

## Designated Smoking Areas or Dining Cars? An Observational Assessment of Trains in Bangladesh

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### Intro

Bangladesh's 2013 amendment to its tobacco control law introduced rules that allow multi-compartment public vehicles such as trains to install a marked Designated Smoking Area (DSA) at the end or open space that is not crossed or used by non-smokers to access services. This cross-sectional observational study aimed to determine the prevalence and location of DSAs within trains traveling through Dhaka station.

### Methods

An initial list of 56 trains passing through Dhaka station was obtained from the Bangladesh Railway Agency. Three trains were eliminated from the final sample due to permanent closure. Following at least 20 minutes of observation of the entire train, trained data collectors completed a survey to assess characteristics of the DSA between December 2021-January 2022. If observers could not locate the DSA, they were instructed to ask the train staff.

### Results

The study surveyed 34 intercity trains, 14 mail/express trains, and five commuter trains.

- **40%** (n=21) of all train-types had a DSA: 56% (n=19) on intercity trains, 14% (n=2) of mail/express trains, and none in commuter trains.
- Signage indicating DSAs were not present in any of the observed trains.
  - For all 21 identified DSAs, **data-collectors were verbally directed by train staff to use the dining car as a DSA.**
  - Servers were present in nearly half (48%, n=10) of all identified DSAs.
  - Three of 12 dining cars with patrons had smokers at the time of observation.

### Discussion

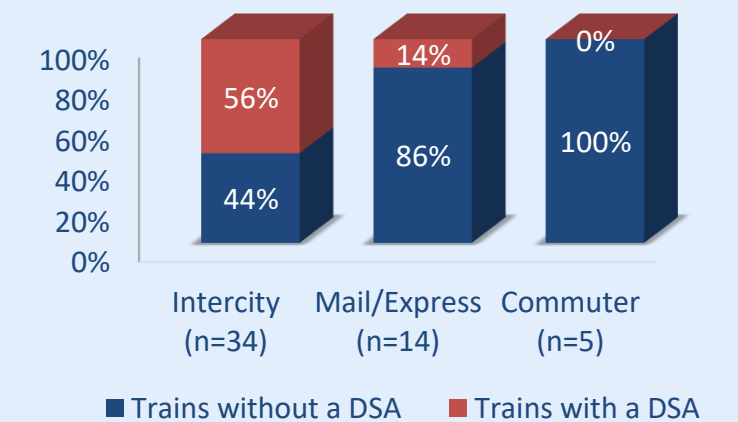
Dining cars are being used as DSAs, indicating low compliance with the law which prohibits provision of any service inside the DSA. This violation creates the **risk of secondhand smoke for servers and other patrons** in the dining car. Recommendations to strengthen the Railway Minister's Initiative to make Bangladesh's railways 100% smoke-free includes posting "No-Smoking" signage, targeting enforcement in dining cars, and providing training on updated smoke-free laws to railway employees.

# Designated Smoking Areas in transportation dining cars are not compliant with smoke-free law in Bangladesh.

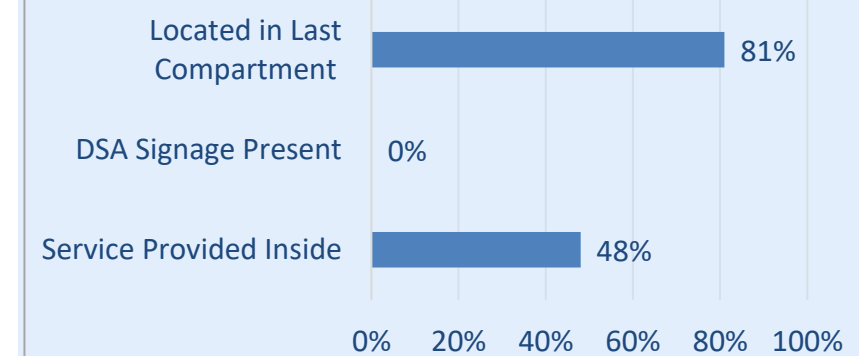
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### Extra Tables & Figures

**Figure 1: Prevalence of DSAs by Train-type**



**Figure 2: Characteristics of Identified DSAs (n=21)**



*\*Requirements as per the Bangladesh Tobacco Control Law*

1. *Design Standards: DSAs should be physically separated from non-smoking areas and shall not be passed to reach any services of the venue.*
2. *Internal Standards: All DSAs must carry a fire extinguisher, disposal container for tobacco products, and signage adhering to design specifications.*
3. *Non-Smoking Area Standards: No smoking aids (i.e. ashtrays) shall be provided in non-smoking areas. Non-smoking areas should display 'No Smoking' and warning signage that adhere to design specifications.*