

# CHAPTER - I

## Introduction

### 1.1 GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE AUDITEE

Passport is the proof of citizenship which a sovereign country issues to its subjects. Under the Passport Act- 1967, any citizen of India travelling abroad should be in possession of a passport or travel document issued by the Government of India. The Consular, Passport and Visa (CPV) Division of the MEA through the Central Passport Organisation (CPO) and the CPV wings of the Indian Missions abroad provide passport related services. CPO is the nodal unit for delivering Passport-related services in India and the Joint Secretary (CPV) heads CPO in the role of Chief Passport Officer.

There are 37 Regional Passport Offices (RPOs) under the CPO in India as on 2014-15. Each RPO is headed by a Passport Officer. Table below indicate significant increase in the number of passports issued over the last few years:

**Table 1.1: Passports issued by MEA**

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
<b>No. of passports issued (in lakhs)</b>	52.51	58.69	59.40	68.05	81.29
<b>Percentage increase over the previous period</b>	4.43 <sup>1</sup>	11.76	1.20	14.56	19.45

**Source: Annual Reports of MEA and Published Annual Data of PSP**

### 1.2 Passport Seva Project

Due to the rapid growth in the number of passport seekers, a need was felt (2005-06) in MEA for improving the existing system of issuance of passports. To address this need, a Mission Mode Project (MMP) was identified (August 2007) under the National e-Governance Plan. The MMP on Passports named "Passport Seva Project" (PSP) aimed "To deliver all Passport-related services to the citizens in a timely, transparent, more accessible, reliable manner & in a comfortable

<sup>1</sup> 50.28 lakh passports issued in 2009.

environment through streamlined processes and committed, trained & motivated workforce”.

As a first step towards implementation of the project, MEA conducted a study through the National Institute for Smart Government (NISG). On receipt of a detailed report from NISG, the MEA obtained approval of the Union Cabinet (6th September 2007), *inter alia* to:

- Outsource the delivery of front –end passport services,
- Establish passport seva kendras (PSKs) across the country,
- Create a centralised IT system linking all PSKs, RPO/Pos, police and postal department and,
- Permit the private partner to levy a service charge for each service.

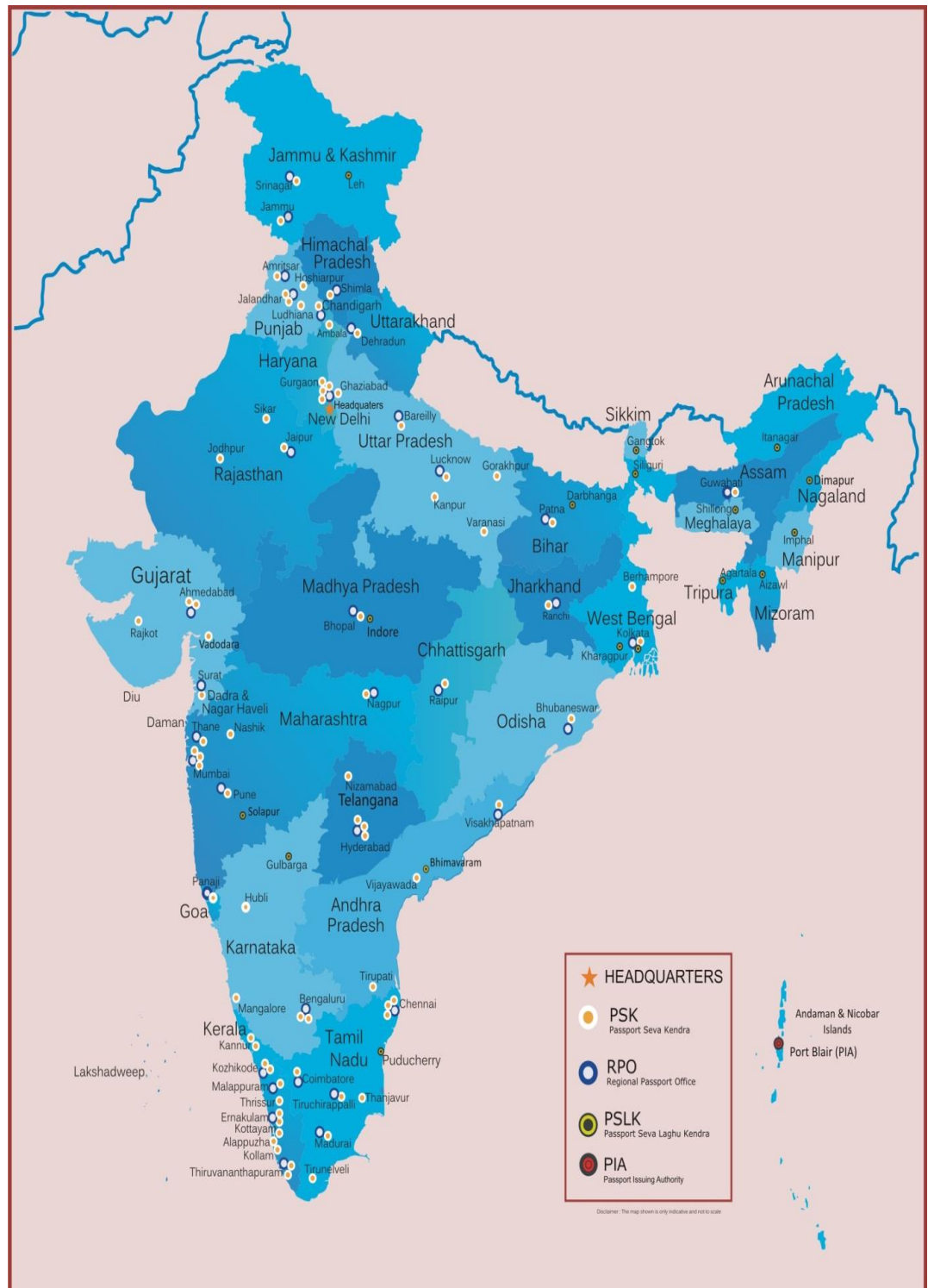
The proposed system was envisaged to be a citizen centric, fast and convenient mode of issue of passport in a streamlined manner with three distinct phases – the application, visit to the PSK and the backend processing before issue of the passport as represented in the diagram on the next page:

Figure 1.1



For implementing the project, a project management unit (PMU) was created under the Additional Secretary (CPV and Admn.). The MEA invited bids for selection of a Service Provider (October 2007). M/s. Tata Consultancy Services Ltd. (M/s. TCS) was selected as the Service Provider in July 2008. A Master Service Agreement (MSA) was signed between MEA and M/s. TCS in October 2008. The pilot project was launched in Bengaluru and Chandigarh in March 2010 and August 2010 respectively. After necessary standardisation and testing, the Project commenced for a period of six years i.e. from 12 June 2012 (the date of Go-Live) to 11 June 2018 as per terms of the MSA. At present, 77 PSKs are operational as given in the figure on the next page.

Figure 1.2: Location of Regional Passport Offices and Passport Seva Kendras



Source: MEA website

### **1.3 Progress under the Project**

The project was running in Public Private Partnership (PPP) mode with M/s. TCS, the Service Provider through 77 Passport Seva Kendras (PSKs) under the 37 RPOs situated across India. A National Call Centre had been set up to provide real-time status and up-to-date information in 17 languages using a toll free number. The passport portal <http://www.passportindia.gov.in> was set up to provide upto date real-time information. Apart from these, an SMS alert facility was also provided to the citizens under PSP to enable citizens to receive alerts and updates regarding progress of their passport applications and pending actions. Since 2014, 135 Passport Seva Camps had been organised by the Ministry with an aim of reaching out to people located far away from PSKs. 718 Passport Melas had been organised from January 2013 to August 2015 to meet the increased demand for passport services.

### **1.4 Audit Objectives**

The objectives of the performance audit were to verify whether:

- (i) passport related services were delivered to the citizens within the prescribed time;
- (ii) comfortable and transparent environment for passport related services was available to the citizens;
- (iii) implementation of the master services agreement and related governance structure was efficient and effective.

### **1.5 Scope and methodology**

The performance audit of the Passport Seva Project of the Ministry was conducted for a period from June 2012 to August 2015 wherein only published reports, fortnightly data trends and internal communications was made available to audit for the period from June 2012 to August 2015. Further, dashboard<sup>2</sup> data relating to 37 RPOs/77 PSKs was also made available to audit in June-August 2015. Facts related to prior period have also been mentioned in the report wherever felt necessary. Information through an audit questionnaire was also

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<sup>2</sup> Dashboard data- Dashboard data of PSP shows the current position of that date depicting passport data of the previous days evening closing for the whole country. It is dynamic and keeps on changing every day. The reports coming in the dashboard has been designed for monitoring of the project by the Ministry.

collected from 15 PSKs under six RPOs (New Delhi, Chennai, Patna, Surat, Cochin and Bhubaneswar) selected on a random sampling without replacement basis.

The performance audit commenced with the entry conference on 9 March 2015 with Joint Secretary (CPO & PSP) wherein audit methodology, scope, objectives and criteria were discussed. Exit conference was held on 28 October 2015 with Joint Secretary (CPO & PSP) wherein important audit findings along-with recommendations were discussed. Response to the draft report as received on 17 November 2015 and 17 February 2016 were suitably considered and incorporated in the report.

### **1.6 Scope limitations**

The following information/records were not provided to audit :-

- (i) Time taken across the RPOs for printing and dispatch of the passports, including an age-wise analysis for the year 2014. *(Para 2.3)*
- (ii) Time taken for delivery of the passports by the postal department for the year 2014 across the RPOs. *(Para 2.4)*
- (iii) Data related to application processing for the year 2014 to assess the performance of the PSKs against the laid down standards. *(Para 3.3)*
- (iv) The actual time taken in redressal of grievances during 2014. *(Para 3.5)*
- (v) Records on legacy data migration including physical files of approval on migrated/digitized data. *(Para 4.4)*

In order to evaluate the time taken in 2014 across the RPOs for printing and dispatch of the passports and to conduct an age-wise analysis, we requested for data relating to printing and dispatch of passports for the year 2014. But due to non-production of data for 2014, the audit points relating to printing and dispatch of passports were prepared by analysing data of current date using the dashboard facility. Similarly due to non-availability of age wise pendency of grievances for the year 2014, the audit para relating to grievances was prepared by analysing data of current date by using the dashboard facility. We also requested for soft data of PSP for any one quarter in order to evaluate SLA parameters. Due to non-provision of data by the Ministry, data on SLA metrics could not be verified to assess the performance of the PSKs against the laid down standards. Hence paras have been prepared based on data provided by M/s TCS Ltd and conclusion have been drawn on that basis.

### **1.7 Sources of Audit Criteria**

The performance of the Passport Seva Project/Passport Seva Kendras was evaluated against the Audit Criteria from the following sources:

- Request for Proposals;
- Master Service Agreement;
- Service Level Agreement;
- Passport Act;
- Passport Manual;
- Rules prescribed by the Government;
- Instructions/guidelines issued by Government from time to time;
- Policy of the MEA;
- IT Act 2000 (as amended till date) etc.

### **1.8 Acknowledgement**

Audit wishes to acknowledge the cooperation extended by Ministry of External Affairs during the audit process.