



KAMARAJ IAS ACADEMY
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Why Indian Railways Uses 10-Digit PNR Numbers

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Indian Railways assigns a unique 10-digit Passenger Name Record (PNR) number to every booked ticket to streamline reservation management and passenger identification. This number acts as a digital record containing complete journey details, including passenger information, booking status, and seat allocation.

The structured 10-digit format enables efficient handling of millions of daily passengers, ensures uniqueness, and allows real-time tracking of reservations across the vast railway network.

Structure and Meaning of 10-Digit PNR:

The 10-digit PNR is not random; it carries encoded information. The first three digits represent the Passenger Reservation System (PRS) or the zone from which the ticket is booked, while the remaining seven digits are system-generated unique identifiers. This structure ensures that each ticket can be uniquely traced and managed within the centralized database.

Purpose and Importance:

The PNR system helps Indian Railways manage a massive volume of bookings by providing a single reference number for all passengers in a ticket. It allows passengers to check their booking status (confirmed, RAC, waiting list) and access details like coach and berth numbers. It also aids railway authorities in chart preparation, passenger verification, and handling cancellations efficiently.

Why 10 Digits Specifically?:

A 10-digit format provides a sufficiently large number of unique combinations, which is essential for handling millions of tickets daily without duplication. It balances complexity and usability—being long enough for uniqueness but still easy for passengers to read and use.

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