Effective Management Practices for Postal Services in India: A Study

Sunny S. Pandhre

Assistant Professor in Commerce, Vidya Prabodhini College of Commerce, Education, Computer and Management, Porvorim-Goa 403 521

Introduction

The postal system was started in India by the East India Company and dates back to 1837 when postal services were opened to public. The first postage stamp was issued in Karachi in 1852 (valid only in Sind). In 1854, the company constituted the Postal Services as a special entity under a Director General and issued a postage stamp on an all India basis. In 1880, Money Order System was introduced. The Post and Telegraph system, received statutory recognition under Act VI of 1898. Post Office Savings Bank was started in 1882 and Postal Life Insurance in 1884.

The Railway Mail Service was started in 1907 and Air Mail Service in 1911. In 1972 Postal Index Number (PIN) was introduced. Quick Mail Service was introduced in 1975. Speed Post Service was introduced on 1st August, 1986. The articles are delivered within time frame (24 hours) with 'Money Back Guarantee' for any service defect. Being a member of Universal Postal Union (UPU) India has direct postal links with almost all countries. At the time of Independence, on August 15, 1947 there were 22,116 Post offices of various types in the country handling Rs. 124 crores of Postal services. Since Independence a systematic attempt has been made to see that every village in India enjoy postal facilities. The growth of the Post offices, both in terms of area and population has been spectacular since independence. At the time of Independence, a Post office served on an average, an area of 146 sq. km. and a population of 16,000. Thus, the network has registered a seven-fold growth since Independence, with the focus of this expansion primarily in rural areas. On an average, a Post Office serves an area of 20.99 Sq. Km and population of 28923 people as on 31st March 2019

Services offered by Department of Post in India

The postal operations includes the whole array of the pioneer postal services that mainly includes viz., Sale of Stamps and Postal Stationery; Transfer of Registered Articles from one place to another; Transfer of insured articles; Delivery of Value Payable Articles; Transfer of Money through Money Orders, and Postal Orders as well as, services offered through

Booking of Parcels. The postal services were traditionally provided at manually managed counters. But, now with the use of Information Technology it has further extended its scope making it more responsive. It has also been described as the provision made by the Government system of the nation for the transfer of Letters, Packages, and Periodicals, and includes other related services.

The basic functioning of the department of post is to have successful accumulation, collection processing, transfer and delivery of correspondence and it also includes other allied services. Mail is collected from more all avenues through duly fixed letter boxes. Then, it is divided and processed by the well-established and well-structured network of Mail Offices and transferred by Rail, Road and Airlines throughout India to ensure its delivery to the citizens. The functioning of the postal services is through the post office counters that cover the whole pool of core services that includes viz., the sale of stamps; booking of registered articles; insured articles; value payable articles; transfer of money through money orders; booking of parcels, and savings bank transactions. Traditionally, these services were being made available through manually operated counters with less technological support. With the passage of time and with due respect to the growing need for availing benefits of technology to customers, functioning at the counter is now being progressively computerized to ensure a wider range of services to the customers from a single window leading to Swift Services.

Broadly speaking the types of services offered by the department of post can be divided into four major categories. The four major categories will include mail service, financial service, corporate service and insurance. Among the four services the mail and corporate services are classified postal services and financial and insurance services can be classified as non-postal services offered by the Department of Post. Apart from the above mentioned services the post also implements and offers number of schemes which are offered by the Government of India from time to time. The services are mostly categorized as non postal services and are offered as a part of implementation of programs and schemes of Government of India.

Need for the Study

The India post is having its presence in all the States of the country and also has human resource and also infrastructure facilities. In spite of having all the resources, the post is not

able to reach to the majority of customers. The reason behind of not catering to maximum customers is lack of effective management practices which is the reason the study is required.

Review of Literature

The reviewed literature is presented as under:

Nayar K.B. (1986) evaluated management of the postal services in India with reference to Kerala Circle. The study speaks about evaluation of postal system, structural changes of postal services, functions of the Indian postal department and evaluation of the postal system in Kerala. The problems faced by employees of the postal circle are discussed. A major part of the study speaks about human resource management practices and perception of the employees with regard to recruitment, training, transfer, performance appraisal, welfare schemes, grievance handling, disciplinary action, wage structure, incentives, union management relations and organisational behaviour is being discussed. The customer perception, difficulties faced by customers, complaint redressal by post is also discussed. The study uses descriptive statistics to present the data collected from the respondents and officials of the post. The study focuses on human resource problems and also issues faced by the customers; it does not take into consideration the postal services.

Thangapandi G (2011) studied marketing of postal services by India Post with reference to Salem West Division. The speaks about history of postal services, policy of India Post , network and services of post and marketing mix of the postal services. The objective of the study included opinion of the post master, employees of the post, customers. The study is conducted using three different types of questionnaire for post masters, postmen and customers. The findings are people mix; price mix, promotion mix and physical evidence are to be improved for effective functioning. The study highlighted overall services and problems and difficulties faced by postmaster and postmen. Specific services are not given much importance. The review is focused on a particular region and overall and holistic points are not present by the authors. The aspect of management practices is not given importance therefore there is a need to discuss effective management practices for the post for overall development.

Objective of the Study

The broad objective of the study is to present effective management practices for Indian Postal services in India for development and growth of post and also for catering to maximum number of customers in the country.

Effective Management Practices for Indian Postal Services in India

The following are the management practices which can be useful for development of postal services in India.

1. The Indian Postal Department has its website which is managed by the department of Post and also has websites for postal circles throughout the country. Most of the websites are providing information about the services of the India Post but are static in nature. Some of the post circle websites are not even updated and only contains information about the meeting held and the action taken reports. The first and the most important change the post as to adopt in its effective management practices is to develop dynamic websites for all the postal circles of the country.

2. The second effective management practice which the India Post should work is extensive promotion of India Payment Bank which is started in the year 2017 with a motto "Every customer is important, every transaction is significant and every deposit is valuable, no matter the value". The time has come where the mobile application of the India Payment Bank is promoted so that financial transactions can be done by many customers using the application. The India Payment Bank application will go a long way not only in promoting financial inclusion but also help in connecting citizens to the main stream online banking business without incurring cost. The initiative is a well planned one, but only it requires lot of promotion so that more and more customers can connect to the post.

3. The third effective management practice for post is to make available the charter of services to the citizens of the locality along with name and contact number of the postmen or postal agent designated to a particular locality outside the post office. This particular management practice will go a long way in creating awareness about the services available and also the person responsible for providing the services. The Post has to effectively use the human resource in management of the products and services offered by the post

4. The last important effective management practice is for promoting postal insurance and rural insurance services in India. The post provides insurance services through postal agents. The services are being provided to customers for a very long time. The post provides services to customers using both online and offline mode. In some states the

services are being provided only through offline mode making it very difficult for the customer to pay premiums and get information about the policy online. The focus should be on providing insurance services 100 percent through the online mode.

Conclusion

The Postal department have to adapt to the four management practices for development and progress of the department and also be an effective public sector enterprise. The department has to work with an approach of professional human relationship management. The resources are to be utilised in order to make the department more effective and developed and also to see that the organisation reaches more number of customers in near future.

References

1. www.indiapost.gov.in
2. www.ippbonline.com
3. *Nayar K.B. (1986)* Management of the Postal Services in India With Reference To Kerala Circle. (Doctoral thesis) Retrieved from https://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/handle/10603/19253
4. *Thangapandi G (2011)* A Study of Marketing of Postal Services by India Post with reference to Salem West Division (Doctoral thesis) Retrieved from https://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/handle/10603/20384

_____