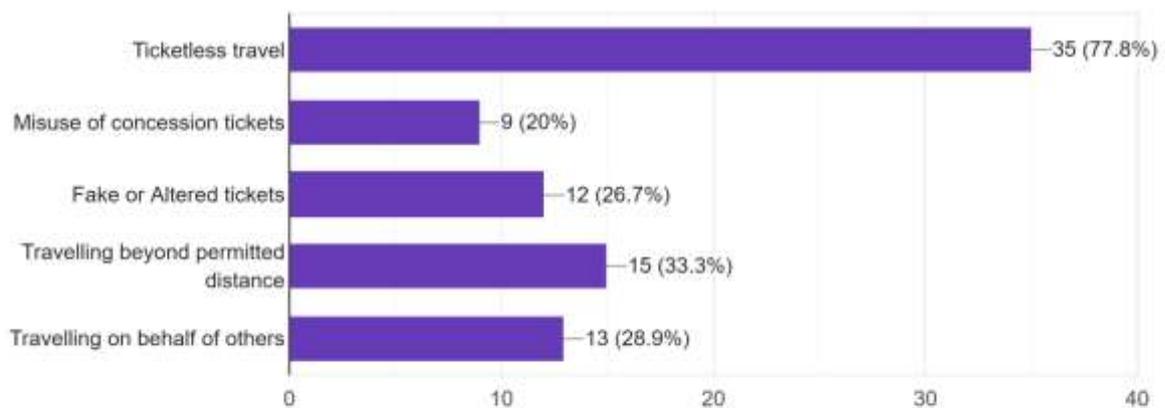


Figure 3

Interpretation:

From the above chart, it is observed that:

- 77.8% respondents recognised **Ticketless travel** as the most prevalent offence.
- 20% respondents recognised **Misuse of concession tickets** as the most prevalent offence.
- 26.7% respondents recognised **Fake or Altered tickets** as the most prevalent offence.

- 33.3% respondents recognised **Travelling beyond permitted distance** as the most prevalent offence.
- 28.9% respondents recognised **Travelling on behalf of others** as the most prevalent offence.

Interference: From this study, we can conclude that out of 45 respondents, 77.8% respondents recognised Ticketless travel as the most prevalent offence.

9. In your opinion, does occasional booking for friends or non-blooded relatives amount to a legal offence?
45 responses

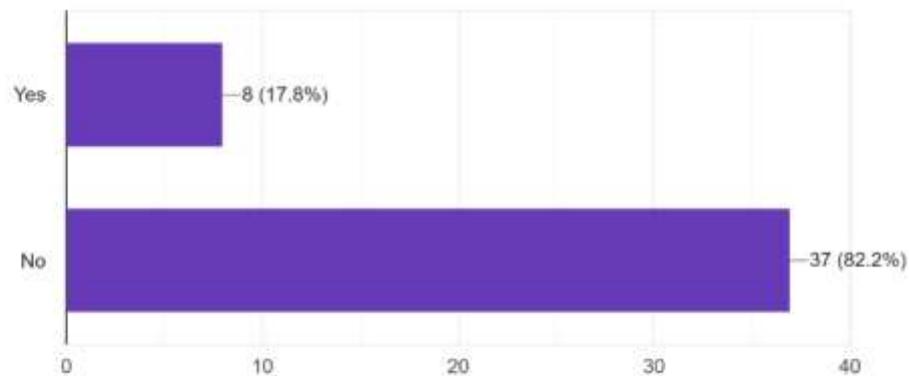


Figure 4

Interpretation:

From the above chart, it is observed that:

- 17.8% respondents recognize occasional ticket booking for friends or non-blood relatives as a violation of law.
- 82.2% respondents do not recognize occasional ticket booking for friends or non-blood relatives as a violation of law.

Interference: From this study, we can conclude that out of 45 respondents, 82.2% respondents do not recognize occasional ticket booking for friends or non-blood relatives as a violation of law.

11. Do you think current enforcement mechanisms (e.g., ticket inspectors, surveillance, penalties) are effective in reducing ticketing offences?

45 responses

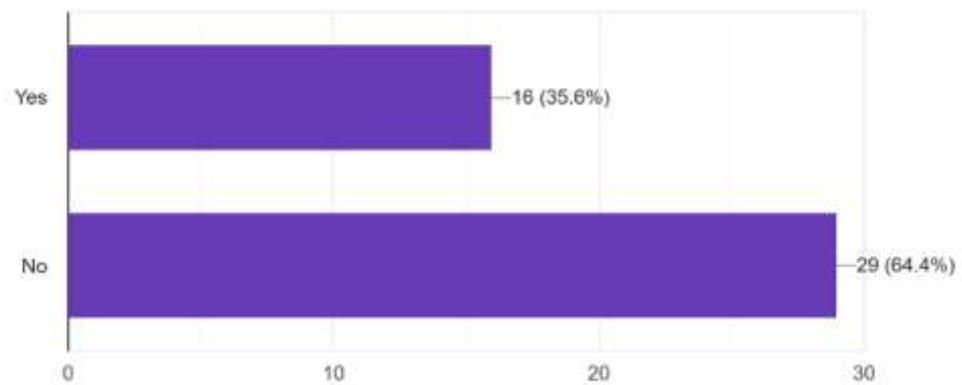


Figure 5

Interpretation:

From the above chart, it is observed that:

- 35.6% respondents consider current enforcement mechanisms to be effective in reducing ticketing offences.
- 64.4% respondents do not consider current enforcement mechanisms to be effective in reducing ticketing offences.

Interference: From this study, we can conclude that out of 45 respondents, 64.4% respondents do not consider current enforcement mechanisms to be effective in reducing ticketing offences.

12. Do you think main reason for ticketing offences is ignorance of law rather than intention?

45 responses

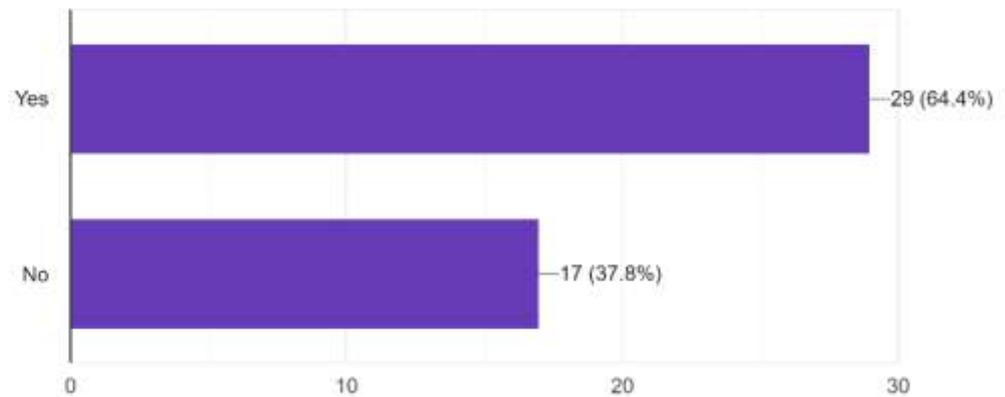


Figure 6

Interpretation:

From the above chart, it is observed that:

- 64.4% respondents believe that ignorance of law is the main reason for the commission of railway ticketing offences.
- 37.8% respondents believe that ignorance of law is not the main reason for the commission of railway ticketing offences.

Interference: From this study, we can conclude that out of 45 respondents, 64.4% respondents believe that ignorance of law is the main reason for the commission of railway ticketing offences.

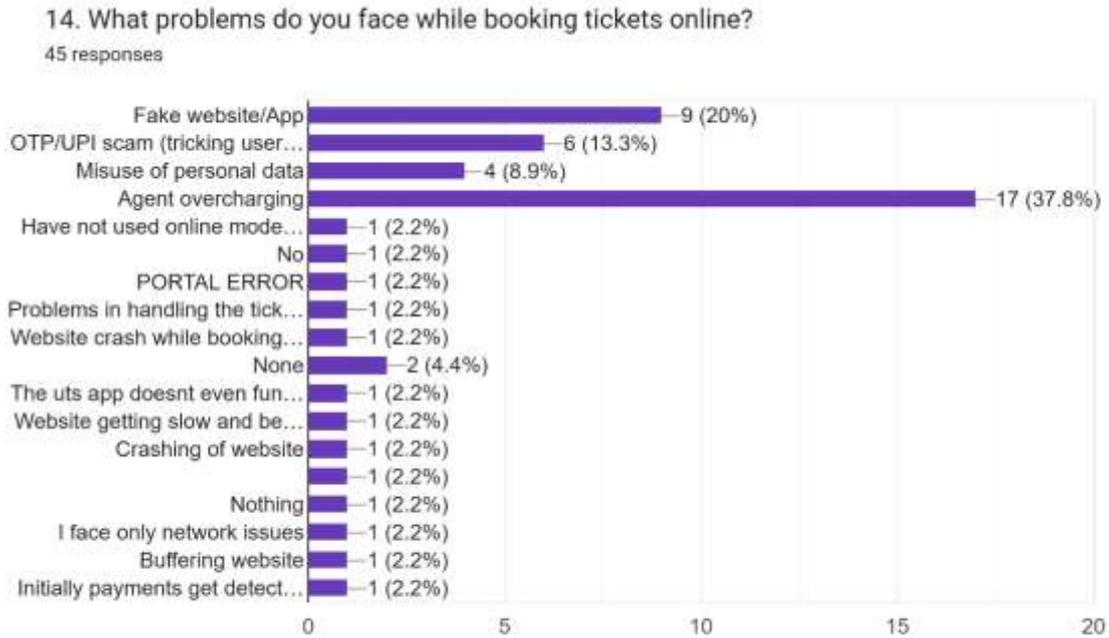


Figure 7

Interpretation:

From the above chart, it is observed that:

- 20% respondents reported **Fake websites or applications** as the most common issue encountered during online ticket booking.
- 13.3% respondents reported **OTP/UPI scam** as the most common issue encountered during online ticket booking.
- 8.9% respondents reported **Misuse of personal data** as the most common issue encountered during online ticket booking.
- 37.8% respondents reported **Agent overcharging** as the most common issue encountered during online ticket booking.
- 33% respondents reported **Others** as the most common issue encountered during online ticket booking.

Interference: From this study, we can conclude that out of 45 respondents, 37.8% respondents reported Agent overcharging as the most common issue encountered during online ticket booking.

15. Did you report the incident to?

45 responses

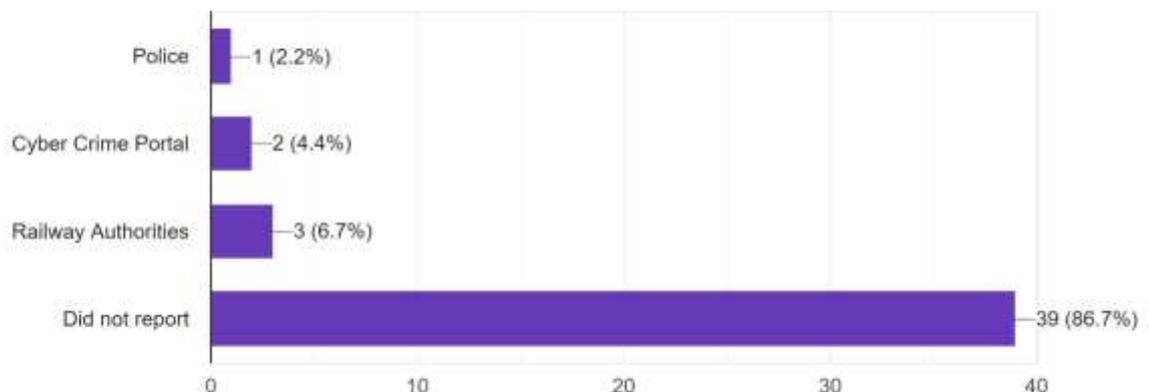


Figure 8

Interpretation:

From the above chart, it is observed that:

- 2.2% respondents stated that they reported the incident to the Police authorities.
- 4.4% respondents stated that they reported the incident to the Cyber Crime Portal.
- 6.7% respondents stated that they reported the incident to the Railway authorities.
- 86.7% respondents stated that they did not report the incident.

Interference: From this study, we can conclude that out of 45 respondents, 86.7% respondents have not reported the incident to any enforcement mechanisms.

16. If you did not report, why?

38 responses

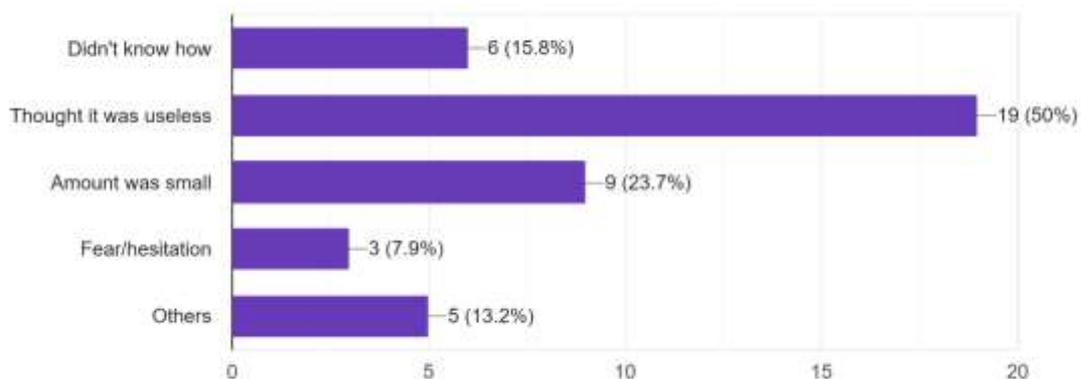


Figure 9

Interpretation:

From the above chart, it is observed that:

- 15.8% respondents refrained from reporting due to insufficient knowledge of reporting mechanisms.
- 50% respondents refrained from reporting as they thought it was useless.
- 23.7% respondents refrained from reporting due to low monetary loss.
- 7.9% respondents refrained from reporting due to fear/hesitation.
- 13.2% respondents refrained from reporting due to other reasons.

Interference: From this study, we can conclude that out of 45 respondents, 50% respondents refrained from reporting as they thought it was useless.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

- The study reveals that over half of respondents aren't reading terms and conditions, risking ignorance of railway ticketing rules.
- Ticketless travel was cited as the most frequent violation by huge number of respondents (77.8%), demonstrating how it has its prevalence among the society.
- The study reveals that online ticket booking is affected by fraudulent practices, as 37.8% of the respondents reported agent overcharging as a major problem.
- A significant majority of respondents (64.4%) identified ignorance of law as the main reason for the commission of railway ticketing offences, indicating a low level of legal awareness among the public.
- The study reveals a very low level of reporting, as 86.7% of the respondents stated that they did not report the offence or incident to any authority, largely due to the belief that reporting such incidents would be useless.
- The study concludes that there is a significant lack of legal awareness among respondents regarding ticketing offences under Section 143 of the Railways Act, 1989. A majority (82.2%) failed to recognize that using personal user IDs to book tickets for others with a profit or business motive amounts to a punishable offence, highlighting the need for greater public education on lawful ticketing practices.
- Only 35.6% of the respondents considered the existing enforcement mechanisms to be effective in reducing railway ticketing offences, suggesting limited public confidence in current enforcement measures.

- Although 53.3% of respondents have a legal background, the findings reveal that misconceptions and lack of awareness about railway ticketing offences still exist, even among those with legal training.
- The findings collectively indicate that minor ticketing offences are often viewed as trivial or non-criminal acts by the public, reducing compliance with legal norms. Therefore, the study highlights a disconnect between legal provisions under the Railways Act, 1989 and the practical awareness and behaviour of railway users.

SUGGESTIONS

- The efficacy of current laws in addressing railway ticketing offences is insufficient, necessitating thoughtful revisions to enhance their impact.
- Passengers should be encouraged to read and understand the rules and regulations issued by Indian Railways to reduce misuse of railway tickets.
- Since ignorance of law is not a valid excuse, awareness programs should be conducted to educate passengers about their rights, duties, and legal consequences of ticketing offences.
- Strict action should be taken against the use of personal user IDs for selling tickets with a profit or business motive, as such practices constitute punishable offences.
- While the shift from offline to online ticket booking has improved convenience, innovative technological measures should be introduced to prevent misuse and reduce the commission of ticketing offences.
- Effective and well-trained enforcement personnel should be appointed to enhance public confidence and encourage passengers to report difficulties and offences without fear or hesitation.

CONCLUSION

The present empirical study reveals a significant gap between legal provisions under the Railways Act, 1989 and public awareness of those provisions. The findings indicate that offences such as ticketless travel and misuse personal user IDs continue to occur frequently largely due to lack of awareness and inadequate understanding of railway ticketing rules and regulations. Although digital ticketing facilities have made the ticket booking process convenient, many passengers tend to ignore the terms and conditions, resulting in unintentional violations, while a few knowingly misuse the system for profit-oriented activities which is

prohibited by the law.

The study also highlights that technological advancements have introduced new forms of offences such as online ticket fraud, unauthorised ticket sales, etc., Weak enforcement, lack of confidence in authorities and under-reporting of offences further reduce the effectiveness of existing legal measures. Even respondents with legal backgrounds showed gaps in practical understanding. Therefore, the study concludes that improving legal and digital awareness, strengthening enforcement mechanisms and introducing effective technological safeguards are essential to reduce ticketing offences and ensure a fair and effective railway ticketing system.

REFERENCES

1. Crime in India (2013). Crime in Railways. Crime in India 2013, pp. 181-186
2. Railway Claim Manual, 2014. pp. 18-46.
3. The Railways Act, 1989. No. 24 Of 1989 [3rd June, 1989.], pp. 1-85.
4. Vijetha S. Shetty, "E- Ticketing in India (2014) "A Study on the Indian Railway Catering & Tourism Corporation Ltd.", Indian Journal of Applied Research, Vol. 4, (5), PP.109-111.
5. Sangeetha Sahney, Koustub Ghosh and Archana Srivastava,(2010) "Consumer „Personality“ in Railway E-Ticketing: Conceptualization and Empirical Testing in Indian Context", International Journal of Business Management and Social Science, Vol.1, (1), 2010, PP.9- 20.
6. Majduddeen Al Jalaliya P.P, Dr. Gajraj Singh Ahirwar, A Study of E-Ticketing System and Its Value in Indian Railways.
7. Sayyed Mahfooz Ahmed, Lubna M.Ali, Exploratory challenges faced by Railway Passengers in the Usage of IRCTC.
8. R. Sheeja, Dr P Umaeswari, Nishanth R, Bibin Chidambaranathan, Local train ticketing system using web services
9. Rohit Kanda, Railways in India: A Study on the Day by Day Increasing Crimes in Railways Effecting the Prospects of Railway Tourism in India
10. Nilkanthsinh C. Parkhi, Impact of Railway law on the criminals in India