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Effective Management of Passport Offices through "Online Passport Seva" portal-a Myth or Reality

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ABSTRACT

Passport Seva Project aims to deliver passport services to citizens in a timely, transparent, more accessible, reliable manner and in a comfortable environment through streamlined processes and committed, trained and motivated workforce. Users of online passport services comprise residents of India and authorized agents who facilitate passport services on behalf of their clients. This research paper presents a summary of the key findings from the assessment studies of impact on citizens of the national project focusing on issue of passport. The study captures user's experience with the manual and computerized modes of delivery for each service and evaluate whether passport seva portal simplifies service access without seeking assistance from intermediaries. A sample size of 99 (basically of Gurgaon) is randomly sampled through SPSS tools for which data is collected basically by questionnaires.

KEYWORDS: online portal, ANOVA, e-Governance, passport services

I. Introduction

The Consular, Passport and Visa (CPV) Division of the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) provides passport and consular services to Indian citizens through the Central Passport Organization(CPO), and consular and visa services to foreign nationals and Indians residing overseas through the passport, visa and consular wings of Indian Missions and Posts abroad. There are 37 Regional Passport Offices (RPOs)/Passport Offices (POs) under the CPO which deal with passport matters in India as per provisions of the Passport Act, 1967 and the Passport Rules, 1980 as amended from time to time. Besides the 37 RPOs/P.Os there are also 15 Passport Application Collection Centres (PACC), mostly located in remote areas. In addition, there are 495 District Passport Cells and 1154 Speed post centres which serve as application collection centres. The CPV Division is headed by Joint Secretary (CPV). For passport related matters, he is assisted by Director (PV). Passport offices/ Regional Passport Offices are headed by Passport Officers (POs)/Regional Passport Officers (RPOs).

Given the changing demographic profile and economic liberalization, the number of passport seekers has been growing rapidly as seen from the illustration below. For instance, the number of passport seekers increased 133 times from 1958 to 2006.

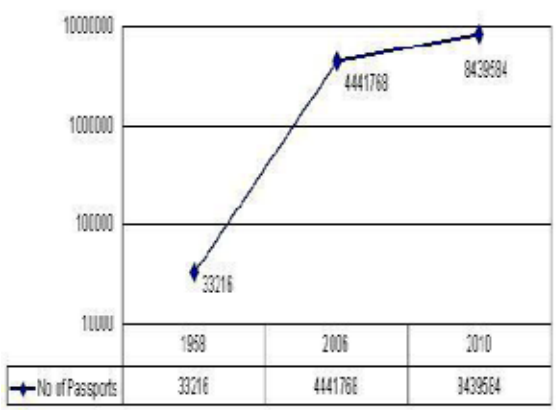

Fig. 1 Source-http://www.passportindia.gov.in/ AppOnline Project online/aboutUs

Despite such increase in the workload, the staff of the Central Passport Organization has strived hard to keep pace, by innovative measures involving change in processes and infusion of technology. This has led to significant improvement in productivity. The figure below shows the productivity improvement across the years.



Fig. 2 Source-http://www.passportindia.gov.in/AppOnlineProject/ online/aboutUs

Despite all these measures, the Ministry felt that the existing infrastructure and manpower is not adequate to handle the requirements of our citizens. With this objective in view, Ministry initiated the Passport Seva Project whose implementation is currently underway. The project envisages setting up of a National Data Centre, a Disaster Recovery Centre, a nationwide common software application, a 24 x 7 call centre, opening of 77 Passport Seva Kendras across the country to increase the reach of the citizen etc. It is expected that with the complete rollout of the Passport Seva Project, problems faced by the citizens in obtaining passport services will be significantly mitigated.

II. Literature Review

In view of the proposed roll out of the ambitious National e-Governance Plan (NeGP), the Government of India was keen to understand Passport offices which are undertaking a modernization programme for speedy resolution of concerns related to issuance and renewal of passports, immigration checks and passenger information.

This national project provides portals unlike the state level projects The application process for issuing and renewal of passport can be completed only partially through the website. Most services are still accessed manually with the 'online' part primarily being used by institutional users, as mandated by the department.

The field level data collection was serviced by different types of service delivery points located across the Gurgaon, Haryana. The survey captured users' experience with the manual and computerized modes of delivery for each service.

III. Online Passport Services

Computerization of passport offices was initiated as a pilot project at

the Regional Passport Office at Delhi, in 1989. Subsequently, computerization was extended to all 34 passport offices across India.

There was a 75 percent rise in total number of passport applications in five years, from 2.6 million in 2000 to 4.5 million in 2006. As a response to this growth, online services for issue and re-issue of passports under the regular and 'tatkal' categories were launched at four RPOs in 2006.

Other major services offered through the online mode include provisions to check the status of one's application, download application forms, and access information on services and procedures. Passport services offered through the online mode can also be availed through the manual mode.

Users of the online services comprise residents of India and authorized agents who facilitate passport services on behalf of their clients. The use of online services is mainly limited to downloading of application forms and seeking of information on application processes. Only 17 percent of the respondents had used the online services for registration of application forms or checking the status of their applications.

IV. Scope and Objectives of the Study

- To make a Comparative Study of Online Seva Portal with Traditional Passport Centres.
- To know about different services of Online Seva Portal.
- To get aware of Online Seva Portal.
- To get aware of growth & productivity of new passport centres.
- To get knowledge about the additional services offered by new passport centres to its customers.
- To get knowledge of working of External Ministry Passport Department.

V. Research Methodology

- Research instrument used:- questionnaire
- Software used to analyse the research:- IBM SPSS 19
- Sample design:- random sampling
- Sample size:- 99
- Area of research:- Gurgaon and Haryana

A. Data Collection and Sample Data

The research involved administering a structured survey to a systematically selected sample of different types of users, and at times, conducting focus group discussions to gain further insights into qualitative aspects of the project.

B. Sampling Plan, Sample Size and Profile

For the survey of online passport services, a representative sample of 1 RPOs/ Pos was selected from Delhi- NCR regions of the country by adopting stratified random sampling. The sample of about 100 was drawn from users in cities/ towns where these selected RPOs/ POs were located and who had availed and received the passport services from them during the period of April 2006 to March 2012.

C. Data Analysis

After collection of data, it was analysed and tested on following basis:-

- Factor analysis and KMO test :- The KMO test value came out to be 0.860, which is more than 0.5, it refers to positive result of sampling adequacy. It also represents that there is high degree of relation amongst variables.

Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Analysis N
AGE	2.99	1.403	99
GENDER	1.32	0.47	99
OCCUPATION	2.06	0.867	99
LOCATION	1.4	0.493	99
awareness about online passport portal	1.1	0.303	99
source of awareness	2.06	1.219	99
pre-usage of service	1	0.495	99
scope of usability	1.24	0.938	99
mode of availing the service	1.25	0.849	99
effectiveness of service	0.98	0.67	99
accessibility of service	1.31	0.922	99
comparability of service	1.01	0.647	99
access to complete information	1.12	0.732	99
transparency of service	1.08	0.68	99
processing time of service	1.08	0.665	99
satisfaction level of service	1.65	1.365	99
quality of service provided	1.64	1.344	99
comparison of psk and govt office	0.88	0.48	99
hidden charges	1.55	0.812	99

- **Regression**

Model Summary					
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	
1	.418[a]	.175	.026	.487	
a. Predictors: (Constant), comparison of psk and govt office.					

ANOVA Test

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	4.171	15	.278	1.173	.309[a]
	Residual	19.667	83	.237		
	Total	23.838	98			

a. Predictors: (Constant), comparison of psk and govt office.

VI. Research Findings
Demographic profile
1. **Age**

Among the people surveyed, 14.14% were under 20, 32.32%, 17.17%, 13.13%, and 23.23% of people fall under the age category of 20-30, 30-40, 40-50 and above 50 respectively

2. Gender

Among the people surveyed 32.325 are females and 67.68 are the males

3. Occupation

Among the people surveyed, 28.57 % are the service persons, 31.69% are the self employed and 39.80% are fall in others category.

4. Location

Among the people surveyed 59.60% are from urban area and 40.40% are from rural area.

VII. Results and Findings of Analysis on Online Passport Seva Portal

1. Most of the population was in general aware of this service.
2. Media is the most effective tool to spread the knowledge about the service, following which are family and family relations.
3. Most of those who know about the service have actually used it.
4. Technology aided two-third of the users to a good extent, while it proved to be mildly useful for others. There were a proportion of those for whom technology involved isn't that helpful.
5. Half of the people found themselves apt for the work, while one-third hired professional agents. There was a little proportion of those whose tasks were performed by their parents, colleagues, etc.
6. The service needs to be upgraded as almost 30% users are dissatisfied about the effectiveness.
7. The passport office is far away from most residential areas as most people find it far away from their places.
8. In terms of overall services, online method scores over manual as more than 70% of those surveyed, found these better in the online method.
9. Considering the use of technology, the website does not contain all the information required on part of a customer as about 42% people found it insufficient.
10. Online method again scored over the manual method in terms

of transparency as two-third of the people voted for it on this account.

11. Waiting time is lesser in online passport Seva portal than that in manual services as almost two-third people felt the change.
12. About 87% people are either satisfied or neutral about the services provided; a mere 13% felt dissatisfied.
13. On the whole about two-third people were served well by the officers while a little proportion felt that they were not. Few people refused to comment on the question.
14. Most of the users didn't pay any extra or hidden service charge to use the service.
15. Like above, most of the users felt a refreshing change in these offices. They think that these offices are not in the same condition as expected from the typical government offices.

VIII. Conclusion

After conducting the survey it can be concluded that e-service of passport processing is still at its infancy. It needs to develop more so that it is easily accessible to all citizens and it becomes the most efficient and effective service to gain satisfaction amongst citizens.

IX. Limitations of the Study

- The time and economic factor was not sufficient.
- Complete and appropriate knowledge cannot be obtained from primary as well as secondary sources.
- The appropriate material or information about the related study is not available.
- Respondents are not taking the questionnaire seriously.
- Sample size is not appropriate to cover whole population.
- Restrictions placed by governments to maintain the secrecy of the process.
- Lack of complete data

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