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Title: Need to add more de-reserved coaches in the trains.

SHRI K.C. VENUGOPAL (ALAPPUZHA): Sir, I would like to draw the attention of the House to a serious issue faced by the commuters. As per the notification issued by the Southern Railway Headquarters, Chennai, which will be implemented with effect from 1.5.2013, certain restrictions have been put in place for short distance passengers in reserved sleeper coaches.

As per the notification, the passengers with de-reserved tickets will not be permitted to travel in reserved sleeper coaches. The decision was justified on account of persistent complaint from the passengers of long-distance sleeper class reserved compartments in Express or Super-fast trains that they are facing disturbance owing to the crowding of passengers with de-reserved tickets.

19.00 hrs.

The decision will clamp down on commuters without reservation travelling in sleeper compartments. According to the Railways, even if they possess sleeper tickets, they can only travel in de-reserved sleeper coaches which are few in number. Those travelling without reservation are bound to pay revised amount as provided.

As per the current rule, the passengers must pay increased amount to board the reserved compartments. De-reserved coaches are sleeper class coaches but kept unreserved for a particular section for the use of short distance day-time travellers by paying charges for the actual distance travelled. But these de-reserved coaches are very few in many long-distance trains. Commuters with sleeper tickets have not been sticking to de-reserved coaches.

When fresh norms come into force from Friday, commuters will have to pay additional amounts to travel in sleeper class or confine themselves to one or two de-reserved compartments. The present practice of short-distance passengers travelling with tickets in reserved sleeper coaches which are not nominated as de-reserved coaches will be stopped. Such short-distance passengers will have to take a sleeper ticket for a minimum chargeable distance of 200 kilometres. The fresh norms would be a major hazard to short-distance rail commuters and the arbitrary hike in fares is affecting them. This is an indirect fare hike, Sir.

Although the Railways are going as per procedures, the authorities are silent about the insufficient number of trains and compartments. Short-distance commuters are boarding reserved compartments only because of a shortage of de-reserved compartments in long-distance trains. It is highly ironic to impose such a heavy fare on short-distance passengers than to add more de-reserved coaches in the trains. Thank you.