

Feature
Passport Seva/ I. Day 2014

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The Passport Seva Project is one of the largest Mission Mode projects of the Government of India under the National e-Governance Plan (NeGP). The project is being successfully executed by the Ministry of External Affairs in Public-Private-Partnership with Tata Consultancy Services as the Service Partner.

The existing infrastructure, systems and processes were found inadequate to meet the growing demand for Passport and related services. In 2013, the Government rendered about 85.17 lakh passport services in a year. This is an all time high and amounts to over threefold increase since 2000. At this rate, the Government is likely to be reaching a milestone of issuing one crore passports a year during the year 2014-15. In the first six months of this year, 42 lakh applications have been received by Passport offices in India. This does not include overseas applications. As on 30th June 2014, some 5.4 crore Indian citizens held valid passports. India today accounts for about 14% of global issuance and is placed third behind China and the United States

The Passport Seva Project was conceptualized and launched to augment and improve the delivery of passport related services to Indian citizens. The all India rollout across 23 states and 63 cities was completed swiftly by June 2012. This IT-driven Project is run with over 2,500 persons deployed from the private Service Provider and 2,500 officials from the MEA. The Project runs on the Build-Own-Operate-Transfer model wherein the initial investments are by the private partner. There is minimal investment from the Government.

Vision

“To deliver all Passport-related services to the citizens in a timely, transparent, more accessible, reliable manner & in a comfortable environment through streamlined processes and committed, trained & motivated workforce”.

Passport Seva Network

The Passport Seva Project has a country-wide networked environment integrating 77 state-of-the-art Passport Seva Kendras (PSKs), 39



Passport Issuing Authorities and external stakeholders involved in the process viz. Police, India Security Press and India Post. The Passport data is also accessible at Immigration Check Posts and at the 183 Indian Missions & Posts abroad.

Benefits to Citizens

The project has transformed the way passport and related services are delivered to Indian citizens:

1. Simplified and Transparent Processes

The complete process of application for Passport and related services has been re-engineered and automated. The application is filled online through the user friendly Passport Seva Portal <http://passportindia.gov.in>, fees submitted and appointment scheduled for the selected Passport Seva Kendra. On the appointed day and time, the applicant needs to visit the PSK where the application is processed, supporting documents scanned into the system, photograph and biometrics taken. The application and documents are verified by Passport Office staff and a decision to grant the service taken in front of the applicant. An acknowledgement receipt is handed over to the applicant wherein the applicant is informed of the decision in writing.



An Electronic Queue Management System (EQMS) ensures first-in-first-out based smooth flow of citizens across the various stages of processing at the PSK. The EQMS can cater to multiple services and multiple categories of citizens – for eg. Senior Citizens can be assigned to a separate queue.

2. Improved Amenities

The Passport Seva Kendras provide applicants with a comfortable and air conditioned environment. Amenities in every



PSK include photocopying machines, public phone booth, baby care room, newspapers & journals, ATM, internet kiosks and food & beverage kiosks. The PSK also has the provision of wheel chair, washroom for physically challenged and ramp & lift for easy access to the facility. Helpful staff guide the citizens through the process at the PSK.

3. Multiple Channels of Communication

The Passport Seva Project provides the citizen with multiple channels for effective communication and connects with the Passport Issuance system.

- a. **Passport Seva Portal:** The online portal is a Single Window Online Interface which provides extended reach, ease of use, greater transparency with availability of up-to-date information on passport services and real time status tracking.



b. **Call Centre & Helpdesk:** The National Call Centre answers queries round-the- clock in 17 languages. An email based helpdesk is also available to answer citizen queries.

c. **'mPassport Seva' Mobile Application:** The mPassport Seva mobile app enables citizens to access Passport related information on their Smart Phones. mPassport Seva is available on all major platforms namely Android, iOS, Windows and Blackberry.



d. **Value Added SMS Service for Status Tracking:** The Passport Seva system sends SMS updates to applicants at the time of passport dispatch along with the Speed Post tracking number. A value- added premium 'SMS Service' has also been implemented for passport applicants to provide citizen-centric mobility solution, comprising incoming and Outgoing mobile messages (SMS) at a nominal charge.

4. Extended Coverage & Reach

The Passport Seva Project has significantly increased the reach of Passport Services to Citizens. Various improvement initiatives have been taken to further extend the coverage of the services.

a. **Passport Seva Melas:** Regular Passport Seva Melas are conducted on weekends at the PSKs to provide services to citizens, thus, helping cater to an unexpected temporary surge in demand

b. **Passport Seva Camps:** Passport Seva Camps are occasionally set up to provide passport services in remote locations where there are no PSKs.

c. **Common Service Centres:** The Ministry has collaborated with Citizen e-Governance Services to extend the reach of Passport services to rural areas. Citizens can approach a Common Service Centre (CSC) for online filing of application, payment of fees and scheduling of appointment at a nominal charge. Similar services are also available at select Post Offices



5. Interoperability with Third Parties - Faster Service Delivery

Passport Seva system has electronic data exchange with external entities involved in the process. A digital interface has been provided to integrate with the key stakeholders – namely, the Police (for verification of an applicant's personal particulars), India Security Press (for passport booklet supply) and India Post (for passport delivery). This seamless exchange of data ensures faster and smoother service delivery to Citizens.

6. Uninterrupted Services to Citizens



A Passport Seva Network Operations Center (NOC) and Security Operations Center (SOC) has been set up for 24X7 monitoring of the Passport Seva infrastructure and environment. The NOC is equipped with an intelligent monitoring framework for proactive identification of potential infrastructure, system and security issues. This ensures committed services to citizens. State-of-the-art security technologies are deployed in the SOC for enterprise wide security monitoring of physical locations, systems, network and more importantly cyber space.

Awards

The Passport Seva Project has won various awards and accolades for its endeavour to provide best-in-class passport services to Indian citizens. Some of these include:

- Computer Society of India Nihilent Award of Excellence, 2012
- eIndia Award of Excellence, 2013
- Promising Innovation Award at Tata Innovista Regional Rounds, 2013
- SecureIT Award for Information Technology, 2014



Conclusion

The Passport Seva Project has been successful in transforming the way Passport services are delivered to Indian citizens. Close to 18 million applications have been processed in the new system to date. On an average, 45,000 citizens are serviced daily and citizen satisfaction at the PSK stands at 99.5%. The 24X7 Call Center handles close to 25,000 calls daily. The online portal provides up-to-date information/ real time status and receives over 20 million hits/day. The mobile app mPassport Seva which is also available for the convenience of citizens receives over 15,000 hits per day. Through re-engineered, standardized, integrated and automated processes, implemented using state-of-art technology, services are being delivered in a transparent manner, with extended reach, better accessibility, accountability and efficiency.

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