

THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF BUSINESS & MANAGEMENT

A Study of Facilities Provided by Maharashtra State Road Transport Corporation at Bus Station to Passengers in Maharashtra

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Abstract:

Public transport service is need of society. Maharashtra State Road Transport Corporation (MSRTC) plays an important role in public transport as its networking is spread all over Maharashtra – in urban, rural and even remote places. The aim of MSRTC is totally social point of view. For providing transport services MSRTC invests large amount in land, infrastructure and also help employment generation at state level. Corporation is established under Special Act and completed successfully completed over 60 years. As per the aims and objectives, the basic duty of MSRTC is to provide different facilities to passengers. As per 2011 census 54.78 percent live in the villages of rural areas and for their transport State Transport is a solace.

Thus, the importance of State Road Transport for transport to urban as well as rural population cannot be ignored. MSRTC provides public transport and through this paper an attempt is made to study the real position of facilities provided at Bus Stations for comfort of passengers and understand the level of satisfaction of passengers from the services provided by it.

Keywords: MSRTC, bus station, buses, facilities, passengers

1. History of MSRTC

The Maharashtra State Road Transport Corporation was established by the State Government of Maharashtra as per the provision in Section 3 of RTC Act 1950. Earlier it was called Bombay State Road Transport Corporation (BSRTC), but later changed its name to MSRTC with the re-organization of the state. The M.S.R.T. Corporation operates its services by the approved scheme of Road Transport Published vide Notification MVA 3173/30303-XIIA dated 29.11.1973 in the official gazette. The area covered by the scheme is entire area of the State of Maharashtra. First bus having been flagged off from the Pune to Ahmednagar in 1948.

The driver and conductor used to wear khaki uniforms and peak caps and still do. There were 10 makes of buses in use then - Chevrolet, Ford, Bedford, Seddon, Studebaker, Morris Commercial, Albion, Leyland, Commer and Fiat.

The ST started with 30 Bedford buses having wooden bodies, coir seats and the fare charged on the Pune-Nagar route was nine paise. Having seen the State Transport undergo many changes, the list includes- increasing the seating capacity from the original 30 to 45 to the present 54, introduction of all-steel bodies to replace wooden bodies to make them stronger and cushion seats for more comfort. Later, in 1960, aluminium bodies were introduced as steel corrodes, especially in coastal areas, and the colour code also changed to red from the blue and silver. A partial night service was launched in 1956; the overnight service about a decade later and the semi-luxury class came into being during the Asian Games in 1982.

Significantly, the ST does not only carry people, but also takes care of the postal mail, distribution of medicines, newspapers and even tiffin to children studying in the bigger towns. In rural areas, it aids farmers to transport their goods to the cities. All this in the face of bad roads, recurring losses, hiked taxes and yet it retains its identity of a transport service for everybody.

This clearly indicates that over the years the state transport has undergone many changes to make lives easier while travelling by state's road transport and also helps transport luggage, mail and goods from one place to another through parcel facility.

In around 6 decades, "its position of strength speaks for itself - 16,000-odd buses, 12,000 employees, about 70 lakh citizens utilizing the service daily"¹.

No matter what, the State Transport reaches every village that is connected by road, however bad it may be, truly living up to its motto of 'jithe rasta, tithe ST' (where there's a road, there's a ST bus)!²

2. Bus Station

Bus Stations are established at every Taluka place in Maharashtra. The place where Station controller, drivers, conductors and other employees are appointed by MSRTC, the place where the controller office, Cash Counter, Canteen, restroom and other services and facilities are provided to employees and passengers, Bus Station building, platforms and required infrastructure created by MSRTC such place is called Bus station.

3. Facilities for Passengers by MSRTC

As per act and commitment published on website, MSRTC provides following facilities and services at bus stations to passengers:

- | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| (a) Enquiry Counter | (b) Waiting space |
| (c) Canteen and Stalls | (d) Fresh rooms |
| (e) Drinking Water | (f) Parcel and Reservations |
| (g) Vehicle parking | (h) Facility to Handicraft passengers |
| (i) Online reservation and advance booking | (j) Quality Food service by massage |
| (k) Waiting room for passengers | (l) Luggage storage facility |

4. Objectives of Research

1. To find out factual status of facilities provided by MSRTC at Bus station.
2. To understand the view of passengers to the facilities provided by MSRTC at Bus Stations and know their expectations.
3. To provide practical suggestions, in case of gap between expectations and factual position.

5. Hypothesis of Research

- H0- Facilities provided by Maharashtra State Road Transport Corporation to Passengers at bus station are satisfactory.
- H1- There is a need to improve upon the facilities provided by Maharashtra State Road Transport Corporation.

6. Research Methodology

This study is based on primary and secondary data for the proper and factual finding and analysis. Primary data is collected with the help of the questionnaire and interview of the passengers who are travelling (A) within the District, (B) from one district to another and (C) from one state and another state and pass through Bhusawal bus station. Employees of MSRTC at Bus Station are also interviewed for cross checking the information provided by respondents and also help to come up with useful recommendations. Secondary data is collected from news papers, periodicals, books, journals and website.

6.1. Research Questionnaire Questions

It is the study about services and facilities provides by MSRTC to passengers and tourists at Bus station and questions are based particularly on facilities provided by MSRTC.

6.2. Sample Selection

Researcher prepared a questionnaire and distributed 400 questionnaires at Bhusawal Bus Station to different passengers between 9 am to 10 am for a week at waiting space, on platform and in the bus.

7. Data Analysis

Researcher received total 326 questionnaires, after scrutiny researcher rejected 34 and select completed 292 questionnaires for the analysis for study. The details of responses from various types of passengers is given in Table No. 1.

Category	Type of Passengers	Questionnaires Received	Percentage
A	Local and from District	211	72.26
B	From other District	056	19.18
C	From other state	025	08.56
	Total passengers	292	100.00

Table 1: Information of Type of Passengers at Bus Station Bhusawal

Researcher analyzed the data received from above respondents and used simple mathematical formula to calculate the average percentage.

The respondents through the questionnaire were asked questions to find out their views relating to facilities like cleanliness at Bus Station, drinking water, and wash room, food quality, light and fan facility and sitting facility. The responses received are presented and analyzed in Table No. 2 as given below.

SN	Facility	Type of Passenger	Outlook of passengers					Total
			Very Good (%)	Good (%)	Neutral (%)	Bad (%)	Worst (%)	
1	Cleaning at Bus Station	Local / from District	04 (1.90)	77 (36.48)	66 (31.28)	60 (28.44)	04 (1.90)	211 (100.00)
		From other District	03 (5.36)	20 (35.71)	19 (33.93)	10 (17.86)	04 (7.14)	056 (100.00)
		From other State	00 (0.00)	12 (48.00)	03 (12.00)	09 (36.00)	01 (4.00)	025 (100.00)
		Total	07 (2.40)	109 (37.33)	88 (30.14)	79 (27.05)	09 (3.08)	292 (100.00)
2	Drinking Water Facility	Local / from District	09 (4.27)	76 (36.02)	58 (27.49)	60 (28.44)	08 (3.78)	211 (100.00)
		From other District	05 (8.93)	17 (30.36)	17 (30.36)	14 (25.00)	03 (5.35)	056 (100.00)
		From other State	01 (4.00)	11 (44.00)	05 (20.00)	05 (20.00)	03 (12.00)	025 (100.00)
		Total	15 (5.14)	104 (35.62)	80 (27.40)	79 (27.05)	14 (4.79)	292 (100.00)
3	Wash Room Cleaning	Local / from District	00 (0.00)	48 (22.75)	52 (24.64)	88 (41.71)	23 (10.90)	211 (100.00)
		From other District	03 (5.36)	22 (39.29)	06 (10.71)	15 (26.79)	10 (17.85)	056 (100.00)
		From other State	00 (0.00)	10 (40.00)	03 (12.00)	11 (44.00)	01 (4.00)	025 (100.00)
		Total	03 (1.03)	80 (27.40)	61 (20.89)	114 (39.04)	34 (11.64)	292 (100.00)
4	Food Quality at Canteen or Stalls	Local / from District	16 (7.58)	75 (35.55)	72 (34.12)	44 (20.85)	04 (1.90)	211 (100.00)
		From other District	03 (5.36)	21 (37.50)	17 (30.36)	11 (19.64)	04 (7.14)	056 (100.00)
		From other State	01 (4.00)	14 (56.00)	06 (24.00)	04 (16.00)	00 (0.00)	025 (100.00)
		Total	20 (6.85)	110 (37.67)	95 (32.53)	59 (20.21)	08 (2.74)	292 (100.00)
5	Light and Fan Facility	Local / from District	06 (2.84)	109 (51.66)	28 (13.27)	60 (28.44)	08 (3.79)	211 (100.00)
		From other District	01 (1.79)	25 (44.64)	11 (19.64)	15 (26.79)	04 (7.14)	056 (100.00)
		From other state	03 (12.00)	10 (40.00)	03 (12.00)	06 (24.00)	03 (12.00)	025 (100.00)
		Total	10 (3.42)	144 (49.32)	42 (14.38)	81 (27.74)	15 (5.14)	292 (100.00)
6	Seating arrangement at platforms	Local / from District	10 (4.74)	128 (60.66)	30 (14.22)	40 (18.96)	03 (1.42)	211 (100.00)
		From other District	02 (3.57)	32 (57.14)	10 (17.86)	09 (16.07)	03 (5.36)	056 (100.00)
		From other state	00 (0.00)	12 (48.00)	04 (16.00)	06 (24.00)	03 (12.00)	025 (100.00)
		Total	12 (4.11)	172 (58.90)	44 (15.07)	55 (18.84)	09 (3.08)	292 (100.00)

Table 2: Passengers' Outlook about Facilities provided by MRSTC at Bhusawal Bus station Waiting room facility

When respondents were enquires questions relating to cleanliness at bus station, nearly a bit near 40% answered Very Good and Good, around 30% answered that it was in bad condition and around 30% were neutral. This was from the passengers within the District. The same response was from passengers travelling to and from other Districts. For passengers travelling to and from other state nearly 50% found the cleanliness up to the mark, 12% remained neutral and 40% found it from bad to worst.

Passengers travelling within the District and within the State responded around the same for drinking water facility too. Towards drinking water facility 40% approximately said very good and good and 30% were of the opinion of bad to worst. 30% of the respondents were neutral. For passengers from other states 48% gave response towards good, 20% remained neutral and again about 30% felt that the drinking water facility was bad.

In case of view towards cleanliness of fresh room around 50% found it bad and very bad. 23% of local passengers found it good and 25% were neutral and for passengers from other District and State it was around 40%, i.e., more bad view of the facility and 10 to 12% were neutral.

For food quality around 42% of passengers travelling within the District and State stated it to be of good quality, around 34% and 30% within District and State respectively were neutral and 20% passengers within the District were of a negative opinion of condition of food quality and 25% was the same opinion of passengers from other Districts within the state. 60% of passengers of other state found the food quality good, 24% were neutral and 16% found it bad.

Light and Fan facility was found good above 50% of passengers travelling within the District and from other states, whereas 45% found of passengers within the state but from other Districts it good. Similarly, 12 to 13% of passengers of within the District and from other states and 20% passengers from other Districts remained neutral. 32% of all types of passengers found it bad to worst.

Above 60% of the respondents on an average found sitting arrangement good and others were either neutral or felt it was bad. 16% and 12% of respondents travelling from one District to another and from one State to another found it bad.

Respondents experience relating to discipline about bus parking and cooperation and behavior at inquiry window is depicted in Table No. 3.

SN	Facility	Type of Passenger	Passengers' Experience					Total
			Very Good (%)	Good (%)	Neutral (%)	Bad (%)	Worst (%)	
1	Discipline about bus parking	Local / from District	04 (1.90)	124 (58.77)	28 (13.27)	44 (20.85)	11 (1.90)	211 (100.00)
		From other District	01 (1.79)	29 (51.78)	09 (16.07)	14 (25.00)	03 (5.36)	056 (100.00)
		From other state	00 (0.00)	14 (56.00)	03 (12.00)	06 (24.00)	02 (8.00)	025 (100.00)
		Total	05 (1.71)	167 (57.19)	40 (13.70)	64 (21.92)	16 (5.48)	292 (100.00)
2	Cooperation at inquiry window	Local / from District	06 (2.84)	128 (60.66)	42 (19.91)	24 (11.37)	11 (5.22)	211 (100.00)
		From other District	03 (5.36)	29 (51.79)	11 (19.64)	09 (16.07)	04 (7.14)	056 (100.00)
		From other state	00 (0.00)	18 (72.00)	04 (16.00)	01 (4.00)	02 (8.00)	025 (100.00)
		Total	09 (3.08)	175 (59.93)	57 (19.53)	34 (11.64)	17 (5.82)	292 (100.00)

Table 3: Passengers' Experience at Bhusawal Bus Station

Table No. 3 shows that in response to questions relating to discipline in bus parking and cooperation at inquiry window, 54 to 58 percent respectively found discipline good and 22% of passengers within District and above 30% of the other types of passengers were not happy. Others were neutral.

Majority of passengers of all types found cooperation at inquiry window good. 22% passengers travelling within the State but outside Jalgaon District found it bad and 20% passengers travelling within the State and Jalgaon District remained neutral.

MSRTC also provides facilities like stalls in and around the bus stations, parcel and porter facility as well as tries to provide human safety. An attempt was made to find out the level of awareness about such facilities.

SN	Facility	Type of Passenger	Awareness			
			Yes	No	Don't Know	Total
1	Stalls facility	Local / from District	177 (83.89)	22 (10.43)	12 (5.68)	211 (100.00)
		From other District	36 (64.29)	13 (23.21)	07 (12.50)	056 (100.00)
		From other state	14 (56.00)	07 (28.00)	04 (16.00)	025 (100.00)
		Total	227 (77.74)	42 (14.38)	23 (7.88)	292 (100.00)
2	Human Safety facility	Local / from District	105 (49.76)	60 (28.44)	46 (21.80)	211 (100.00)
		From other District	20 (35.71)	30 (53.57)	06 (10.72)	056 (100.00)
		From other state	03 (12.00)	17 (68.00)	05 (20.00)	025 (100.00)
		Total	128 (43.84)	107 (36.64)	57 (19.52)	292 (100.00)
3	Porter facility	Local / from District	105 (49.76)	84 (39.81)	22 (10.43)	211 (100.00)
		From other District	20 (35.71)	26 (46.43)	10 (17.86)	056 (100.00)
		From other state	05 (20.00)	15 (60.00)	05 (20.00)	025 (100.00)
		Total	130 (44.52)	125 (42.81)	37 (12.67)	292 (100.00)
4	Parcel facility	Local / from District	80 (37.91)	131 (62.09)	00 (0.00)	211 (100.00)
		From other District	17 (30.36)	36 (64.29)	03 (5.35)	056 (100.00)
		From other state	07 (28.00)	18 (72.00)	00 (0.00)	025 (100.00)
		Total	104 (35.62)	185 (63.36)	03 (1.02)	292 (100.00)

Table 4: Awareness of Passengers about facilities

It can be viewed from the above table that when asked about stall facility majority, i.e., 3/4th, of all types of passengers were aware but when inquired into the types of stalls available at bus stations, majority talked about newspaper stall, which one can conclude is the most desirable and frequently purchased commodity at bus stations. Few were aware of snacks, fruits, etc.

Again, the table clearly shows that nearly 50% passengers from within District were aware of human safety and porter facility but only 38% knew about parcel facility and majority felt there was no parcel facility. But for other types of passengers it was totally opposite with majority not knowing about any of the above facilities.

8. Findings and Recommendations

The respondents were also asked for any problems they encounter or improvements they would like in the facilities provided at Bus Stations or by MSRTC. Also, employees of MSRTC were interviewed to countercheck and come up with useful suggestions. The problems and expectations stressed by respondents, the answers received from Bus Stations employees and useful practical recommendations are given as under:

8.1. Cleanliness of Bus, Bus Stations and Wash Rooms

Many of the respondents talked on keeping bus, bus stations and wash rooms clean. For Cleanliness of Bus Stations, wash rooms and buses the employees said that sweepers are less and those who are do not work properly. It is suggested that more sweepers could be employed or it must be seen to it that the present employees work properly, dustbins may be installed at various places to avoid creation of garbage all around.

8.2. Hygienic Drinking Water and Food

This was another area of concern. Drinking water facility is provided but it is either overflowing due to being choked or no water. For this at times employees said that the passengers and their companions coming to leave them at the station are responsible. People using the facility should take care and for food – fried or baked and fresh juices, net must be kept on top of it to avoid mosquitoes and flies. Hand gloves should be made compulsory.

8.3. Sitting Facility

It was experienced by many that sitting arrangement fell short. The demand was to increase seating facility for waiting passengers and separate sitting arrangements for senior citizens, physically handicapped and expectant mothers. Again, through security a check must be kept on those who just come for loitering around and occupy the seats.

8.4. Light and Fan Arrangement

At times it was observed that the light and fan facility fell short and where there were, they were not in working condition. MSRTC personnel once again blamed the people for misuse of public property. Switchboards too were broken due to manhandling.

8.5. Buses

Many complained that buses do not run on time. This needs to be taken care of. Frequency of buses and number of buses needs to be increased and if possible special bus for ladies may be run. MSRTC personnel informed that the number of ladies travelling alone is less so it is not economical to start special buses for women and same is the case with frequency and number of buses as it will lead to buses going half empty, once again putting a financial burden on government treasury. Few demanded fast and super-fast buses be stated. Convenience of college going students too needs to be addressed. They also demanded separate bus. For this MSRTC needs to come out with a plan after studying the passenger statistics. Another few felt that stoppages of buses too be increased and the bus must stop at bus stops. Buses should also run late night with, of course, proper security. Two doors be there in buses – one for entering and one for exit. Plates displaying the route of bus be clear. In the dark radium plates would work. Respondents demanded good seats in buses for which once again employees blamed public for spoiling good seats. Provision for air-conditioned buses could also be done and higher fare could be charged to make travelling comfortable.

8.6. Speed of Buses

Though there is discipline in parking the buses, bus drivers should control their speed while driving the bus. Through technology one can control the speed of bus by installing a speed monitoring system.

8.7. Announcement at Bus Stations

At times announcements of arrival and departure of buses are not made or not clear and at times it is very loud. It should be properly audible. A proper announcement system is required to be installed. Another solution could be installing indicators, digital boards or displays about buses.

8.8. Behaviour of Inquiry Personnel

Inquiry counter personnel are recommended to speak more softly and be courteous. A training be imparted to them to deal with different types of people.

8.9. Pollution

Many said that buses must be pollution free and smoking at bus stations should not be allowed. Buses should undergo PUC tests and then only be allowed to run. To reduce pollution, a garden may be built or trees be planted around the bus stations will also be helpful. Regarding smoking it is not allowed in public places and this law should be strictly enforced.

8.10. Hi-tech Facilities

The young passengers demanded various facilities in this era of technology

1. Internet connection – wifi facility
2. CCTV Camera for better control
3. E-ticketing – Online ticket facility was announced from 15th December 2014 but has yet to come up in practical.
4. ATM

8.11. Facility for Patients

It is advisable that there be a provision of first aid at bus station and in bus and an ambulance facility at bus station.

8.12. Waiting Rooms

They need to be better in terms of cleanliness and washrooms be better. Air Condition waiting room facility may be provided for a price.

8.13. Safety

For safety the suggestions were passengers be requested not to touch unknown objects, employ more police staff for female security and thieves. From many female respondents it was demanded that drunkards not be allowed.

8.14. Other Facilities

1. Bus conductors should keep change.
2. More attractive stalls.
3. Not to increase fare steeply.
4. Luxury buses should be cheaper.
5. Porter facility is there but they are not seen.
6. Auto-rickshaw drivers to be instructed to park their auto-rickshaws properly outside the stations.

The above problems are such that they could be solved if MSRTC takes them seriously. What is required is the will-power. It is not that these facilities are not available or could not be made available but a proper planning and more than that a proper administration and control of their plans is the need of time.

9. Conclusion

It cannot be denied that state transport buses play an important role in transporting not only passengers but also parcels in Maharashtra. Lakhs of people travel every day by this means of transport because of its connectivity with urban, rural as well as remote areas of the state. The facilities provided by MSRTC is for the comfort of passengers but due to some lacunae is unable to serve the passengers to the extent possible. If MSRTC is to be blamed, the passengers too are to be blamed. Both the parties have to cooperate. For dirty Bus Stations, water facility, wash rooms, bad buses from inside, broken switch boards, lights and fans, etc. are at times due to misuse of public property. But MSRTC too should provide many services to make it more comfortable for people to travel and feel good. A stronger will power, better administration and proper control could help change the slogan from 'jithe rasta, tithe ST' (where there's a road, there's a ST bus)! to 'Jithe jayiche tithe ST tun Jayiche (wherever I go, I will go by ST).

10. References

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