

Passport Seva Project

The Passport Seva Project (PSP), an ambitious Mission Mode Project of the Government of India, is being successfully run in 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.

With the implementation of the Passport Seva Project in partnership with its Service Provider M/s TCS, the Ministry has been providing quality service to the people from the Passport Seva Kendras (PSK) established with best in class amenities across the country in PPP mode. Under this system, the applicants are required to apply for their passports online, upload relevant documents, make the payment online through debit/credit card or SBI net-banking/SBI Challan, schedule an appointment and then visit the designated Passport Seva Kendra (PSK). A user friendly portal has been made available. When an applicant visits the PSK, an Electronic Queue Management System (EQMS) working on the principle of First-in First-out is available at all PSKs to monitor the flow of applicants. The applicants can track the status of their applications themselves through portal and also SMS services. In the current system of passport issuance, there is no manual intervention at any stage, and the complete process is digitally flown with re-engineered process through a single visit clearance.

3. Since the launch of Passport Seva Project, there has been an increase in the scope and volume of passport services. During 2017, the Ministry processed more than 1.17 crore passport and passport related service applications compared to 98.4 lakhs in 2016 marking a growth of nearly 19%. The Indian Embassies and Consulates abroad issued approximately 15.13 lakh passports, Emergency Certificates and other passport related miscellaneous services. Thus, the Government of India, in total, dealt with more than issued 1.32 crore passport and other related services in the year 2017.

The Government has taken several steps to simplify the procedure for getting passports by the general public. These involve simplification of the passport rules and outreach to the people in the delivery of passport related services. 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. The steps taken in this direction are as follows:

A. **Outreach**

- i. The Government has opened 16 Passport Seva Kendras (PSK) since May 2014 which includes all the States in the North East of India.
- ii. The Ministry of External Affairs in association with the Department of Posts has taken an innovative initiative and has decided to open Passport Offices at the Head Post Offices (HPO) in the country called 'Post Office Passport Seva Kendra' (POPSK). The Government has announced the opening of 251 POPSK out of which 187 have become functional till 18th April, 2018. The Ministry intends to complete the requisite formalities for the remaining locations like preparation of the site, procurement of IT and non-IT equipment for setting up of the remaining POPSK at the earliest.
- iii. The POPSK are functioning like the other existing PSK. The process of issuing passports has not changed after the opening of the POPSK. Applicants, who apply for their passports online through the passport portal, can schedule an appointment and then visit the designated POPSK to complete the formalities similar to those at the PSK necessary prior to the issue of the passport. The photographs, biometrics and the supporting documents would be electronically captured at the POPSK and the applicant will not have to revisit them prior to the issue of the Passport.

- iv. With the addition of 251 POPSKs, the total number of Passport Seva Kendras including POPSK to have been set-up since May 2014 for the benefit of the citizens would be 267.
- v. There will be 93 PSK and 251 POPSK after the operationalization of all the PSK and POPSK announced so far.

B. Simplification of Passport Rules

The Ministry has liberalized a sizable number of processes for benefit of the citizens (passport applicants) and the same has been operationalized from 26th December 2016. The liberalized processes are helping the passport applicants immensely as per the feedback received from various Passport Seva Kendras (PSKs) and also from the Regional Passport Officers located in the country. The improvements done are as under :

i. Proof of Date of Birth

- Birth Certificate (BC) issued by the Registrar of Births & Deaths or the Municipal Corporation or any other prescribed authority whosoever has been empowered under the Registration of Birth & Deaths Act, 1969 to register the birth of a child born in India;
- Transfer/School leaving/Matriculation Certificate issued by the school last attended/recognized educational board containing the DOB of the applicant;
- PAN Card issued by the Income Tax Department with the DOB of applicant;
- Aadhaar Card/E-Aadhaar having the DOB of applicant;
- Copy of the extract of the service record of the applicant (only in respect of Government servants) or the Pay Pension Order (in respect of retired Government Servants), duly attested/certified by the officer/in-charge of the Administration of the concerned Ministry/Department of the applicant, having his DOB;
- Driving license issued by the Transport Department of concerned State Government, having the DOB of applicant;

- Election Photo Identity Card (EPIC) issued by the Election Commission of India having the DOB of applicant;
- Policy Bond issued by the Public Life Insurance Corporations/Companies having the DOB of the holder of the insurance policy.

ii. Out of turn issue of passport under Tatkaal scheme

The Ministry announced a new Tatkaal scheme on 11 January, 2018 in which the Verification Certificate from a Government Official has been done away with. If an applicant of the age of 18 years and above desires to obtain a passport under the Tatkaal Scheme, any 3 out of the 13 prescribed documents needs to be provided along with a self-declaration prescribed in Annexure–E of the Passport Rules, 1980, and the Tatkaal fee as prescribed needs to be paid. No proof of urgency is required for out of turn issue of passport under Tatkaal scheme. Post Police Verification shall be done in all the cases of issue of passport under Tatkaal scheme. The passport, subject to the satisfaction of the Passport Authority, will preferably be issued within a period of three working days from the date of submission of application.

iii. Out of turn issue of fresh passport under normal scheme without paying any additional tatkaal fee

If an applicant applies for a new passport under the Normal scheme and desires to obtain the passport on out of turn basis without paying the additional Tatkaal fees, any 3 out of the 13 prescribed documents needs to be provided along with a self-declaration prescribed in Annexure–E of the Passport Rules, 1980. Post Police Verification shall be done in all cases of issue of passport under this Scheme. There shall be no additional fee payable by the passport applicant to avail this Scheme.

iv. Other changes made in the Passport Rules

i. A discount of ten percent in passport fee for fresh applications (and not for re-issue) has been provided to minors up to the age of 8 years and senior citizens (persons above the age of 60 years) with effect from 24 June, 2017.

ii. Ministry has approved the inclusion of the name of step parents in the passport.

iii. To obviate the hardships being faced by the applicants due to non-possession of registered rent agreement, unregistered rent agreement has been prescribed as valid address proof for issuance of passport.

iv. Exemption has been accorded to children below the age of 5 years and physically disabled persons without forelimbs from giving biometric details (10 fingerprints) to the passport authority, which is otherwise mandatory for every applicant.

v. Regarding the request for change of Date of Birth in a reissued passport, the Passport Issuing Authorities (PIA) have been authorized to consider the explanation of each applicant seeking change in the DOB (irrespective of the period that would have lapsed after the issue of the passport) to find the genuineness of the claim. If the PIA is satisfied with the claim and with the document(s) submitted by the applicant in support of the claim, the PIA shall accept all such requests made by the applicant to issue the passport with revised DOB.

vi. The following additional list of documents have been prescribed as proof of address for issue of passports:

a) Allotment letter of the Government accommodation issued by the Estate Office/ Public Works Department of the Central/ State Government in respect of their employees.

b) Duly certified/attested extract of the service record/book of the Government employees (serving/retired) or the

bonafide certificate issued by the employer in respect of serving Government employees.

c) Proof of address (POA) issued by the India Post, Department of Posts.

v. Process Improvements

- The online passport application form now requires the applicant to provide the name of father or mother or legal guardian, i.e., only one parent and not both. This would enable single parents to apply for passports for their children and to also issue passports where the name of either the father or the mother is not required to be printed at the request of the applicant;
- The total number of Annexes prescribed in the Passport Rule, 1980, has been reduced to 8. Annexes A, C, D, E, J, and K have been removed and certain Annexes have been merged;
- All the annexes that are required to be given by the applicants would be in the form of a self declaration on a plain paper. No attestation/swearing by/before any Notary/Executive Magistrate / First Class Judicial Magistrate would be henceforth necessary;
- Married applicants would not be required to provide Annexure K or any marriage certificate;
- The Passport application form does not require the applicant to provide the name of her/his spouse in case of separated or divorced persons. Such applicants for passports would not be required to provide even the Divorce Decree;
- Orphaned children who do not have any proof of DOB such as Birth Certificate or the Matriculation Certificate or the declaratory Court order, may now submit a declaration given by the Head of the Orphanage/Child Care Home on their official letter head of the organization confirming the DOB of the applicant;

- In case of children not born out of wedlock, the applicant for the passport of such children should submit only Annexure G while submitting the passport application;
- In case of issue of passport to in-country domestically adopted children, submission of the registered adoption deed would no longer be required. In the absence of any deed to this effect, the passport applicant may give a declaration on a plain paper confirming the adoption;
- Government servants, who are not able to obtain the Identity Certificate (Annexure-B)/ No-Objection Certificate (Annexure-M) from their concerned employer and intend to get the passport on urgent basis can now get the passport by submitting a self-declaration in Annexure-'N' that he/she has given prior Intimation letter to his/her employer informing that he/she was applying for an ordinary passport to a Passport Issuing Authority;
- Sadhus/ Sanyasis can apply for a passport with the name of their spiritual Guru mentioned in the passport application in lieu of their biological parent(s) name(s) subject to their providing of at least one public document such as Election Photo Identity Card (EPIC) issued by the Election Commission of India, PAN card, Aadhaar Card, etc wherein the name of the Guru has been recorded against the column(s) for parent(s) name(s).

Police Verification

The Ministry has launched mPassport Police App for speedy submission of Police Verification Report (PVR). The App has the capability to capture the personal particulars and photograph of the passport applicant and transmit the same electronically to the concerned stake holders. The Police Department of several states have started implementing this app which has helped in reducing the time taken to complete the PVR in these states.

The Ministry has successfully connected, till date, 726 Police Districts out of the total 764 Police Districts with the Passport Seva Project digitally under the DPHQ model. Consequent upon these steps, the time taken to complete the PVR has come down from 42 days in 2014 to 21 days during

2017. 72% of the PV has been completed within the prescribed timeline of 21 days during 2017.

The following States and Union Territories have started using mPassport Police App as on 1 December, 2017: Dadra and Nagar Haveli, Daman and Diu, Delhi, Haryana, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Puducherry, Tami Nadu, Uttrakhand and West Bengal.

Appointments

Securing online appointments for submission of passport applications at PSK has been simplified. The current provision is allowing applicants to choose any appointment date from the earliest five available dates (working days) for scheduling/ rescheduling an appointment for passport related services. Earlier, the System used to offer only one available date to the applicant for seeking appointment for passport related services. This measures have made the process of issuing passport easy and quick.

Grievance Redressal through Social Media

To connect and empower citizens in quicker exchange of ideas and their sentiments and also to strengthen feedback for Passport related services through social media “Twitter CRM (Customer Relation Management) Platform” has been started by the Ministry in February 2016 and officially launched on 23rd December 2016.

Bridging Digital Divide

With a view to address the challenge of digital divide, especially in the rural hinterland, the Ministry in association with M/s CSC e-Governance Services India Ltd. promoted by DeitY, provided the facility of online application filing for through the vast network of Common Service Centers (CSCs) across the country.

Green Initiatives

The Ministry has taken several steps to promote environment friendly paperless initiatives:-

- a) Doing away with the physical file of the applicant. All documents provided by the applicant are digitally saved in the Passport Seva System and after successful submission of the application, the physical file created is returned to the applicant.
- b) The physical copy of Police Verification report submitted by Police authorities to Regional Passport Offices have been stopped and only digitally signed copy of report is utilized.
- c) SMS based appointment receipt.

Other Key Initiatives in Pipeline

- a) The Ministry is working on a new passport booklet with additional features to print the passport bilingually – both in English and in Hindi.
- b) Integration of Passport Seva System with Indian Missions/Posts abroad, in order to have uniform centralized passport issuance application process working on a single centralized database. Work under progress to take up the proposed integration through the existing service provider.
- c) Application filing through Mobile App.
- d) Integration with other e-Governance Projects e.g. CCTNS, EPIC, PAN, eSign and Digi-Locker.
- e) Passport eKYC Service to benefits other Government Departments.
