

Evaluation of Selected Governance Reform Project: One Stop Service Centre for Urgent Endorsement of Passports in the Regional Passport Office (RPO), Dhaka

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Abstract

This study aims at evaluating a small governance reform project titled above in the Department of Immigration and Passports in Bangladesh. The study was conducted in the Regional Passport Office, Dhaka mainly focusing on One Stop Service Centre for urgent endorsement of passports. Information has been collected both from secondary and primary sources. A comparative study was conducted on passport delivery services in some Asian countries to get lessons from their practices. Simple statistical methods and SWOT analysis were used in the study to analyze both quantitative and qualitative data. The study found significant changes in the atmosphere of the Dhaka Regional Passport Office with the new initiative. In the One-stop Service Center clients are fairly happy with the newly introduced speedy services compared to the past. Due to decentralization of the service to Banks, Post Offices and Deputy Commissioners' (DC) Offices positive changes are found. Gap was identified between clients' expected service and present service delivery system and appropriate suggestions were made that deemed to be fit.

Keywords: Passport, Governance, Reform, Service delivery, Corruption

1. Introduction

Government service delivery systems in Bangladesh do not often function according to citizens' expectation. According to Khan (Note 1), 'The public service is increasingly becoming non-functional' (Khan, 2009, p.147). 'Public agencies have been generally characterized as being rigid, unresponsive, inefficient and ineffective, preoccupied with process rather than results driven by outdated rules and regulations' (PARC, 2000). This is mainly due to inherited bureaucratic culture, weak institutions, salary structures in civil service, and mindset of service providers. Different print and electronic media have been reflecting citizens' dissatisfaction and demand over the period. There is a huge demand from civil society and people for changing existing civil service culture and making it more pro people and effective so that it can respond to the needs of the citizens and deliver appropriate public goods and services efficiently, responsively and impartially which will lead to achieve good governance. For better service delivery, reform in governance is urgently needed. Ministry of Establishment with joint initiatives of Department for International Development (DFID), United Kingdom (UK) took a project called Managing at the Top 2 (MATT2) in September 2006 in order to bring changes. Through experiential learning process this program takes small reform projects in different sectors called Performance Improvement Projects (PIP)s to bring reform in governance. Since its inception, sixty-four PIPs have been implemented. Among these, two PIPs were taken "to provide better services to citizens in Passport delivery". This study analyzed one of the two client focused PIPs based on improving service delivery.

1.1 Background of the Study

Since independence, Bangladesh has been struggling to reduce poverty. 'However, with a large proportion of the

population still below the poverty line, Bangladesh has many challenges in dealing with the outstanding social and economic challenges' as mentioned in the 'National Strategy for Accelerated Poverty Reduction-ii (NSAPR-ii)'. According to National Strategy for Accelerated Poverty Reduction (NSAPR), 'Governance weaknesses stand in the way of acceleration in the growth processes'. Over this period some developing and underdeveloped countries in Asia have made significant progress through reform initiatives that brought necessary changes. Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand and South Korea are glaring examples in this regard. Citizens get better services from government in those countries.

Government of Bangladesh envisages for pro-poor economic growth, gender equity, human development and good governance in its national policy framework- *Unlocking the Potential: National Strategy for Accelerated Poverty Reduction (NSAPR)* as citizens suffer from poor governance. It requires governance reform through adopting new styles of working and a change of mindset among government officials. The NSAPR points out that 'Active search for small solutions has been a missing focus in governance agenda'. With this backdrop, Government of Bangladesh has taken MATT 2 under which many small reform projects are taken on different sectors focusing on providing better service to citizens.

According to Public Administration Reform Commission Report, 2000, the degree of success and failure of an organization should be measured in terms of services it provides. The government's interest in reform is premised on enhancing the effectiveness of delivery of public services. 'In practice, good governance is said to be a 'feel good factor' in receiving goods and services from different service providers in the public sector' as depicted in the NSAPR.

In the present world, passport delivery service is one of the essential services in any country. 'When the developed countries have already introduced biometric passports, citizens of Bangladesh continue to carry passports filled out manually and prepared with primitive technologies' (The Daily Star, May 10th, 2007). In Bangladesh, the demand for passports has been on the increase over the years. In the period 2001-2006 Department of Immigration and Passport issued 57.23 lacs passports, according to Transparency International, Bangladesh (TIB) report. It is one of the important areas where citizens face a lot of inconvenience to get service. According to Public Service Reform Commission Report, *Public Administration for Twenty First Century*, 2000, some limitations are present in the passport delivery system. These are: the complexities of the process, waiting in long queues for application dropping and passport receiving, harassment by brokers and thus delay in passport delivery and police verification and forgeries of attestation. Different print media reveals that people suffer to get services from passport department due to corruption. 'Passport seekers pay taka 21 crore in bribe a year' (The Daily Star, October 15th, 2006). To resolve the passport related problems reflected in media, reform initiatives have been taken as Performances Improvement Projects (PIP) under Managing at The Top 2 (MATT2), Ministry of Establishment.

Performances Improvement Projects (PIP)s are small projects to bring reform in the area where clients can get better services. To minimize the sufferings of the public in getting passport services the following two PIPs were implemented:

1. *Simplification of Passport Services: Application Form Collection and Submission*; The specific purpose was to make facility available in seven different post offices of Dhaka Metropolitan City in addition to existing facilities at the passport offices.
2. *One Stop Service Centre for urgent endorsement of Passports in the Regional Passport Office (RPO), Dhaka*: The specific purpose was to ensure expeditious disposal of urgent passport endorsement applications in an effective, transparent and time bound way.

Through the implementation of the above-mentioned reform projects, the Passport Department could considerably reduce the inconvenience to passport applicants. The city dwellers and later rural dwellers also were able to observe passport related formalities at local post offices. One survey reveals that during 2007, time required for disposal per case (6.83 days) came down to less than one day in September 2007 in March. The Daily Star, October 28, 2008 reveals that "One-stop passport service boon for applicants. Applicants approaching the one-stop passport service at GPO, where they no longer have to take the trouble to wait long tiring hours". Passport related media criticism turned into positive appreciation within a year.

1.2 Review of Literature

By and large, information on the studies relating to passport services in Bangladesh is scarce. However some related studies have been reviewed to link with the necessity of undertaking reform projects in passport services.

A.T Rafiqur Rahman (Note2) in his book 'Reforming the Civil Service for Government Performance' mentions

that service delivery is the area where government is competing with private sectors in developed countries to meet citizens' needs. Rearrangement of government services, introduction of performance based and result based management, development of institutions and processes are necessary for improving service delivery.

In 1999, the UK government published a white paper entitled 'Modernizing Government'. This white paper sets out a long-term program of improvement in the process of government in U.K. One of the main themes was responsive public service (Malcom Prowle, 2000, 239). According to this, public services should be more responsive to consumers by delivering the services people actually need and at a convenient time and location.

'Government that works, Reforming the public Sector' by The World Bank mentions that Government is more concerned with rules and processes, paying less attention to the outcome of its actions. This makes it difficult to meet the real needs of its citizens for better quality services. Most citizens perceive government institutions as coercive and government functionaries as 'rent seekers' to be avoided. A universally recognised development lesson is that most successful program with a high degree of customer satisfaction is decentralized. The fewer the layers, the better the services. The ultimate test of any service is consumer satisfaction. Making public organisation more customer driven should be given high priority. Customer driven services are more efficient and less wasteful.

Few developing countries assess the delivery of public services according to their impact and usefulness to target population. "Unlike the private sectors where the customer is the king, public service is generally driven more by inputs and compliance with rules" (PARC, Volume-1, 2000). Enhancing customer service and responsiveness to the citizen should be made a high priority of the newly established efficiency unit in Prime Minister's office like Service improvement Unit (SIU) in Singapore.

To have an immediate impact on public service delivery without much of a financial implication, the Public Administration Reform Commission Report 2000 put thirty recommendations. Among these, 'Simplification of Issuance of Passport' was included. This study identified procedural problems, harassment by middlemen, long delays and recommended some reform measures to improve the accountability and service standard. These can be analyzed in comparison to adapted measures.

Transparency International, Bangladesh (TIB) undertook a diagnostic study in 2007. In this study the focus was to review the existing passport delivery system and process, to identify the limitation and to identify the nature and extent of corruption and irregularities in passport delivery. This study found that people who are illiterate and who hail from rural areas have to depend heavily on brokers. Police and Passport officials, according to TIB are involved in corruption and harassments of people. The worst sufferers of the passport delivery services are the unskilled labourers who bring precious remittance to the country.

TIB conducted impact assessment of the diagnostic study in November, 2007. According to this study, it is mentioned that widespread corrupt practices existed in the process of passport delivery in Bangladesh. 'There was collusion amongst officials, middlemen and the police in passport department. The latter, for example, were paid bribes during the police verification process. The whole system of issuing passports lacked the adequate and necessary administrative and logistical support required. TIB's diagnostic study on the corruption led to a radical shake-up. Almost 60 brokers were arrested and their general influence diminished. A computerized system has been introduced which makes the police verification process more transparent and signboards with information regarding the procedures involved are now displayed' (TIB, 2007).

According to Morshed (Note 3), 'Public private partnership in service delivery can be an important step too. Recently Bangladesh government has decided to appoint private sector agents to collect application for passports. Expectedly, this partnership will facilitate initiatives to market information like passport rules and regulations proactively by the private sector at the most competitive price. Following this footsteps, government needs to look into several other segments of information product categories and create markets'.

Institute of Governance Studies, BRAC University conducted a study titled '*Internal reforms, external progress*': *A story of Good Governance from the Department of Immigration & Passport, Bangladesh*' in 2008 to examine the quality of service delivery towards clients. This study specifically focused on innovations to improve the quality of service, protocols and procedures, operational constraints, current changes and areas of further changes and micro level issues that play integral role in service delivery. But this study could not find out reform factors and their replicability in other service providing organisations where people suffer.

Against these backdrops, this study tried to explore reform factors that brought some positive changes in passport delivery system as well as citizens' expectations and further room for improvement.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

By thorough review of literature it is felt necessary that investigative study can be conducted with the following objectives. The objectives are to:

1. Figure out the reform process in passport delivery service of Bangladesh;
2. Identify the strength and weaknesses of One-stop service Centre at Dhaka Regional Passport Office;
3. Explain the gap between clients' expected service and present service delivery system on One-stop service centre, Dhaka.

1.4 Methods of the Study

1.4.1 Sources of Data

The study was conducted in the Regional Passport Office, Dhaka mainly focusing on One Stop Service Centre for Urgent Endorsement of passports. For the purpose of conducting the envisaged study, information has been collected both from secondary and primary sources. Primary sources were the key informants from the Department of Immigration and Passport. Data were also collected through interviews, questionnaire survey, and discussion with stakeholders in One Stop Service Centre. During survey 20 passport receivers and 20 service providers were interviewed. Secondary sources were published papers, relevant reports, websites, and journals. A comparative study was conducted on passport delivery services in some Asian countries to get lessons from their practices.

1.4.2 Methods of Data Analysis

Simple statistical methods and SWOT analysis were used in the study to analyze both quantitative and qualitative data.

1.5 Rationale of the Study

No study has been conducted yet to identify factors of positive changes through this reform project or whether this PIP is successful in terms of citizens' expectations. This study focused on citizens' views and needs from their own perspectives. Its sustainability and replicability in other similar service providing organizations were also studied.

1.6 Limitation of the Study

Due to time and resource constraints study was conducted in only One-stop Service Centre in Dhaka Regional Passport Office. The findings would have been more influential if other points of passport delivery services like Deputy Commissioner's office, post offices were studied and compared. So, there remains scope for other researchers to focus on those areas.

2. Passport Services in Bangladesh

2.1 Passport Department: Organizational Structure

The Department of Immigration and Passports is an attached department under the Ministry of Home Affairs of the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh. The responsibility of the department is to execute government policies on passport, visa, and permits and to give advice to the government regarding formulation of policy on these subjects and revision thereof. Director General is the head of this Department. Current DG is an Additional secretary to the Government. There are two Directors, six deputy directors and some others Assistant Directors in Passport Department.

Altogether 100 positions are lying vacant in the Department of Immigration and Passport and Regional Offices. This shortage is one of the major causes of corruption and poor passport delivery service. There are 15 regional passport offices in the greater districts across the country; each of which provides service to the people of the some adjacent districts. Among these, the Dhaka, Chittagong and Sylhet offices are considered to be big offices in terms of total number of passports issued. In the period 2001-2006 (May), the Department of Immigration and Passport issued 57.23 lacs passports from its 15 regional passport offices, among which, 52.32 lacs were International Passports while 4.91 lacs were Special Passports and earned Tk. 1578.74 crores. The Dhaka regional passport office is the largest in Bangladesh. Almost half of the passports of the country had been issued from here before the decentralization began. There are 87 approved positions at the Dhaka office, among which 13 positions are vacant.

2.2 Reforms in Passport Department and Decentralisation

Director General (DG) of the Department of Immigration & passports (DIP) has undertaken a number of new

initiatives since 2006 that has increased efficiency, improved the quality of service and reduced the barriers to securing a passport. Many of these changes became effective since August 2007:

- Introduction of one-stop service;
- Decentralisation of passport processing to 52 Deputy Commissioner (DC) Offices throughout Bangladesh, in addition to the existing regional passport offices; and
- Delivery of Passports without the need for immediate police verification is available (the process of verification is completed subsequently).

The Passport Office has undertaken a new project to construct four new offices in Chittagong, Comilla, Jessore and Noakhali. In March 2009, the present government approved the Introduction of Machine Readable Passport (MRP) and Machine Readable Visa (MRV) project at a cost of Tk 526 crore. The long-awaited Machine Readable Passport (MRP) and Machine Readable Visa (MRV) with an aim to elevating the country's passport and visa system to international standard were launched in June 02, 2010. It was expected that introduction of MRP and MRV would put an end to tampering of passport and visa and harassment particularly faced by the innocent expatriate Bangladeshi workers and would also play a role in checking drugs and arms smugglers as well as militant and terrorist activities. "No more handwritten passport... Today we entered the digital era with the introduction of MRP and MRV," as uttered by the present Prime Minister (PM) on launching ceremony as published in the daily star.

However, The Daily Star's report on Saturday, July 24, 2010, requires attention, '*Willful delay in delivering MRP*' and mentions that The Department of Immigration and Passports (DIP) officials are procrastinating over giving Machine Readable Passport (MRP) to the applicants. On Sunday, July 18, 2010 this daily points out that '*MRP delivery gets slow*'. 'The task of issuing Machine Readable Passports (MRP) is seriously hindered because of non-cooperation of staff at the Department of Immigration and Passport (DIP) and delay in submission of police verification reports. The authorities now can utilize only half its capacity to produce MRPs as some DIP staff promotes issue of manual passport to help a syndicate make a quick buck, said MRP project officials. The authorities issue less than 1,000 MRPs a day despite having a capacity to produce nearly 2,000 MRPs. The home ministry in a recent order allowed issuance of manual passports with three-year validity although the International Civil Aviation Authority (ICAO) allows issuing emergency manual passport with one-year validity. The project officials fear it might put Bangladeshi nationals in trouble as the UAE, Bangladesh's largest manpower recruiting country, had denied accepting manual passport for two weeks'. The decision encouraged many passport handlers and middlemen to revive their business. A syndicate involving a few DIP staff and outsiders had been active at the DIP's Agargaon office'. The introduction of the MRP from April 1, 2010 was regarded as a severe blow to the syndicate. "Some DIP staff are very unhappy with the introduction of Machine Readable Passports that closes their ways to make brisk money. The syndicate is on the rebound following the home ministry order," said a DIP official, preferring anonymity as reported in this daily news paper.

The Department has authorized two organizations, under the Passport Agent (Licensing) Regulations 2007, to process passport applications with the aim of improving service delivery. Despite the shortage of staff and limited resources DIP has taken some initiatives to enhance image and service quality. The introduction of the 'One-stop service' has expedited the process of obtaining a passport within a very short space of time. This does not require Police verification. Subsequently it is done. A report published by Transparency International, Bangladesh (TIB) in 2006 identified that in the past applicants were dependent on 'satisfying' SB Police for verification. The officers would often request for numerous documents to establish the identity of applicants. In many instances this was tantamount to harassment by the SB Police.

The One-stop service has bypassed complexities associated with verification and administrative protocols as these hamper the speed of the service. One problem, which becomes apparent, now is that number of passports has become null and void due to adverse police verification report. However sincere and careful verification can facilitate this speed. The Department has also decentralized its activities to 52 DC offices throughout the country. Once, where one had to wait in line for hours to submit application form and collect their passport, now one can choose from a number of options. A DC office can now receive, issue and distribute passports to applicants within its jurisdictional area. This has overcome problems of shortage of manpower and reduced the pressure on the Dhaka Regional Passport Office. In the past there was a constant overflow of applicants creating an atmosphere of chaos and discord between staff and applicants. This often led to poor service delivery and harassment of applicants.

Applicants can submit and collect their passports now at selected branches throughout Bangladesh of the designated bank, on payment of a service charge of Tk. 200 per passport. The Dhaka Regional Passport Office

currently receives applications per day via this service. Applicants can also submit their application free of charge and collect the passport from the local Post Office. The Dhaka Regional Passport Office currently receives up to 50 applications per day via the postal delivery service. The introduction of the one-stop service provides applicants the opportunity to obtain a new passport within three hours, receive endorsements and correct mistakes in passports within thirty minutes.

2.3 Passport related laws, rules and regulations

Under Bangladesh Passport Order 1973 Article 17A, the government has formulated the Passport Agent (Licensing) Regulations 2007, which outlines the use of appointed agents to assist clients to complete application forms and obtain required documents. Accordingly Government issued orders on 3 October 2007 authorizing use of post offices as outlets for supplying and receiving of passport forms. A contract was signed on 16 October 2007 between DIP and Department of Postal Services in this regard.

2.4 Existing challenges for Improvement

Table -1 shows annual increase of issuance of passport, which means increasing demand of passport services. Table-2 shows yearly revenue earning and expenditure of Passport department. Compared to its earnings budget allocation to this department was meager. Lack of initiatives for modernization, shortage of manpower, resources and mindsets of the service providers are existing challenges to meet increasing demand of the clients.

2.5 Importance of improving passport services

The demand for passports has increased substantially in Bangladesh in the past decade. The reason is that the number of Bangladeshis travelling abroad for work, study, business and other purposes has increased rapidly. The largest increase has been in export of contracted manpower to various parts of the Middle East and recently East Asia. The majority of applicants for a passport are migrant labourers with limited education and knowledge of the application process. The rise of the demand has not been in line with development of infrastructure and institutional capacity. The result is decline in quality in service delivery. So improving service delivery is necessary to provide expected services to our remittance earner.

3. Analysis of the Present Service Delivery

3.1 Service providers' views on present service delivery

3.1.1 Problems faced by service providers

Regarding the problems faced by the service providers, seventy percent of the interviewed service providers held view that they have huge work volume. Twenty percent of them told that they did not find clients when required while ten percent are of the opinion that clients are impatient (Figure-2).

3.1.2 Suggestions made by service providers

For improving the service delivery thirty-five percent of the responses came to provide incentives to them. More than thirty percent opined to simplify police verifications and reduce harassment. Around twenty percent of the responses came to modernize process and incorporate ICT. Around fifteen percent responses were regarding use of national database while five percent opinion was to establish more one-stop services (Figure-3).

3.2 Service takers' views on present service delivery

3.2.1 Purposes of passport taking

The largest group of respondents will be using their passports to travel abroad for work (70%); however, then large number of applicants will be using their passports for other purposes such as education, medical treatment etc. We must take into account the growing demands for labor from East Asia and Middle East, which will increase the number of applications in the near future (Figure-4).

3.2.2 Satisfaction level of service takers

Sixty five per cent of the respondent held view that their satisfaction level is very high. Thirty percent opined as high while five percent ranked as moderate. Regarding sincerity of their service providers fifteen percent ranked as moderate, thirty-five percent ranked as high and fifty percent ranked as very high. Though there is a contradiction in between two types of opinion, it is not unrealistic as satisfaction is related to services whereas sincerity is related to service providers' attitude and behavior (Figure-5).

3.2.3 Suggestions made by service takers

Passport seekers made some suggestions during interview. Twenty-six percent of the responses came to introduce machine-readable passport. For improving the service delivery thirty-five percent of the responses

came to provide incentives to them. More than twenty-three percent opined to simplify police verifications and reduce harassment. Around twenty percent of the responses came to establish washroom for the clients, modernize process and incorporate ICT. Around nine percent responses were regarding use of national database while eleven percent held opinion to establish more one-stop services. Eight percent were of the opinion to introduce online service while four percent suggested to specify women corner (Figure-6).

Service providers and service takers made their suggestion from own perspectives. Some suggestions are common in both groups. Both groups want modernization of passport services.

4. Passport Service Delivery in Some Asian Countries

4.1 India

In September 2007, the Indian Union Cabinet approved a new passport issuance system under a project called Passport Seva Project. As per the project, front-end activities of passport issuance, dispatch of passports, online linking with police, Central Printing unit for centralized printing of passports will be put in place. The new system is aimed at 'timely, transparent, more accessible and reliable manner' for passport issuance. India has just recently initiated first phase deployment of Biometric e-Passport for Diplomatic Passport Holders in India and abroad. The new passports have been designed indigenously in India by the Central Passport Organisation, the India Security Press and IIT Kanpur. It contains a security chip with all personal data and digital images. In first phase new passports will have 64KB chip which contains personal photograph of passport holder and subsequently it will have a fingerprint. The new passport has already tested with passport readers in United States and have 4(four) second of response time which is 2/5th of US Passport. All the mobile and landline phone holders, who have SMS facility, could get their passport application status on their phone from now on. All they need to do is message

4.2 Pakistan

Pakistani Passports are issued to the citizens of Pakistan for the purpose of international travel. Pakistan's new Machine Readable or Biometric passports are currently being issued from regional passports offices. Directorate General Immigration and Passports, an attached department of Ministry of Interior is responsible to deal with the matters concerning issuance of Passports, Visas, Pakistan Citizenship and Renunciation of Pakistan Citizenship Certificates. Machine Readable Passports and Machine Readable Visas are replacing the existing the manual system.²⁵ Regional Passport Offices within Pakistan and 10 Foreign Missions are now equipped with Machine Readable Passport System.

4.3 Malaysia

The main legislation governing the production of passports and travel documents, their possession by persons entering and leaving Malaysia, and related matters is the Passport Act 1966. Malaysia was the first country in the world to issue biometric passports in March 1998, after a local company, IRIS Corporation, developed the technology. In December 2002, thumbprint data was added to the biometric data on the passport chip. Similar technology is used in the Malaysian identity card Mykad.

The biometric data included on the Malaysian passport is a digital photograph of the bearer's face, and images of their two thumbprints. Malaysian immigration checkpoints were the only ones with the technology to read and authenticate the data from the RFID chip using a fingerprint scanner and facial recognition technology, but widespread adoption of ePassport technology around the world has seen the technology installed in international airports in the USA, the UK and other countries. In addition to biometric data and the personal information stored on the information page, the chip also records the bearer's travel history of the last ten entry and exits at Malaysia border control points.

4.4 Singapore

The Singapore passport is a travel document issued to the citizens of Singapore. It is issued by the Immigration and Checkpoint Authority of Singapore. Only citizens of Singapore can apply for this passport. The passport is a popular target for counterfeits, due largely to the relatively liberal visa requirements accorded to Singaporean travellers to destinations such as the United States, and the tendency for immigration to clear Singapore passport holders more quickly. It thus adopted several measures to foil forgers, including utilizing digital photos and special ink since October 1999, and the Biometric passport from August 2006. Since 15 August 2006, all newly-issued Singapore passports contain biometric features (BioPass). A major reason for this addition was to comply with the requirements for the US Visa Waiver Program. The features also help to prevent forgery and minimize the abuse of Singapore passports. A biometric passport contains 64 pages unlike the machine readable passports which contains 96 pages. It costs S\$ 80 for a passport, with a higher cost due to the special features

encoded into the passport. There is a ten dollar rebate if one applies for the passport on the internet, by post or by the deposit box with applicants having to collect the passport personally. The biometric passport project costs S\$9.7 million.

4.5 Japan

Japanese passports are issued to Japanese citizens to travel outside Japan. Ordinary passports are issued to normal citizens. Ordinary passports are issued in two different lengths of validity: five and ten years. Japanese citizens up to 19 years of age can only be issued a five-year passport, while those who are 20 years of age or older can choose either a five-year (blue) or ten-year (red) passport for different registration fees. Official passports are issued to members of the National Assembly and public servants. Diplomatic passports are issued to members of the Imperial Family, diplomats and their family members and government high-level officials. By convention, Japan's Emperor and Empress do not hold a passport. All Japanese passports issued after March 20, 2006 are biometric passports. Japanese passports have the Imperial Seal of Japan inscribed in the center of the front cover.

5. Findings of the Study

5.1 Findings of the Study

5.1.1 Reforms in Passport Delivery Services

During my survey I found that the initiatives undertaken by passport office have begun to tackle the problems associated with brokers. The parallel network established by the brokers prior to the new initiatives depicts bad governance and poor service delivery in the Passport Department. The brokers preyed on illiterate and semi-illiterate applicants who faced difficulties in understanding rules and procedures set by DIP. During my survey I found significant changes in atmosphere in the Dhaka Regional Passport Office. In the past there was continuous hue and cry with the constant movement of the brokers. In the One-stop Service Center clients are fairly happy with the newly introduced speedy services. RPO's premise is almost quiet compared to the past due to decentralization of the service to Banks, Post Offices and DC Offices. However, I tried to figure out mechanism of speedy services from OSSC and found service providing chain that is shown in the following lay out (Figure-7).

5.1.2 Gap between clients' expected service and present service delivery system

There is a gap identified through this study between client's expected service and present service delivery system. Service takers identified complexities in police verification process, lack of motivation of service providers and high charge of the service. This is to mention that OSSC provides Very Urgent Category passport (Fee Tk5000), which does not require immediate police verification. In the subsequent time during the process of verification, the police ask for various documents to establish the identity of the applicant. If the applicants are unable to satisfy the police, they have to endure harassment and delay. Sometimes issued passports become null and void due to adverse verification report.

To fill out gaps both groups made suggestions of which some are common.

5.2 Recommendations

According to the findings of this study, the following recommendations are put in order to help policy makers, the Department of Immigration and Passport and the concerned to streamline this service.

5.2.1 Enhance Institutional capacity and development of infrastructure: The department is understaffed and has less manpower than approved. Manpower shortage along with institutional capacity and deficiency in infrastructure aggravate poor service delivery for the people. So development of necessary infrastructure and institutional capacity building is essential.

5.2.2 More decentralization of passport service:

As recent decentralizations have brought some positive changes, more decentralization can bring wider impact.

5.2.3 Incorporation of ICT in passport offices:

Manual system of work is not only time consuming but also less effective. Incorporation of ICT would save time and help reduce some of the problems due to staff shortage.

5.2.4 Quick Implementation of Machine Readable Passport (MRP):

Government has already launched MRP project in June, 2010. However to keep pace with global community and enhance image of the country quick implementation of the project is necessary. MRP should be issued from One

Stop Service Center.

5.2.5 Making National Database:

Creation of national database is the demand of the time. Personal data of each citizen have to be kept for multiple uses. National Identity card can be utilized.

5.2.6 Withdrawal of Official Secrets Act, 1923:

Official Secrets Act 1923 is somehow contradictory to Right to Information Act. Public have right to have access to the information of the department. Its withdrawal would increase transparency and accountability of the passport service.

5.2.7 Motivation and Incentives for the staff:

Motivation and incentives can bring speedier services and will provide impetus to the officers and staff to reduce delay in processing applications and issuing passports. The money for incentives can be taken from passport application fees.

5.2.8 Simplification of passport application form and delivery process;

As most of the passport seekers are not educated enough, passport application form should be simplified. Some recent attempts of the passport delivery process have become effective. However, existing limitations in the application form and process should be removed.

5.2.9 Transparency and accountability in the passport department:

Though recent steps have reduced corruption in Passport Department, transparency and accountability must be restored in the department.

5.2.10 Updating of a website and provisions of Internet application:

Although the Department of Immigration and Passport has set up website, necessary information on applications can be made available on the website, so that applicants can get information on the status of application. An online application provision can also be introduced on this website.

5.2.11 Make information available;

Regarding passport types, fees, location of banks, place to enquire, steps for processing applications, and other requirements for documents and payments a booklet can be prepared. This booklet can be distributed with the application form free of charge.

5.2.12 Taking necessary action on Complaint and Grievance;

There is a box in the Department to put complaint and Grievance. However this should not be ornamental. After inquiry necessary action should be taken and should be published in media so that corrupt practices are discouraged.

5.2.13 Reducing the complexities and involvement of Police Verification;

Police verification is an essential part of the passport delivery system. Due to adverse report, passports issued from One Stop Service Centre can be null and void. Careful and sincere investigation should be done so that passport seekers are not sufferer without any valid reason. Adequate transport allowances as well as incentives should be provided to SB police to ensure speedy services.

5.2.14 Conduct Client's satisfaction survey;

Through the website of Department of Immigration and Passport feedback and suggestions from the clients can be taken and necessary arrangements can be made accordingly for convenience of the clients.

6. Summary, Conclusion and Recommendation

6.1 Summary

We have huge demand from people to improve service delivery. In the present world, passport delivery service is one of the essential services. India, Pakistan, Malaysia, Singapore and Japan are currently issuing Machine Readable or Biometric passports. On the other hand, we are still continuing manual system as well as irregularities and corrupt practices. In this backdrop, some initiatives were taken to bring changes. One-Stop Service Centre (OSSC) was established in Passport Department to provide speedy passport delivery to the clients. This study focused on reform aspect of this project.

Through review of relevant studies conducted by TIB and IGS, BRAC University missing link has been

identified. Accordingly objectives of the Study were set as to figure out the reform process, to identify strength, weakness, opportunity & threat and to explain the gap between clients' expected service and present service delivery system. Data collected through interview and discussions with different stakeholders have been analyzed. During the survey, a considerable change in the atmosphere in the Dhaka Regional Passport Office was found. I explored lay out of speedy service delivery, strength, weakness, threats and opportunities and gap between service providers and takers. About the service provided by OSSC people were found happy and also dissatisfied. I explored these gaps between service providers and service takers.

6.2 Conclusion

The study identified positive changes with recent initiatives, though there is no scope for complacency. Because compared to similar countries we are lagging behind. Obviously changes can be termed as good start. The remarkable change created a lot of aspiration and expectation among clients. The process itself has eradicated brokers from the premise. To keep pace with growing demand this has been replicated to other Regional Passport Offices. The problem identified by the study is that after issuance of passports from OSSC some passports became null and void due to adverse police verification report. Steps are necessary to minimize gape between service providers and service takers in the present service delivery system. One-stop service centre can be established in other service providing area like Tax Return, Land Mutation fees, Utility Bills, Pension, Birth Registration, Driving Licence etc.

6.3 Recommendation

From the study the following recommendations can be made considering the priority of needs.

1. After conducting survey necessary outlets can be established to provide passport service
2. Incorporating ICT and using National database machine-readable passports should be issued immediately
3. Motivational training should be arranged and incentives should be provided to the service providers.
4. Police verification should be investigative but hassle free to facilitate the speed in passport service delivery.
5. Client's satisfaction survey should be conducted regularly.

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Notes

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Table 1. Number of passports issued

| Year | Number of Passports Issued | Annual change (%) |
|----------------|----------------------------|-------------------|
| 1997 | 842,196 | - |
| 1998 | 766,641 | -9 |
| 1999 | 876,328 | 14 |
| 2000 | 966,613 | 10 |
| 2001 | 863,315 | -11 |
| 2002 | 767,249 | -11 |
| 2003 | 1,095,880 | 43 |
| 2004 | 1,024,408 | -7 |
| 2005 | 1,060,591 | 4 |
| 2006 | 1,376,794 | 30 |
| 2007 | 1,685,818 | 22 |
| Average | 1,029,621 | 7.8 |

Source: Government of Bangladesh (GoB), Dhaka, 2008

Table 2. Annual Revenue and Expenditure

| Financial Year | Expenditure (BDT) | Annual change (%) | Tax Revenue Amount (BDT) | Annual change (%) | Annual Expenditure/Revenue Ratio (%) |
|----------------|--------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|-------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1998-99 | 120,329,085 | - | 1,265,436,000 | - | 7.8 |
| 1999-00 | 136,159,000 | 13 | 1,548,805,000 | 22 | 8.9 |
| 2000-01 | 158,762,000 | 17 | 1,534,122,000 | -1 | 9.2 |
| 2001-02 | 177,286,000 | 12 | 1,728,069,000 | 13 | 5.3 |
| 2002-03 | 217,789,000 | 23 | 3,345,785,000 | 94 | 5.1 |
| 2003-04 | 225,359,000 | 3 | 4,291,651,000 | 28 | 6.6 |
| 2004-05 | 128,374,000 | -43 | 3,430,719,000 | -20 | 2.9 |
| 2005-06 | 192,329,000 | 50 | 4,365,586,000 | 27 | 3.8 |
| 2006-07 | 342,280,000 | 78 | 5,067,267,203 | 16 | 5.3 |
| Average | 188,740,787 | 17 | 2,657,744,020 | 18 | 7.1 |

Source: Government of Bangladesh (GoB), 2008

Table 3. SWOT analysis of one stop service centre

| Strength | Weakness |
|---|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Centre is equipped with experienced staffs and audio devices. Staffs secured expertise in audiovisual materials. Citizen charter is developed and followed Sufficient numbers of qualified and capable executive are working in the centre. Centre got recognition from the stakeholders. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of motivation for having no incentive package. Lack of any manual or digital display board. Still there is non-availability of adequate information. The system is not transparent as the clients expect Staffs are not trained adequately Passport and related polices are not updated. Citizens still have confusion and uncertainty about the centre's functioning. |
| Opportunity | Threats |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> There is a chance for improving the office space with sophisticate furnishing materials. Organization enjoys some form of flexibility. Demand will be enhanced for better service delivery by the centre. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Inadequate staffs Exogenous pressure especially from so called passport dalal. Endogenous irregularity derived from rent seeking staffs. Attitude of the Staffs Lack of moral values and ethical considerations. |

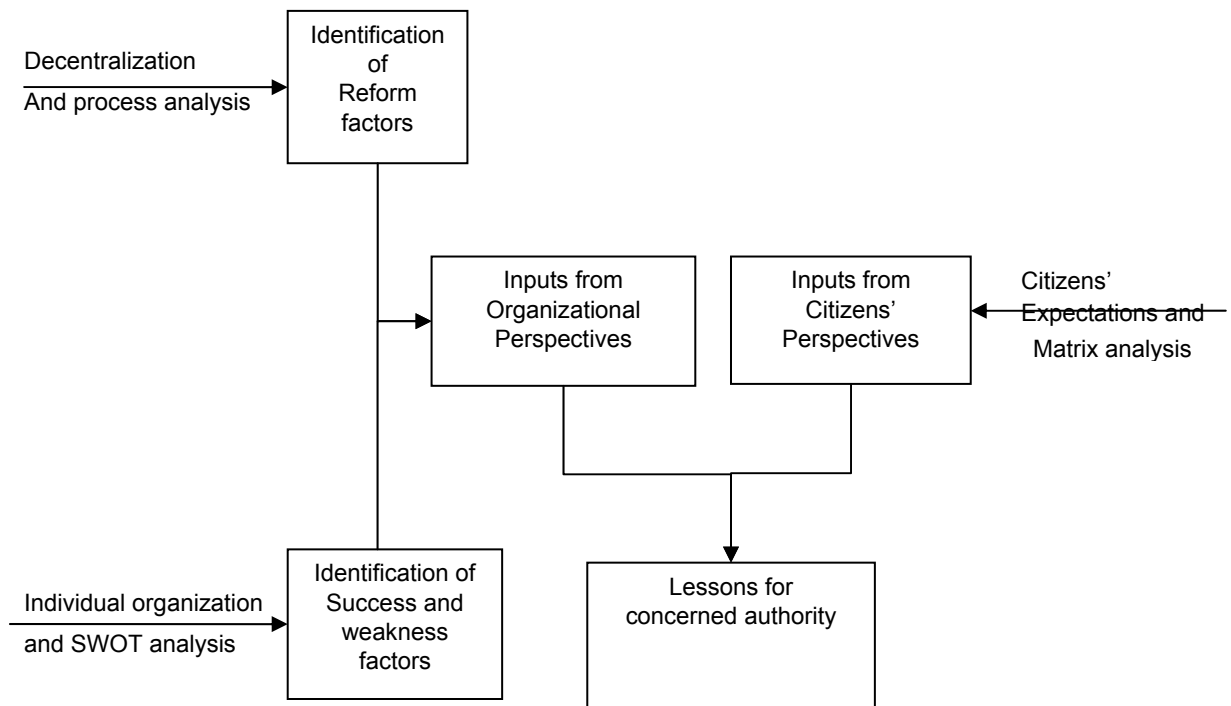


Figure 1. Analytical Framework of the Paper

Problem faced by the service providers

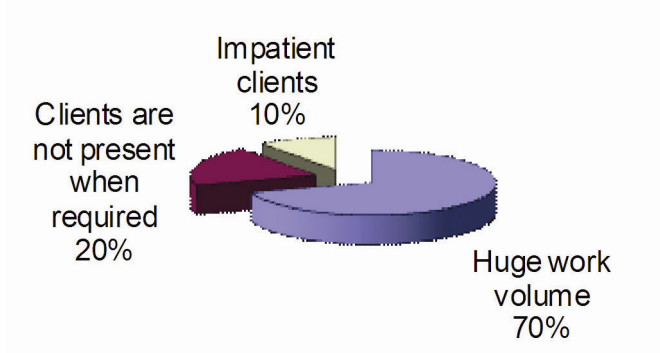


Figure 2. Problem faced by the service providers

Purposes of Passport

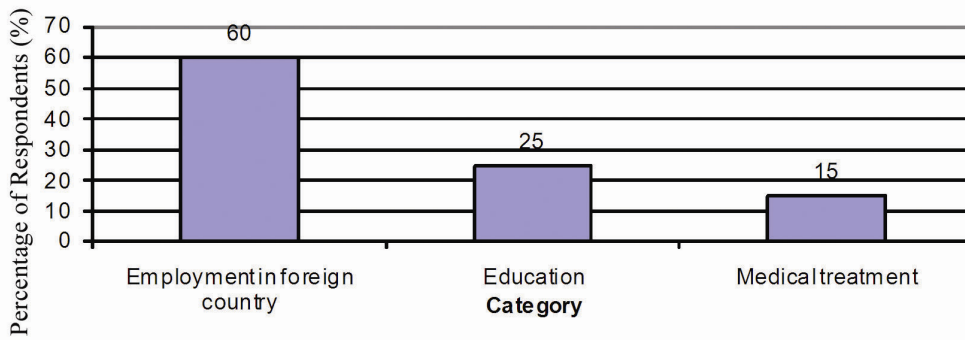


Figure 3. Purposes of Passport

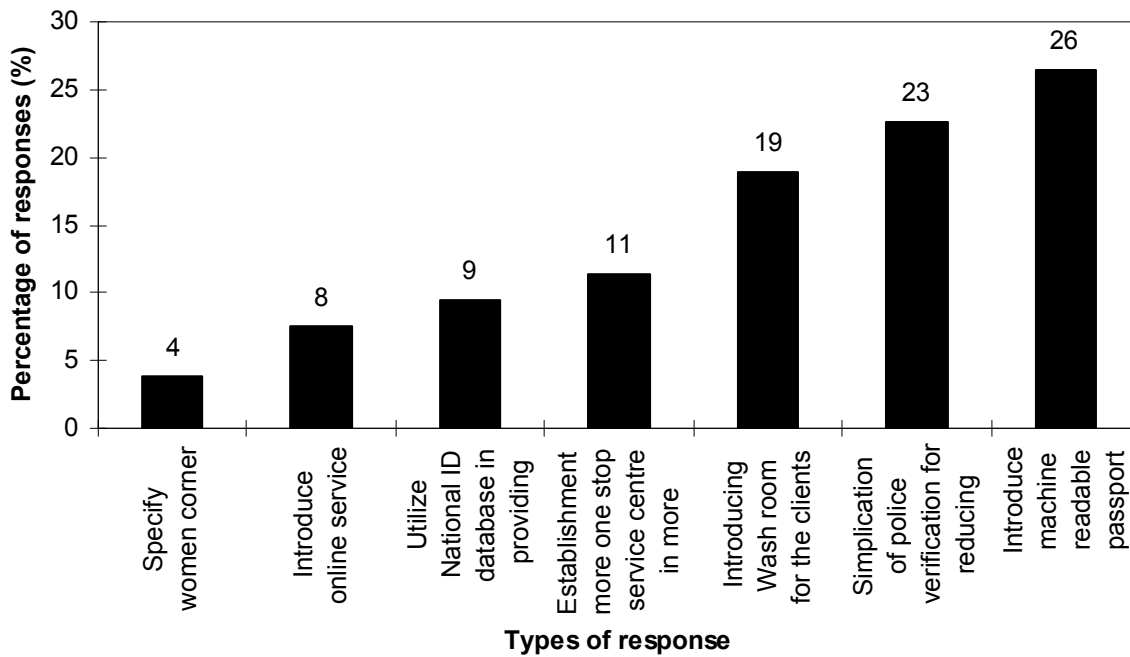


Figure 4. Suggestions by service taker for improving the service

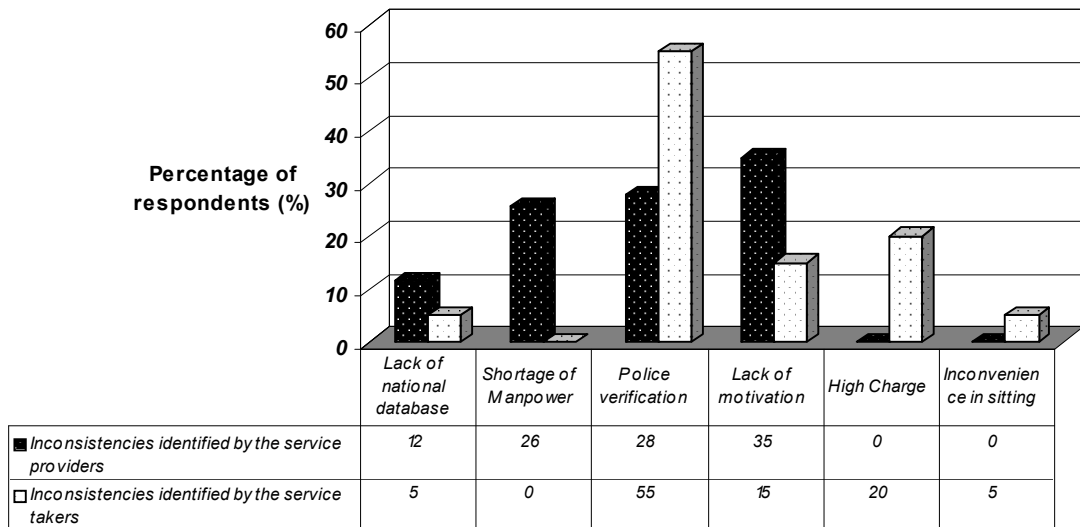


Figure 5. Inconsistencies identified by service providers and service takers

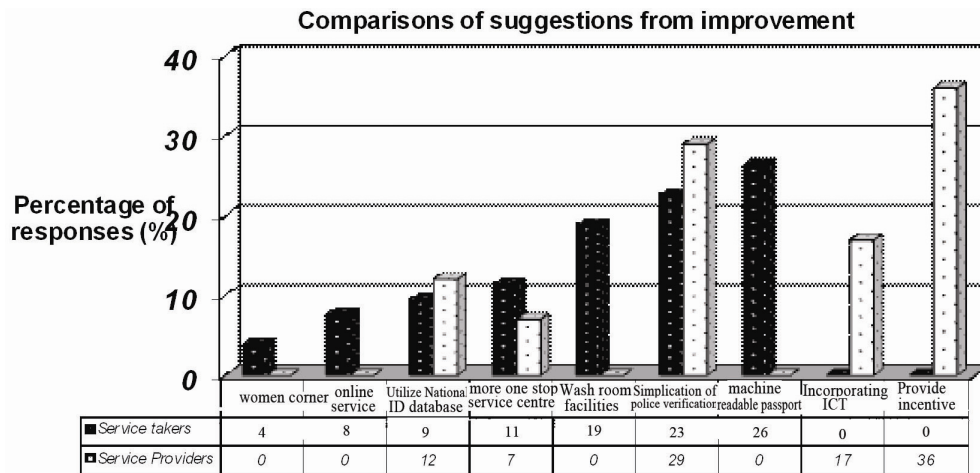


Figure 6. Comparisons of suggestions from improvement

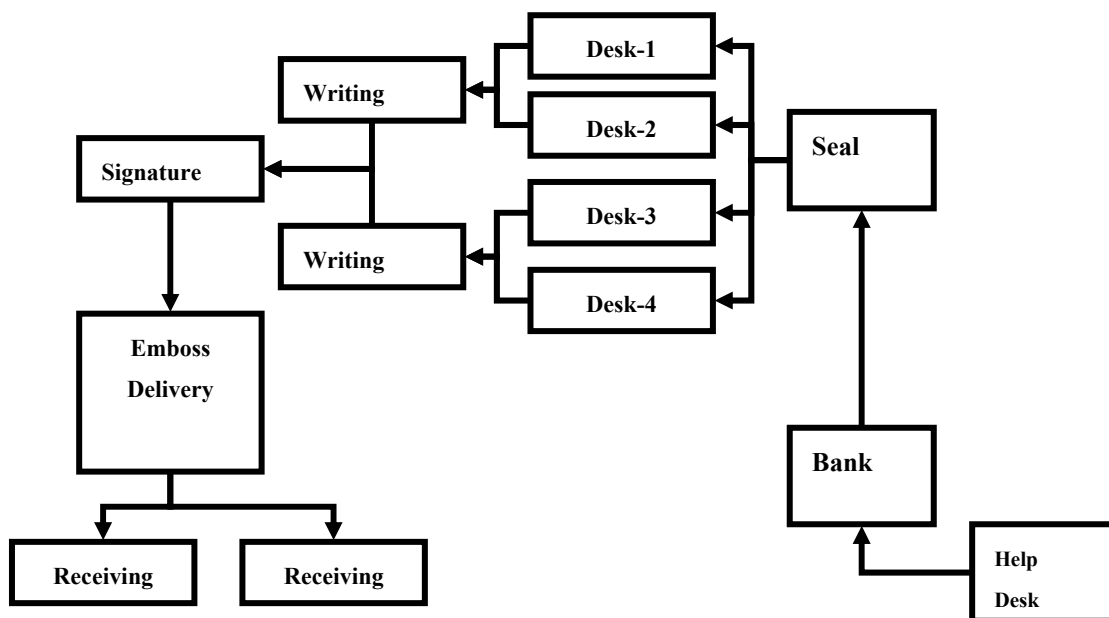


Figure 7. Service Providing Chain of the One Stop Service Centre