CRIS: How a CPaaS-powered AI Chatbot Enhanced Railways Operational Efficiency

Introduction

Railways are the lifeline of India and connect all its states from Kashmir to Kanyakumari. Thus, when the masses across the country use their services on a daily basis, handling their queries and ensuring each one is addressed effectively became.

This is what made the Indian Railways recognise the need to have faster query redressal at the right time, leading to them launching a dedicated platform called Rail Madad in 2021. Although an effective solution for the time being, this platform was not even available to the majority of travellers, defeating the objective of Rail Madad to help the Indian Railways improve its services.

Upon coming in contact with OneXtel, the Indian Railways realised the ways their difficulties could be minimised by replacing their website Railmadad with an AI-driven CPaaS-powered chatbot, which led to the emergence of CRIS.

The highlight-worthy feature of this chatbot is that it operates on WhatsApp. Thus, given that India has the highest number of monthly active WhatsApp users globally, with approximately **535.8 million users,** this chatbot helped more travellers reach out to the authorities. In fact, it even eased the technological headache of the Indian Railways.

Wondering about the ways CRIS has benefited the Indian Railways so far? To exactly understand the depth you know in detail, read this case study till the end.

About Rail Madad Website

Indian Railways operates one of the world's largest railway networks, spanning 65,000 km with 19,000 trains daily, including 12,000 passenger and 7,000 freight trains. It transports over 23 million passengers every day, making customer service a significant challenge.

To address passenger issues efficiently, **Indian Railways launched the Rail Madad website.** This platform enabled users to lodge complaints, track trains, and check schedules. However, as user numbers grew, the website struggled with high query volumes, causing delays due to manual handling. Additionally, it was difficult for those unfamiliar with technology to use.

To overcome these challenges, Indian Railways sought an advanced, user-friendly communication solution. They needed a scalable, automated system that could efficiently handle queries, replicating Rail Madad's functions but in a more accessible and responsive manner.
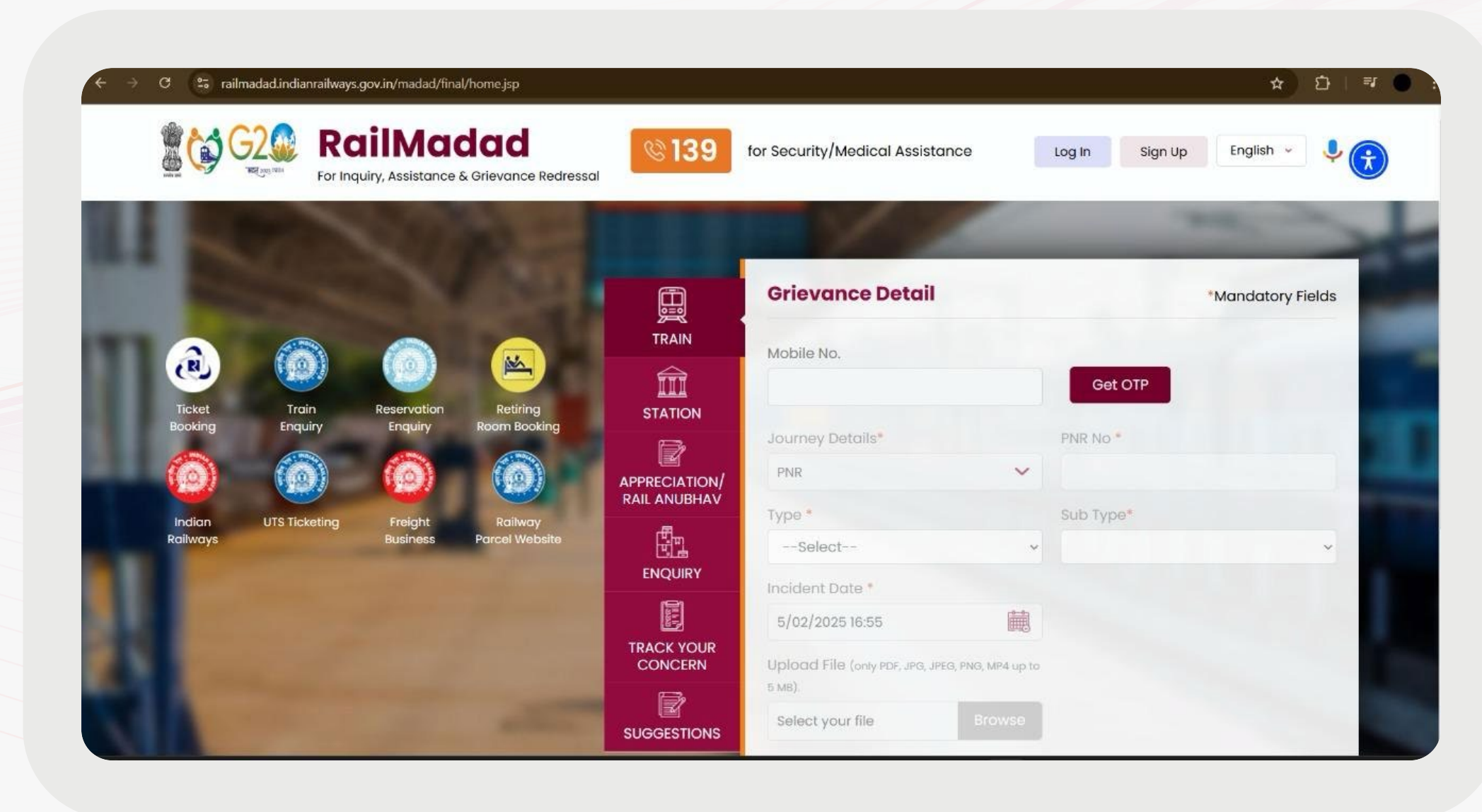
Challenges Faced by Indian Railways

To understand the ways CRIS benefitted the Indian Railways, it is essential to understand the challenges they were facing. Here is what our executives got to know about the issues faced by Indian Railways.

High Volume of Queries and Complaints

As the number of passengers was increasing day by day, the conventional helplines and manual complaints systems were struggling to solve all the queries in real-time. Then, the Rail Madad platform was introduced to simplify the process. Though it was a step forward, the website was overburdened by high traffic, and the lack of automation resulted in slow complaint resolution.

Slow Response Time

Passengers have many concerns, such as train delays, ticketing issues and onboarding assistance. When these things are handled manually, it delays the complete process. Passengers want their journey to be free from any issues, but these delays negatively impact their journey. This frustrated the passengers, lowering the customers' trust and reliability in railway services.

Limited Accessibility

As railway services are used by all kinds of people from rural to urban areas, many people from rural areas have limited access to the internet, which makes it difficult for them to register complaints on the website. There was no integration with WhatsApp, SMS, or voice support, which further restricted easy access.

Operational Inefficiencies

Due to the lack of automation, the query-handling process became difficult even for the railway staff. They had to sort, categorise, and respond to queries individually. This increased the administrative burden, resulted in inefficient resource utilisation, and resulted in additional operational costs.

Why were existing solutions not sufficient?

Lack of Personalisation

Responses were general and not at all customised according to the specific queries of the passenger.
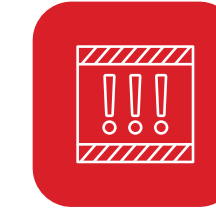
Website Limitations

The digital website was not AI-powered, which prevented urgent queries from being handled immediately.

Manual Processing Dependence

Due to manual processes, the helplines failed to handle the high volume of calls, leading to long wait times.

Ease of access

Using the website again and again for any query was not feasible for the passengers.

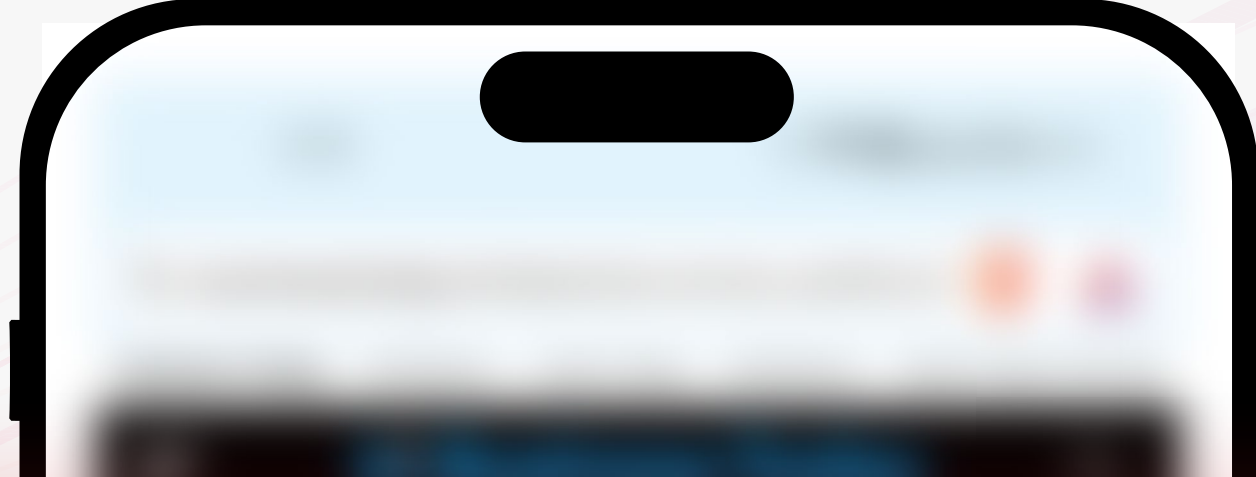# Why did they want to ease up the process?

Here are some of the reasons why the Indian Railways wants to further ease up this process

Enhancing Passenger Experience

The railway was observing the dissatisfaction amongst the customers due to delays in resolution and therefore wanted an efficient grievance system to ensure a smoother travel experience for their customers and to increase the confidence of the passengers in the railway services.

Reducing Complaint Resolution Time

They wanted to reduce the delays caused by manual interventions while solving any query. They wanted to reduce congestion at the inquiry counters and to avoid repeated complaints to improve the efficiency of their services.
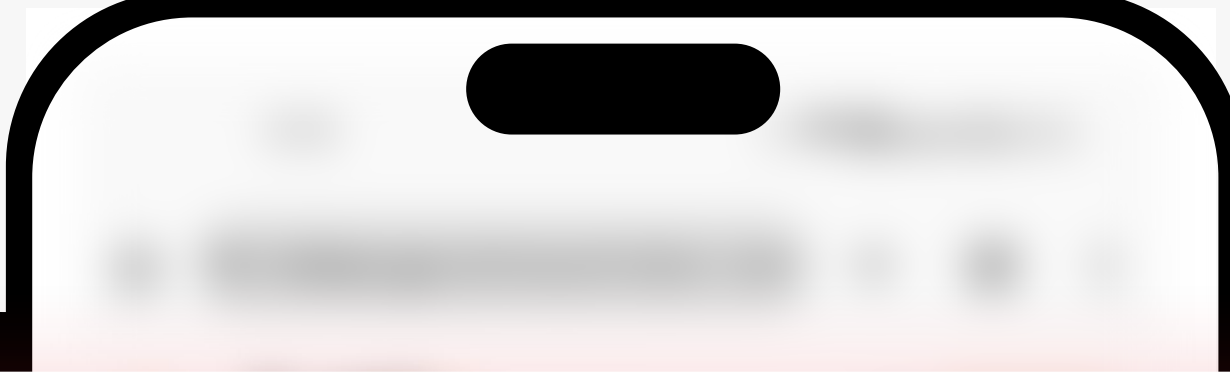
Indian Railways received over 40 lakh complaints on helpline numbers in past 5 years

In a written reply to a question in the Rajya Sabha, Railway Minister Piyush Goyal said over the last five years, from 2016 to February 28, 2021, 40,90,589 such calls were received

Source

RailMadad Portal Handles 3.65M Complaints Annually

Receives 10,000+ grievances daily

Processes ~3.65 million complaints per year

Source

Providing Real-Time Assistance in Emergencies

There were many concerns that required to be handled urgently, but railways were sometimes not able to get the most urgent query or resolve it quickly. Therefore, they required a mechanism by which urgent doubts could be handled quickly.

Making query resolution accessible to all

They wanted to find a solution that would be handy to all their passengers. Dealing with a website becomes difficult for people with less technical knowledge. They wanted to resolve their passengers using a platform that they use on a daily basis.

The OneXtel Solution

Our team at **OneXtel** carefully examined all the challenges faced by the passengers travelling on the railways. Moreover, since our solution was supposed to be a replacement for the Rail Madad website, we carefully analysed the website to determine what features they had and how they would be optimised.

In our in-depth discussion with the executives of the Indian Railways, we came to the conclusion that they require software that can be easily integrated with whatsapp, as whatsapp is something which is used by passengers on a daily basis without much difficulty. Therefore, we **developed a CPaaS-powered AI chatbot named CRIS,** which can be easily integrated with whatsapp to make its query resolution process easier. Read on to know the various features of chatbot:

Grievance Submission

Passengers can submit their queries or complaints by typing or recording messages directly in a WhatsApp chat called CRIS, our AI-powered chatbot. The chatbot even allows the passengers to choose their category of grievances, such as medical assistance, security, cleanliness and more categories.
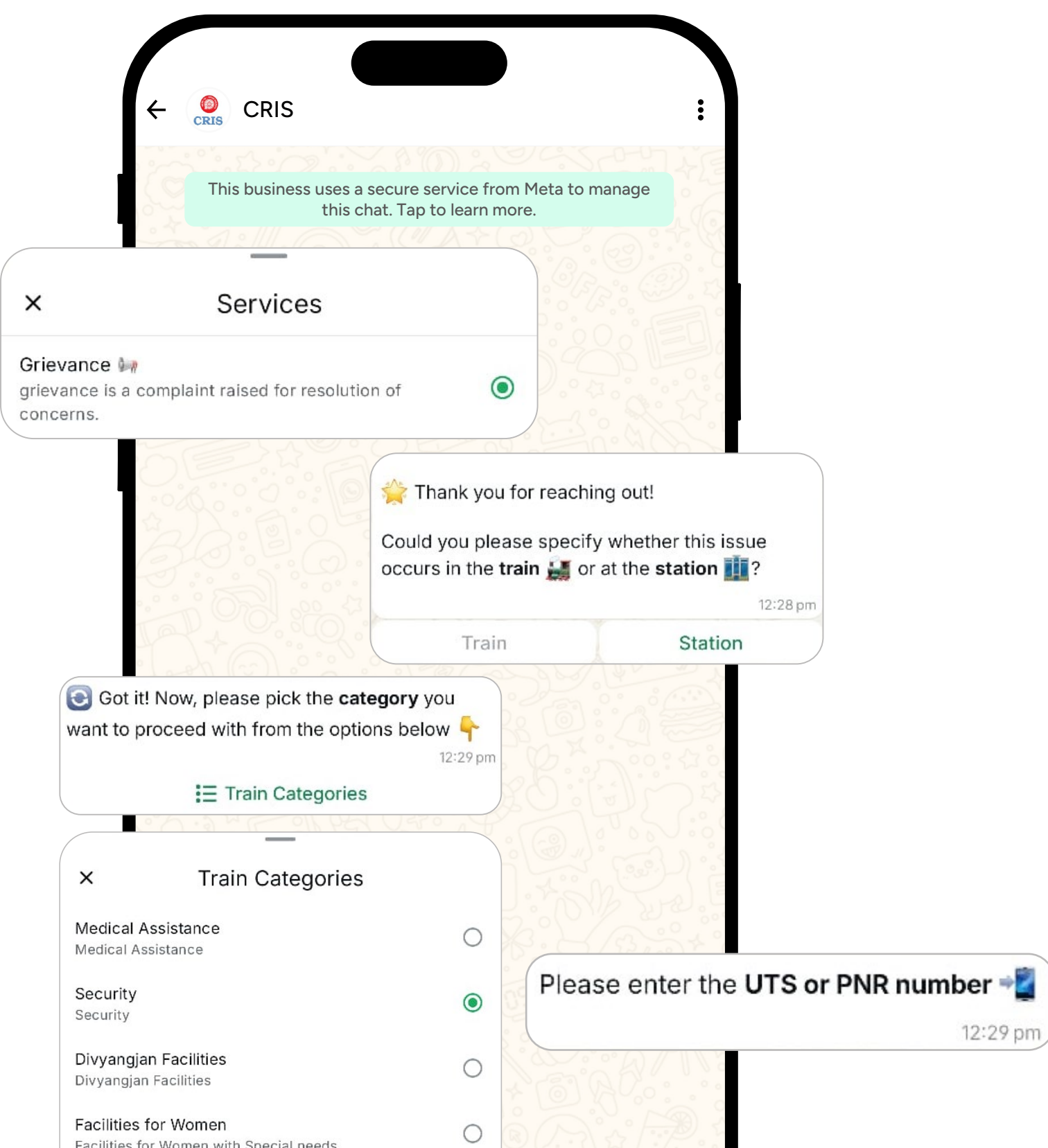
Enquiry

Using this chatbot, passengers can even track the details of their train, track their personal belongings, or even get the train schedules in real-time. They can even get solutions to their inquiries in real-time.
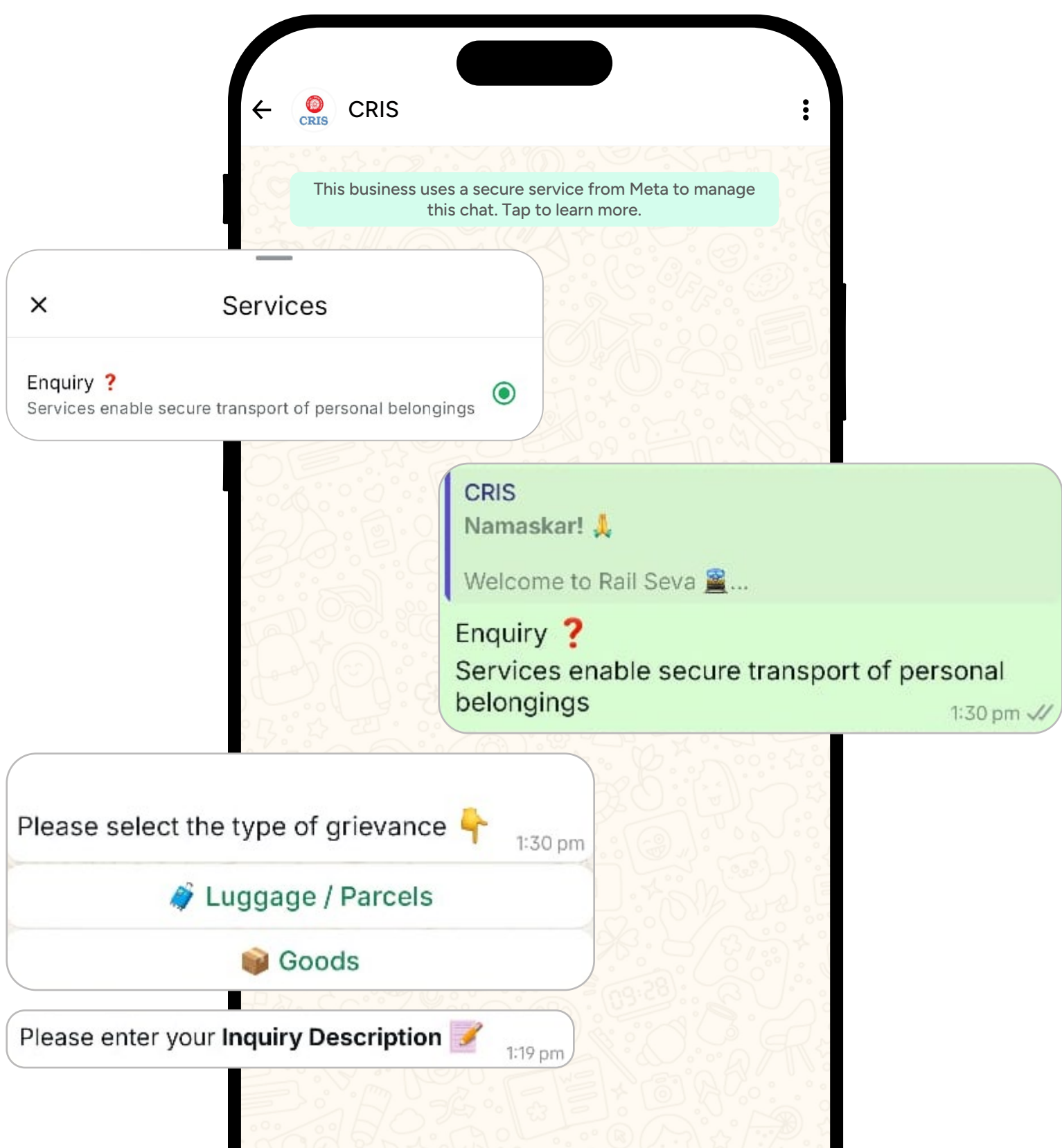
Track Submitted Concerns and give feedback

Using this chatbot, passengers can even track the details of the concerns and complaints that they submitted previously. If they are not satisfied with the solutions provided, they can even provide suggestions for improvement using the chatbot. If they are satisfied with the service, they can appreciate the railway by sharing their positive experiences.
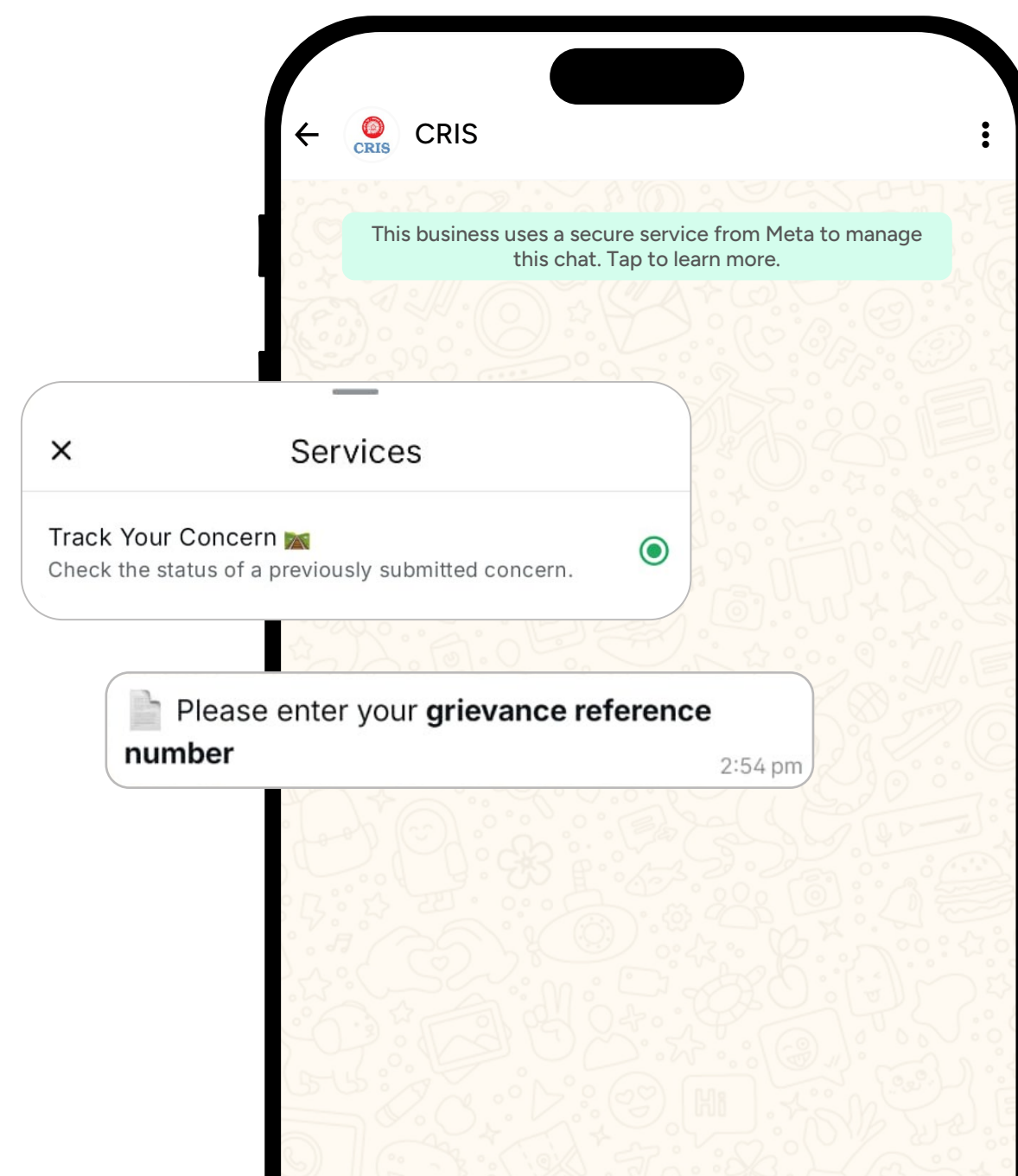
Ease of Access

The chatbot is integrated with WhatsApp, a widely used messaging platform, ensuring easy access for passengers. Users will not be required to go to any website or register using many details. They should only have an account on whatsapp, and they are good to go.

Multi Lingual
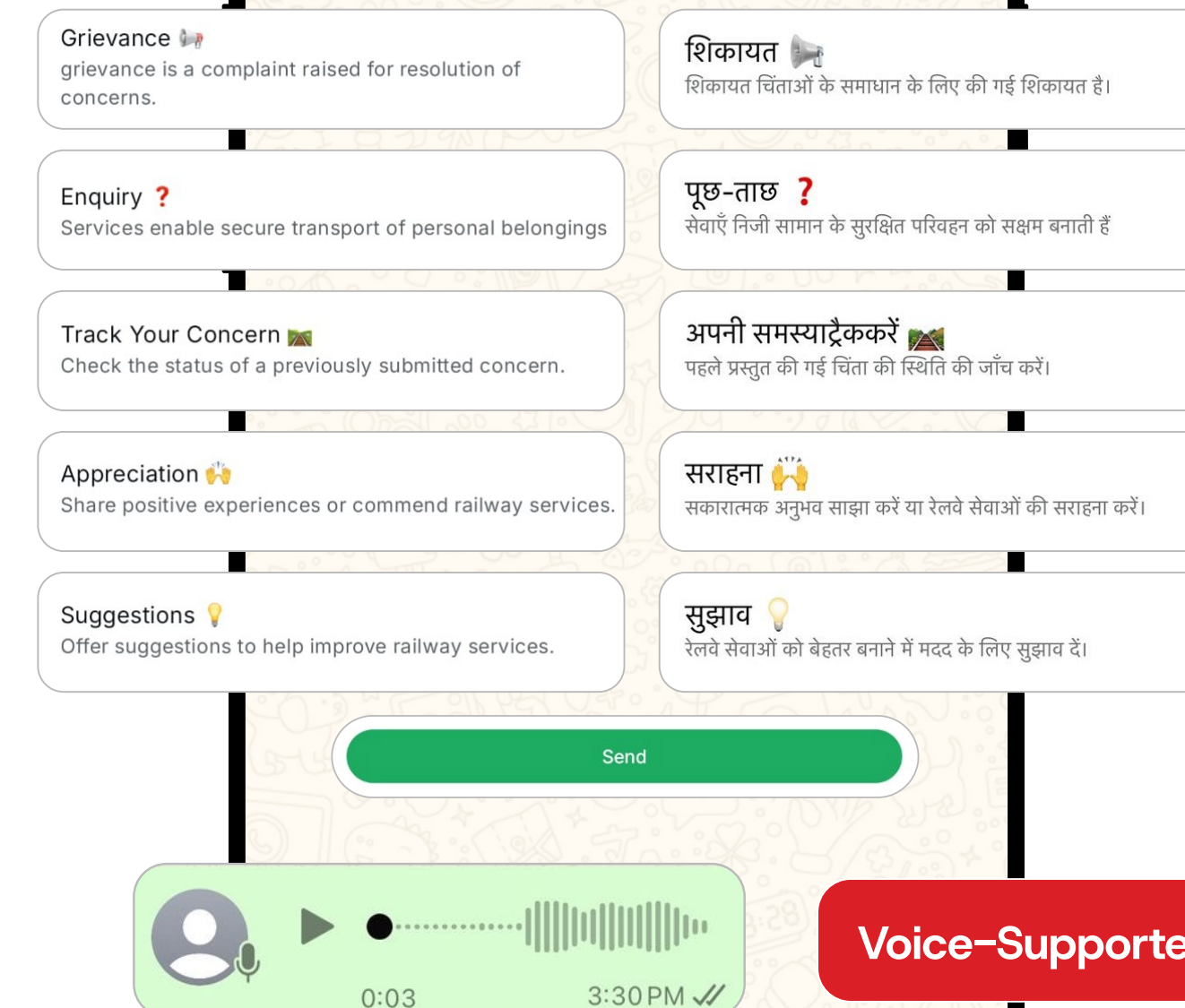
Voice-Supported Messages

The Learning Curve

Railway, which caters to millions of individuals on a daily basis, was still following the old manual model. However, the evolving technology and customer requirements have convinced them to adopt an AI-driven chatbot. This helped them save a lot and build customer trust. If your company is still following the old methods of query resolution, then integrating such a chatbot will help you to reduce your company's operational burden.

If you are in doubt about how a CpaaS-driven chatbot can help make your business efficient, consider connecting with the experts at OneXtel. Our platform offers easy integration and scalable communication solutions that are in line with your industry. In fact, our CPaaS solutions are considered among the best in the industry. Contact us to know how!