



# Extending Outreach of Passport Services through Network of Post Offices

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The Passport Seva Project (PSP), an ambitious Mission Mode Project of the Government of India, is being successfully run in the Public Private Partnership (PPP) mode as part of the National e-Governance Plan. It has emerged as one of the most noticeable statutory and citizen-centric services being rendered by the Government. M/s Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) is the Service Provider for the PSP.

At present, 89 Passport Seva Kendras (PSK) with best-in-class amenities are operating across the country as extended arms of the 38 Passport Offices, thus providing extended reach to passport applicants. Several quantitative and qualitative improvements in the delivery of passport services in the country have been made during the last two and a half years.

Over the years, there has been an expansion in the volume of passport related services. Government of India rendered 1.15 crore passport and other related services during the calendar year 2016.

The Ministry of External Affairs has engaged closely with the Police Departments across States/ Union Territories to reduce the time taken in completion of Police Verification Report (PVR) for expeditious issuance of Passports. The Department of Posts has been a valuable partner of the Ministry of External Affairs in the PSP by ensuring timely despatch and delivery of the passports from the Passport Offices to the registered address of the passport applicants.

In order to streamline, liberalize and ease the process of issue of passport, the Ministry of External Affairs has made several changes towards the end of last year in the realm of passport policy which is expected to benefit the citizens of India applying for a passport. It is expected that these changes in the Passport Rules would further ease the process for passport applicants in getting their passports.

The objective of the Government has been to cater to the demand for passports and to reach out to the people located far away from the Passport Offices. One approach has been to open PSK at various locations and under this, the Government has decided to inaugurate additional four PSK at Indore in Madhya Pradesh, Udaipur in Rajasthan, Siliguri in West Bengal and Sholapur in Maharashtra in the coming months. A second approach has been to organize Passport Seva Camps at various locations. During 2016, 80 such Camps have been organized at various locations across the country in which 34,111 passport applications were processed.

In order to extend passport services to our citizens on a larger scale and to ensure wider area coverage, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) and the Department of Posts (DOP) have now agreed to utilize the Head Post Offices (HPO) in the various States as Post Office Passport Seva Kendra (POPSK) for delivering passport related services to the citizens of our country. The pilot projects for this joint venture between MEA and DOP would be inaugurated on 25 January, 2017 at the HPO at Mysuru in Karnataka and at Dahod in Gujarat. Appointments for passport applicants have been released for these two places beginning 25 January, 2017. Applicants, who apply for their passports online through the passport portal, can now schedule an appointment and then visit the designated POPSK to complete the formalities akin to those at the PSK necessary prior to the issue of the passport.

Delivery of passport related services through the POPSK would be yet another citizen-centric measure of the Government in taking IT- driven public services closer to the people of the country. This partnership would be an important step forward enabling the Government to continue to deliver passport related services to the citizens in a timely, transparent, more accessible, and reliable manner through streamlined processes and a committed, trained and motivated workforce.

Once the pilot projects are operationalized successfully, the Government intends to scale up this programme by opening POPSK in all the HPO in a phased manner.

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