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Choice stimuli of middle class travelers

With special reference to bus transportation

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In the current scenario the transportation industry is suffering from an inherent hierarchical orientation, which is totally distinct from the traveler's orientation. The prevailing situation demands a change in their prejudiced center of attention and become truly market driven. It involves tackling inefficient and improper things in all areas and responding effectively to the traveler's demands. Being a service industry it is very difficult to run them under the strict business principle of no-profit and no-loss, since they are run more as social services than business. The present study aims to determine the contribution of various variables and their levels in the choice stimuli of middle class travelers with special reference to bus transportation. Its objective is to measure an extent to which the attributes of bus transportation are able to determine travelers best choices at different levels of distances. The study reveals that a middle class traveler consider all the three attributes i.e. Tariff, class, and various facilities provided by the mode of transportation while taking traveling decision. But traveling time and distance to be traveled is a major factor behind deciding the hierarchy of these attributes.

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Public transports have been run as bureaucratic organizations rather than service organizations. They suffer from an inherent hierarchical orientation, which is totally distinct from the traveler's orientation. An individual is categorized by his traveling habits and becomes tourist where the focus shifts to the one who is performing the action or undertaking the journey. A common starting point for defining the meaning of traveler or tourist has often been the dictionary itself. The objective in the past was to be an efficient monopoly and therefore, the entire focus of their efforts was on streamlining their operations to drive down the costs. To a certain extent it is fine, but there is only a certain cost that can be reduced and for that the organization need not continuously shrink their way to profitability.

In all institutions and organizations, whether public or private, profitability is the main stuff of management. It is rather necessary that all public and private utilities in particular have a larger productive objective than making profits. Transportation or tourism has been described as the insecurely unified mixture of industries that arise from the movement of people and their stay in various destinations outside their home area (Pearce, 1982). Among all other service industries, transportation industry is considered as a great source of foreign exchange earner (Thullen, 1996). In early 1970's, the importance of productivity and profitability was always a topic of controversy and arguments.

In case of transportation sector as a service industry, a wide series of performance parameters were evolved which had little or no relevance to profitability. If they need profitability growth they have to serve their customers effectively and efficiently and try to fulfill their needs and demands. Initially Chapin stressed on the choice and preference factor in traveler's behavior, but afterwards he recognized that motivation and choice may be sufficient to create a propensity to act, but the outcome or activity was also dependent on the opportunity to act. Instead of viewing the behavioral sequence entirely as a demand phenomenon, the consummation of an activity is seen to be dependent on a supply consideration as well. Traveler's behavior is the most dominating factor behind the traveler's choice stimuli as it always acts as an interactive function of the social, economic and physical context in which it occurs (Hanson and Huff, 1986).

Public transportation also known as public transit or mass transit comprises all transport systems like rail and bus services, scheduled airline services, ferries, taxicab services etc. The principle modes of passenger transports like air, rail and road have undergone significant developments in last few years and continuous increasing competition has provided the travelers with better choices. All the concerns like planners and engineers must be able to forecast the responses of transportation demand with respect to the changes in the attributes of transportation system and changes in the preferences and choices of travelers using transportation system. According to Hagerstrand (1970) and Klingbeil (1980) these activities are occurring as an opportunity to develop travelers demand for the transportation sector.

An efficient transportation system provides a support to the economy by providing efficient, cheap, comfortable and safe services to the travelers as well as to the movement of goods within and outside the country (Arosanyin, 2001). A highly well organized operation with productive service strategy is a sure way for slow refuse and attaining expected growth for any organization (Somayajulu, 2002). Though, there has been a slight development in transport services in the last decade but at

the same time due to inadequacy and scarcity of proper infrastructure and resources, the public is facing a lot many problems (Srinivasan, 1986 and 2000).

The prevailing situation demands that they should change their prejudiced center of attention and become truly market driven. Future challenges involve much more than taking a record of the existing facilities and assets, and perk up them. It involves tackling inefficient and improper things in all the areas and responding effectively to the traveler's demand. The concern needs to improve the quality of infrastructure and service delivery rather than increasing the quantity of the assets. A hasty look at the problems of the travelers due to inadequate and unsatisfactory services reveals that the issues and concerns are varied and not easy to deal (Vasudevan, et al. 2001). There arises a crucial need for balanced and integrated transportation planning and policy, separate infrastructure for all the modes of transportation and continuous increase in the needs and demands of the travelers.

Choosing a right mode of transportation for traveling is a complex decision since it is influenced by many factors such as distance, tariff, speed, journey, length, comfort, convenience, safety and reliability. In recent years, significant trends in the choices of classes or sub-classes of modes of transportation have been observed. Adequate development in the principle modes of transportation like rail, road and air has provided the traveler with many options (Vasudevan, et. al. 2001) and that has long been accepted as an engine of development for long-term economic growth and development. Its objective indicates that they are formed to provide adequate, economic, efficient and properly coordinated transport services to the traveling public (Nadaf, 2002).

Due to tremendous changes and developments in the transportation service industry, competition among private operators and public owned buses have been arises. Previous studies have shown the ignorance of micro level performance in almost each and every class of mode of transportation. Their results revealed that due to the absence of traveler's service satisfaction performance and productivity of service industries gets affected and as a result economic viability and long-term sustainability cannot be restored. The present scenario demands for better services at minimum affordable cost. Several individual transport modes have also emerged supported by various facilities like convenient credit facilities, offering stiff competition. A major section of our society belongs to the middle class people and if the choices and preferences of these people are not taken care off or has neglected, then there would be a huge gap in the developing stages of our country.

Traveling stimulates an increased interest in tourism (Batra and Chawla, 1995) which is inclusive of some important and crucial decisions like payment of tariff, choice of class or sub-class of the mode and the preference of the facilities provided by the mode for a particular distance. Vasudevan et al (2001) found that some of the major factors like time, cost and quality of services still have a strong bearing on travel choices and hence have a universal effect. The distance and fare differentials have the expected coefficient, which decides its positive and negative aspects depending upon travel time and tariff coefficients (Bindhu and Sathikumar, 2001). Today's market is consumer driven. They want service satisfaction at any cost. Economic mode of transportation, time punctuality, behavior of the concern staff, and comfortability in all respects are the primary objectives for a consumer. But some previous researchers showed in their studies that there was no proper emphasis given on traveler's satisfaction. This was the main obstacle in the development process of service (transport) industries.

Being a service industry it is very difficult to run them under the strict business principle of no-profit and no-loss; it improves welfare of people and helps in the economic growth and development of the country. Good transport services with all facilities raises productivity and lowers production costs by providing travelers satisfaction. They run more as social services than business (Jairaj, 2002). The changing scenario has battered the traveler's base in the past few years. To retain and regain the travelers trust, transportation sector has to develop such effective and useful practices with the motive to improve the morale and satisfaction of all the concerned, since evidences suggest strong links between satisfaction level and profitability in several service sectors (Somayajulu, 2002).

It was also found that the performance of the mode choice models could be improved significantly by the addition of the abstract attributes (Spear, 1976). On the

contrary, worsening and declining the quality of services leads to the down turn in the society's quality of life and productivity. Providing a service and facility that effectively and efficiently meets the demand of the traveler is one of the major challenges in front of the transportation sector and economic development (Somayajulu, 2002). By keeping all these things in view, this present study is an attempt to determine the contribution of various variables and their levels in the choice stimuli of middle class travelers with special reference to bus transportation and to measure an extent to which tariff for distance, class and facilities provided by the mode of transportation, as attributes of bus transportation are able to determine consumer best choices at different levels of distances.

Research methodology

The present study is an exploratory study which was carried out on a small sample of middle class travelers with a monthly income of between Rs. 5000 Rs. 15000.

The sample size for the purpose of study is 50 middle class travelers. The reason for choosing only this class of travelers is because they mostly prefer bus for traveling as their mode of transportation. The rational behind targeting only this income group is based on various factors like

(a) *Standard of Living:* A Middle Class Traveler prefer either private or public bus as road transportation for traveling purpose.
(b) *Purchasing Power*: For a Middle Class Traveler, purchasing power plays a vital role in deciding the class of bus as road transport such as Private bus transport or Public bus transport.
(c) *Cost of Living:* Cost of living is affected by spending a decided amount on tariff. Thus, the decision is most vital to consider, what should be the tariff?

Research design: The objective of the present study was to determine the contribution of various variables and their levels in the choice stimuli of middle class travelers. Only bus transportation and its three major attributes i.e. tariff for distance, class and facilities are taken into consideration. The number of levels is restricted up-to only 12 levels (5 + 2 + 5), which are mentioned below:

Factors/Attributes

- Tariff for distance;
- Class;
- Facilities;

Levels/Values

- Tariff for distance; there are total 5 levels i.e.,
  Below Rs. 50 for up-to 150 kms.,
  Rs. 50-200 for 150-300 kms.,
  Rs. 200-250 for 300-450 kms.,
  Rs. 250-300 for 450-600 kms.,
  Above Rs. 300 for above 600 kms.

- Class; there are total 2 levels i.e.,
  Private and Public

- Facilities; there are total 5 levels i.e.,
  Economic fare,
  Good condition of the vehicle,
  Punctuality
  No. of departures and arrivals,
  Behavior of the staff,

Other services, which includes:
Cleanliness,
Prompt services,
Good management,
Ticketing / reservation facility,
Availability of waiting room,
Good working staff,
Late night journeys,
No. of stoppages,
Refreshment centers,
Special facilities for ladies; and so on.

Tools for Data Collection: The study is based on Primary data, which was collected through an enhanced questionnaire that consists of a matrix table along with an instruction to fill. The questionnaire was given to 50 Middle Class Travelers.

Tools for Data Analysis: Conjoint Analysis as a multi-variate statistical technique was used to understand how respondents develop preferences for products and services. It is based on the simple premises that consumers evaluate the value of a product / service / idea (Real or Hypothetical) by combining the separate amounts of value provided by each attribute.

Following criteria's were set as boundaries assuring that research will not go beyond that and these boundaries were

divided mainly under two categories viz. attributes and their relative levels. There may be some other levels also, but to avoid any type of complications and to avoid the respondents from any type of confusion, only these possible levels are considered. The amount of tariff for particular distances was decided with the help of and on the basis of the fare list provided by Indore Depot (Sarvate Bus Stand).

Data Analysis was done in two stages

(1) The estimation of Conjoint Analysis for Average Rank and Deviation, Part - worth and Factor importance; and

(2) Predicted Part worth Totals and Comparison of Actual and Estimated Preference Rankings.

Data Interpretation: It was done at the last stage by taking all the actual and estimated preference rankings of all the 50 travelers and then by comparing them separately.

The study is based on the hypothesis - Tariff stimuli respond harmoniously in travelers choice decision, where 'tariff' refers to the fare rates of bus as a road transportation; 'stimuli' refers to the degree of readiness to pursue any particular activity, say for the purpose of making choice in context with tariff rates; 'respond' refers to react; and 'harmoniously' refers accordingly i.e., according to the travelers choice.

Results and discussion

The objective of the study was to determine the contribution of variables and their levels in context with the travelers' preferences with special reference to bus as road transportation. It has been found throughout the study that these are the most important attributes of bus transportation, which influence the traveling decision of middle class travelers. Definitely the purpose of traveling and availability of mode of transportation is important but these attributes are always been important and crucial in traveler's choice stimuli. The aim of the study was to measure an extent to which tariff for distance, class and facilities provided by the mode of transportations, as attributes of road transportation are able to determine travelers best choice at different levels of distances. The objective has been fulfilled by using conjoint analysis, which ultimately shows the differences in the perception of travelers regarding the importance and significance of various attributes of bus as road transportation. Travelers perceive that classes are the least significant attribute, than the other two. Class of any mode of transportation is irrelevant for the traveler. He has nothing to do with sub-classes of the same mode of transportation, if other facilities are same. Tariff is an important and significant determinant for all modes of transportation. One has to depend upon the distance and tariff factor for traveling. This can be treated as an independent variable in all categories including road.

The study was based on Null Hypothesis "Tariff stimuli respond harmoniously in travelers choice decision" and the final results of the study revealed that this hypothesis has been rejected. The final results “Table 1” revealed that out of total 50 travelers 27 travelers kept facilities at the top, tariff for distance at the second place and class at the last place. The choice stimuli of 54 % of the total population say's that facilities are the most important and class is the least important attribute. 28 % of the total population i.e. 14 out of total 50 travelers say's that tariff for distance should be at the top, facilities at the second and class should be at the last place. 10 % i.e. 5 travelers out of the total population keeps facilities at the top, class at the second place and tariff for distance at the last place. 4% i.e. 2 travelers out of the total population stay's on the opinion that tariff for distance is the most important attribute and facilities is the least important. Out of the whole population only 1 traveler keeps class at the top place, tariff for distance at the second place and facilities at the last and the remaining 1 traveler kept tariff for distance and facilities at the top, and class at the last i.e., it is only 2 % - 2 % of the whole population of 50 travelers.

“Table 2” indicates the final ranking given to the various factors / attributes according to their levels. These rankings are the indications of choice stimuli of middle class travelers regarding the choices and preferences of attributes of bus transportation. It clearly shows that all the three attributes of bus transportation i.e., tariff for distance, the class of the mode of transportation and the various facilities provided by the mode of transportation are significant but in a hierarchy. It was also observed throughout the study that travelers have given more importance to the distance and the desired facility for that distance and then has given attention towards the class of the mode of transportation. It was one of the

Table 1: Preferences and factor importance given to the attributes of road transportation

Attributes / Respondents	Tariff for Distance (%)	Class (%)	Facilities (%)
R1	50.46	36.92	12.62
R2	63.85	8.03	28.12
R3	41.54	10.87	47.60
R4	64.88	10.71	24.40
R5	14.77	31.38	53.85
R6	7.26	12.03	80.71
R7	45.90	25.99	28.11
R8	37.05	9.54	53.41
R9	23.59	1.74	74.67
R10	42.04	7.65	50.31
R11	15.98	3.15	80.87
R12	22.96	3.51	73.53
R13	42.90	36.09	21.01
R14	42.81	4.62	52.58
R15	13.90	29.12	56.98
R16	42.75	15.82	41.43
R17	56.51	14.71	28.78
R18	63.50	4.45	32.04
R19	15.08	3.54	81.38
R20	24.37	4.20	71.43
R21	81.63	2.04	16.33
R22	18.00	2.00	80.00
R23	27.16	12.40	60.43
R24	10.28	14.23	75.48
R25	7.60	10.27	82.14
R26	46.93	8.33	44.74
R27	49.37	5.18	45.45
R28	28.69	4.16	67.15
R29	36.54	4.95	58.52
R30	60.49	9.38	30.13
R31	51.03	-2.05	51.03
R32	54.65	2.96	42.39
R33	25.51	5.76	68.73
R34	73.56	7.42	19.01
R35	46.32	3.34	50.34
R36	15.79	8.45	75.76
R37	21.49	0.98	77.53
R38	48.57	2.58	48.85
R39	21.34	5.43	73.23
R40	13.13	3.94	82.93
R41	22.63	3.23	74.13
R42	28.98	4.45	66.57
R43	39.23	5.00	55.77
R44	27.91	4.20	67.89
R45	20.43	1.43	78.15
R46	16.33	2.04	81.63
R47	40.82	51.02	8.16
R48	24.36	5.74	69.90
R49	47.42	16.57	36.01
R50	55.58	17.75	26.67

most important observations throughout the study that only if the traveler wishes to travel more distance at a time then only he will compare the various attributes and make his own hierarchy. The statistical results also revealed the same thing i.e., more attention was given towards the maximum distance of above 600 kilometers. They want best facilities for the maximum distance and ready to pay the decided or sometimes more tariff. It means according to them facilities are at the top place and tariff is at the second place. That's why they have ranked it first.

After comparing the actual and estimated preferences also the results are same i.e., the travelers have given first rank to the facilities when they had actually filled their responses in the questionnaire. After applying conjoint analysis on their responses the result was same i.e. their estimated ranking for facilities was also first, hence manually and scientifically the results are same. This accuracy is with all the five rankings. The second rank was occupied by the fourth level of tariff for distance i.e., Rs.

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Table 2
Final Rankings Given By The Travelers

Respondents / Stimuli description			From 1 to 10 Total Rankings		From 11 to 20 Total Rankings		From 21 to 30 Total Rankings		From 31 to 40 Total Rankings		From 41 to 50 Total Rankings		Overall Total Rankings		Final Rankings		
Tariff for distance	Facilities	Class	Actual	Estimated	Actual	Estimated	Actual	Estimated	Actual	Estimated	Actual	Estimated	Actual	Estimated	Actual	Estimated	
Below Rs. 50 for upto 150 kms.	Economic	Private	239	307	337	266	175	253	257	228	329	378	1337	1432	29	36	
Below Rs. 50 for upto 150 kms.	Condition	Private	249	167	251	274	240	277	220	191	248	258	1208	1167	17	20	
Below Rs. 50 for upto 150 kms.	Punctuality	Private	222	181	295	315	300	312	253	269	279	328	1349	1405	31	33	
Below Rs. 50 for upto 150 kms.	Bahaviour	Private	136	127	294	250	237	248	242	234	325	281	1234	1140	21	18	
Below Rs. 50 for upto 150 kms.	Others	Private	280	265	309	374	328	364	323	334	256	246	1496	1583	46	42	
Below Rs. 50 for upto 150 kms.	Economic	Public	321	367	292	325	217	281	300	248	363	394	1493	1615	45	44	
Below Rs. 50 for upto 150 kms.	Condition	Public	264	232	348	350	302	296	191	210	277	277	1382	1365	33	31	
Below Rs. 50 for upto 150 kms.	Punctuality	Public	320	249	348	367	275	328	283	289	313	354	1539	1587	49	43	
Below Rs. 50 for upto 150 kms.	Bahaviour	Public	207	201	368	315	313	241	304	276	318	332	1510	1365	47	32	
Below Rs. 50 for upto 150 kms.	Others	Public	293	335	330	449	278	378	249	366	312	313	1462	1841	41	49	
													14010	14500	4	4	Rank 4
Rs. 50-200 for 150-300 kms.	Economic	Private	314	374	242	205	238	253	300	240	353	356	1447	1428	39	35	
Rs. 50-200 for 150-300 kms.	Condition	Private	241	225	237	218	298	267	261	201	248	244	1285	1155	25	19	
Rs. 50-200 for 150-300 kms.	Punctuality	Private	251	248	265	274	264	334	277	271	282	322	1339	1449	30	37	
Rs. 50-200 for 150-300 kms.	Bahaviour	Private	223	191	258	207	259	246	324	257	324	303	1388	1204	35	21	
Rs. 50-200 for 150-300 kms.	Others	Private	324	345	285	337	333	373	250	373	251	273	1443	1701	38	47	
Rs. 50-200 for 150-300 kms.	Economic	Public	391	432	289	280	232	290	266	270	309	371	1487	1643	43	45	
Rs. 50-200 for 150-300 kms.	Condition	Public	254	303	258	277	276	291	241	226	235	262	1264	1359	24	30	
Rs. 50-200 for 150-300 kms.	Punctuality	Public	335	328	312	328	265	351	284	298	336	343	1532	1648	48	46	
Rs. 50-200 for 150-300 kms.	Bahaviour	Public	274	274	254	250	361	272	269	285	303	329	1461	1410	40	34	
Rs. 50-200 for 150-300 kms.	Others	Public	340	425	318	387	345	400	297	384	276	301	1576	1897	50	50	
													14222	14894	5	5	Rank 5
Rs. 200-250 for 300-450 kms.	Economic	Private	323	354	218	193	258	215	230	223	307	319	1336	1304	28	27	
Rs. 200-250 for 300-450 kms.	Condition	Private	227	192	199	196	254	218	171	168	225	205	1076	979	8	9	
Rs. 200-250 for 300-450 kms.	Punctuality	Private	207	223	246	254	211	284	256	248	264	283	1184	1292	15	25	
Rs. 200-250 for 300-450 kms.	Bahaviour	Private	204	163	254	187	225	191	310	248	264	249	1257	1038	23	11	
Rs. 200-250 for 300-450 kms.	Others	Private	323	311	263	319	289	325	254	339	202	230	1331	1524	27	40	
Rs. 200-250 for 300-450 kms.	Economic	Public	389	414	248	268	220	247	280	247	287	340	1424	1516	37	38	
Rs. 200-250 for 300-450 kms.	Condition	Public	294	280	265	271	314	241	247	195	256	230	1376	1217	32	22	
Rs. 200-250 for 300-450 kms.	Punctuality	Public	284	313	359	325	272	311	264	276	310	306	1489	1531	44	41	
Rs. 200-250 for 300-450 kms.	Bahaviour	Public	224	252	299	252	300	228	316	273	271	272	1410	1277	36	23	
Rs. 200-250 for 300-450 kms.	Others	Public	322	397	279	380	285	347	263	359	314	258	1463	1741	42	48	
													13346	13419	3	3	Rank 3

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Respondents / Stimuli description			From 1 to 10 Total Rankings		From 11 to 20 Total Rankings		From 21 to 30 Total Rankings		From 31 to 40 Total Rankings		From 41 to 50 Total Rankings		Overall Total Rankings		Final Rankings		
Rs. 250-300 for 450-600 kms.	Economic	Private	299	306	169	149	196	164	236	209	254	251	1154	1079	13	14	
Rs. 250-300 for 450-600 kms.	Condition	Private	210	150	157	162	237	151	209	163	204	144	1017	770	6	3	
Rs. 250-300 for 450-600 kms.	Punctuality	Private	178	194	233	209	200	223	252	236	227	210	1090	1072	9	12	
Rs. 250-300 for 450-600 kms.	Bahaviour	Private	168	125	202	154	181	158	248	242	172	181	971	860	4	5	
Rs. 250-300 for 450-600 kms.	Others	Private	290	267	239	275	228	273	268	326	166	164	1191	1305	16	28	
Rs. 250-300 for 450-600 kms.	Economic	Public	345	378	230	216	232	198	234	234	268	276	1309	1302	26	26	
Rs. 250-300 for 450-600 kms.	Condition	Public	260	232	239	222	254	174	182	186	195	175	1130	989	11	10	
Rs. 250-300 for 450-600 kms.	Punctuality	Public	273	276	280	273	198	239	247	259	252	235	1250	1282	22	24	
Rs. 250-300 for 450-600 kms.	Bahaviour	Public	203	205	235	209	287	184	303	272	191	206	1219	1076	19	13	
Rs. 250-300 for 450-600 kms.	Others	Public	360	348	275	341	246	295	287	351	219	183	1387	1518	34	39	
													11718	11253	2	2	Rank 2
Above Rs. 300 for above 600 kms.	Economic	Private	320	249	149	116	218	156	169	190	238	210	1094	921	10	6	
Above Rs. 300 for above 600 kms.	Condition	Private	85	101	145	129	288	165	151	136	106	108	775	639	1	1	
Above Rs. 300 for above 600 kms.	Punctuality	Private	116	127	190	172	214	237	311	213	241	199	1072	948	7	8	
Above Rs. 300 for above 600 kms.	Bahaviour	Private	110	77	161	131	210	152	215	215	156	175	852	750	2	2	
Above Rs. 300 for above 600 kms.	Others	Private	221	189	216	239	234	262	301	310	183	137	1155	1137	14	17	
Above Rs. 300 for above 600 kms.	Economic	Public	346	305	158	175	235	184	195	216	286	237	1220	1117	20	15	
Above Rs. 300 for above 600 kms.	Condition	Public	128	162	250	185	308	179	148	156	125	140	959	822	3	4	
Above Rs. 300 for above 600 kms.	Punctuality	Public	174	186	237	232	204	242	317	236	217	221	1149	1117	12	16	
Above Rs. 300 for above 600 kms.	Bahaviour	Public	135	136	210	179	207	177	216	245	211	188	979	925	5	7	
Above Rs. 300 for above 600 kms.	Others	Public	253	262	245	289	239	275	309	329	168	153	1214	1308	18	29	
													10469	9684	1	1	Rank 1

estimated preference shows the same result i.e., 2-2 and the overall rank is second. The third rank has been occupied by the third level of tariff for distance i.e., Rs. 200-250 for 300-450 kms. The actual and estimated preferences showed the same results i.e., 3-3 and its overall ranking is Third. The fourth rank has been given to the first level of tariff for distance i.e., Below Rs. 50 for up-to 150 kms of distance. The actual and estimated preference shows the same results i.e., 4-4 and hence it is on the fourth rank. The fifth rank has been occupied by the second level of tariff for distance i.e., Rs. 50-200 for 150-300 kms. The actual and estimated preference shows the same result i.e., 5-5 and the overall ranking is fifth.

The major portion of the population perceive that facilities are at the top position, tariff for distance is at the second place and classes or sub-classes of the mode of transportation is at the last place which affects the choice stimuli of middle class travelers. Such travelers are around 54 % out of the total population. According to the travelers economic mode of transportation with good behavior of the staff, comfort and special facilities for ladies are the most important requirement. Stopher (1969) in his study identified various factors in the form of facilities that influence and motivates the traveler in choosing the best mode of transportation. He found that abstract attributes like comfort, convenience, reliability, safety, and behavior of crew plays an important role in the choice stimuli of the traveler.

In all road transportations including buses, tariff and distance is one of the dominating factors for passengers. It is having many more peculiar advantages such as flexibility, capital requirements, capacity, infrastructure, accessibility and adaptability (Kadam, 2002). However, small proportion of the travelers perceive differently then the whole population. This difference in the perception of travelers regarding preferences of tariff for distance and facilities is somewhat more than 50%. Because of the quality of services bus transporters have occupied a special place in the minds of the travelers in India, and hence have captured a major market share among all other modes of transportation. In order to maintain the existing level as well as to increase this existing share continuous improvement in that direction is required by providing quality services to the traveler at his doorstep (Babu, 2002).

Conclusion

The study revolves around the importance and significance of various attributes of modes of transportation. Though in this study only one mode of transportation is considered. But all modes of transport are having these common attributes i.e., tariff for distance, class or sub-classes and various facilities provided by the modes of transportation. The traveler pays his whole attention in searching the best and to get maximum satisfaction. This gives rise to choices as well as preferences and as a result competition increases to provide better quality services among various classes or sub-classes in the same as well as various modes of transportation.

This study shows that all the three attributes are important for the traveler to take traveling decision, but with a hierarchical ranking. Top most importance and significance is given to the various facilities provided by the modes of transportation. The next important criterion is tariff and distance. Before taking traveling decision, the traveler wants to know about the distance to be traveled and its tariff. On the basis of combination, he takes his traveling decision for a particular mode of transportation. The traveler is not paying much attention on the class or sub-class factor of the mode. According to him, if facilities for a particular distance in a fixed tariff are satisfactory and suitable, then class or sub-class of the mode is of no relevance. Being a service industry, they should give more importance to those factors, which are of highest significance and factor importance from travelers' point of view.

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