

Customers Expectation in Logistics and Communication Industry A Research Study in Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and West Bengal

M.V. Rama Prasad & Upender Yennam

Abstract

Service Organisations especially the government-owned public-utility departments are realizing the significance of customer-centric philosophies and are increasingly turning towards quality management approaches worldwide. The Post Office, irrespective of the country is seriously reorienting itself to the present day needs of the customer in the wake of cut-throat competition. India Post, the Indian Postal Department is also not an exception to it. Unlike other government departments, the role of post office is unique and indispensable considering the geographic spread and diversity of the country and the diverse servicing roles. The customer profile of a postal set up in terms of age, occupation, needs is quite divergent. It is very true to say that Post Office serves all sections of society equally though it has a legacy system. This research based paper focus to understand the nature of customers who come to Indian Post Offices and their preferences from the basket of diverse product portfolio. It also attempts to study the awareness level and their past purchase experiences with the Post Offices. This study attempts to study the association between the product awareness and the purchase intentions. Also analyses the mail profile and maps the broad parameters on which the satisfaction of postal service hinges. The findings indicate the brighter side of the post office in terms of its product patronage in some areas and many action points to focus on by the policy makers. The design methodology is simple in nature and makes use of statistical techniques like Chi-square test, Pearson Correlation analysis. Future studies on Post Office can be built up on this to discretely study the predictive expectations and the perceptions of customers to draw conclusions so as to augment the service delivery, both, across the point of service terminal and outdoor.

Key words: Post Office, Service Quality, Product Awareness, Past Experience

Introduction

Post Office has been serving the Indians since over 156 years. When British consolidated the postal services in India, the idea was to serve imperial interests. Today the post office is part of human life. Post Office in independent India is synonymous with numerous statistics. Out of a total of 155669 post offices in India, 139225 are in rural areas which accounts for about 89%. The humble post office over the years served as a means of communication and more so as a unifying force in building the Nation and connecting people through mail articles. It handles 7 billion mail articles per annum. On an average, a post office covers an area of 21.2 Sq.kms and serves 7166 people. This compares favourably with USA where a post office covers an area of 259.25 Sq.kms and serves 8029 people; and in China where a post office covers an area of 145.59 sq.kms and serves 19962 people.

The Indian Postal Department referred to as India Post has the savings bank amount over Rs.3750 billion. It was estimated that in 2001, the total amount of savings with the post offices accounted to about 7% of India's GDP (final report of the world Bank study, August 2002) with the customer base of more than 170 million account holders and a branch network of over 154000, the post office savings bank is twice the size of all the banks in the country put together. Given these figures, it is worth attempting to understand the post office consumer.

Statement of the problem

As per the Consumer Protection Act, 1986 a 'consumer' means any person who - hires or avails of any services for a consideration which has been paid or promised or partly paid and partly promised or under any system of deferred payment and includes

any beneficiary of such service other than the person who hires or avails of the services for consideration paid or promised or partly paid and partly promised or under any system of deferred payment, when such services are availed of with the approval of the first mentioned person but does not include a person who avails of such service for any commercial purposes.

Post office is offering about 20 traditional services ranging from Postcard to foreign mail, seven savings banks schemes, two types of Postal Life Insurance, six types of money transmission services, half-a-dozen premium product category of services and many tie-ups with Corporate and Ministries of both State and Central Government. In this competitive business environment of logistics and communication industry how consumers expect about the services of service providers for satisfying their requirements.

Literature Review

The customer satisfaction hinges on many attitudes and feelings that customers hold about their experiences with an organisation. Accordingly they determine the future behaviour of the customers. This behaviour rather than the attitude is more important from the service provider point of view. Measuring customer satisfaction is not so easy. Keiningham and Vavra coined the phrase 'mere satisfaction' to emphasise the extent to which merely satisfying customer is not enough for today's demanding consumers. The service provider should understand the difference between 'making more customers satisfied' and 'making customers more satisfied'.

Many studies in the 1970s proved that customer satisfaction was a primary determination of loyalty including those by Rust and Zohorik, Rust, Zahorik and Keiningham" and Zeithaml, Berry and Parasuraman, while and Schneider found that customers with better perception of service quality were more likely to remain as customers and they tell others about their expectations.

Zeithaml and Bitner in their book *Services Marketing* mentions that service expectations are formed by many uncontrollable factors, from the experience of

customers with other companies and their advertising to a customer's psychological state at the time of service delivery. They further concluded that what customers expect is as diverse as their education, values and experience.

Zeithaml, Berry, and Parasuraman (1993) model brings out two kinds of expectations at two different levels, namely, the desired service level and the adequate or minimum service level. There is a Zone of Tolerance separating them. The desired service is an expectation of the customers which 'should' meet their expectation. On the other hand, the minimum level of expectation is the 'Adequate' service level below which the customer won't accept the service.

Farnel (1992) in his cross- industry studies in Sweden concluded that customer satisfaction is basically a function of pre-purchase expectations of customers and post-purchase performance perceived by customers.

Gronroos service quality model describes customer's perception of any particular service into technical quality and functional quality. Technical quality is also called as outcome quality which is the outcome of a process. On the other hand, functional quality deals with the activity of how the customer receives the technical outcome. This dimension is called 'process quality' by Parasuraman and interactive quality by Lehtinen and Lehtinen (1991).

There are several authors who worked on service quality in various organisations.

Parasuraman, Zeithamal and Berry (1985, 1988, 1991, and 1994) have developed Service quality model based on the Service Quality gap between service provider and the service receiver that is the customer.

In their model, they identified 5 quality gaps and shown Service Quality (SQ) as a measure of difference between perceptions and expectations.

Cronin and Taylor (1992, 1994) had come up with SERVPERF model which deals exclusively with the 'perceptions only' approach.

Le Blanc and Nguyen (1988), Blanchard and

Galloaway (1994) dealt with the Banking Sector and sought to explain customer perceptions. Rust et al (1995) studied about the service quality in Hotel and had come up with Return on Quality (ROQ) concept.

Dabholkar and overby (2005) examined the relationship between the service process and service outcome with SQ and customer satisfaction. According to Brown and Bond (1995), "the gap model of Parasuraman et al is one of the best received and most heuristically valuable contributions to the service literature".

In their article on measuring super market service quality, Eduardo Jorres - Moraga and Luis Jora - Sarru had observed that managers should clearly understand the parts played by different elements while make up the quality of service offered by the Supermarket and understand how consumer behaviour and trust change in the event of variations to each of the factors analysed.

Scope of the Study

For the purpose of study big post office located in Hyderabad of Andhra Pradesh, Mangalore, Balmatta of Karnataka and Kutli of West Bengal are taken.

Objectives

This study aims to know the postal clientele of its composition, the consumer's postal needs, his/her expectations of post office and his/her awareness about post office. Also, it attempts to know the preferences of customers among the basket of postal service, the mail-related analysis.

Relevance

The post office today is at its cross-roads. It needs to balance the role of universal service obligation on one hand and the commercial viability on other side. Ever since the telegraph was invented, the role of post office was challenged. There came telephones, internet, mobiles and short service messaging. It is the defining time to reorient the post office to cater to the changing needs of the society. For any organisation, customer is the focus. There is a need to know the customer and his/her 'experience' with the post office. This study

will put forth to the policy makers to look at the servicescape, service delivery, moments of truth, strategies of service recovery.

Research Methodology

This study as outlined in the objectives portion is basically aimed at understanding the postal consumer. Though there are about 50 different products in postal portfolio, only 18 important services are chosen for the purpose of knowing the awareness level, the source of information and the linkage between the awareness and the past purchase experience with the post office.

The questionnaire which was designed for the purpose of Sevottam project taken up in the Department of Posts is adapted with minor modifications.

The questionnaire was mainly an objective type and closed ended one. It was divided into two parts aiming at services at point of sale terminal and outdoor mail delivery services.

Sample Design

Primary data was collected by means of a structured questionnaire served in person to the customers who came to Post Office to avail various services. It was a random sampling. As random sampling ensures the law of statistical regularity, the sample was presumed to have same comparison and characteristics of universe.

For the purpose of study big post office located in Hyderabad of Andhra Pradesh, Mangalore, Balmatta of Karnataka and Kutli of West Bengal are taken. A total of 547 respondents data after filtration was studied for the purpose of knowing their preferences of the products and services available at point of sale terminal and 381 responses are analysed for the purpose of knowing the mail related information.

The compiled data was fed into the coding sheet and with the help of Microsoft Excel 2007 the data was subjected to analysis.

Results and Discussion

As seen from the Table 1, overall composition of customers 10.76% of respondents belong to students

pursuing studies, followed by the employees who are in service (32.81%), business community (25.98%), retired (19.16%) and unemployed who are largely working in unorganised sectors (11.29%). It is seen that 41 customers out of 381 belong to younger generation. This is probably due to the fact that of late post office is into selling of various kinds of applications of various examinations conducted by State and Central Government Institutions. The

applications so purchased are filled -up and posted then and there. These younger community need to be attracted towards other services especially the savings bank. It is understandable that business community as they would be dealing with various financial services like savings bank, money remittances etc. So is the case with retired customers as they would be saving their money in savings schemes like Senior Citizen Savings Scheme.

Table 1 : Occupation-Wise Profile

	Post Office								Overall Frequency	Overall %
	Hyd. GPO	Balmatta	Mangalore	Kutli	Hyd .GPO	Balmatta	Mangalore	Kutli		
Occupation	Frequencies				Percentages				Frequencies	%
Service	69	24	27	5	42.33	17.39	62.79	13.51	125	32.81
Business	34	54	7	4	20.86	39.13	16.28	10.81	99	25.98
Student	21	10	9	1	12.88	7.25	20.93	2.7	41	10.76
Retired	27	20	0	26	16.56	14.49	0	70.27	73	19.16
Unemployed	12	30	0	1	7.36	21.74	0	2.7	43	11.29
Total	163	138	43	37	100	100	100	100	381	100

Source: Primary Data

It is seen from the data analysis in Table 2, that mail and financial services account for about 89.77% of the traffic. It is interesting to note that financial services are competing with mail services. About 3.11% of people i.e. 17 people out of 547 are visiting post offices for enquiring about the postal services. Further research may study in detail about the nature of

enquiry and the ways of obviating the need to visit post office and to obtain information by any other means. Most people who avail financial services are from Hyderabad GPO, Kuthli Post office and Mangalore Post Office, whereas in case of Balmatta Post office almost 98.61% of people are visiting only for mail services.

Table 2 : Profiling Needs

	Post Office				%				Overall Frequency	Overall %
	Hyd GPO	Balmatta	Mangalore	Kutli	Hyd GPO	Balmatta	Mangalore	Kutli		
Purpose of visit	Frequencies				Percentages					
Mail Services at the counter	47	142	71	9	23.15	98.61	48.97	16.36	269	49.18
Financial Services	133	2	55	32	65.52	1.39	37.93	58.18	222	40.59
Post box/post bag	4	0	1	0	1.97	0	0.69	0	5	0.91
Franking services	4	0	2	0	1.97	0	1.38	0	6	1.1
Enquiry	5	0	0	12	2.46	0	0	21.82	17	3.11
Complaint	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Any Other	10	0	16	2	4.93	0	11.03	3.64	28	5.12
Total	203	144	145	55	100	100	100	100	547	100

Source: Primary Data

The awareness of various products is shown in Table 3. It is the past experience which is drawing the people to post office. However, it is interesting to see that the gap between awareness and past experience is more in case of International Money Transfer Service, Insured Post, Speed Post Passport Service and Postal Life Insurance. On the other hand the gap is less in case of Speed Post gold, media post, EPP and e-bill post (e payment). On the other hand, the repurchase

percentages are more in case of Regd. Post (75.2%), Speed Post (70.19%), Money Order (68.6%) and Banking Services (64.64%). In other words, these four are the popular services enjoying the customer loyalty in the order of preference. This brings out the character of post office in particular. Though Speed Post service has been in operational since 1986, the other most preferred services are century- old. The speed post has done a commendable job in receiving

Table 3 : Frequency Mapping

Sample total	Hyderabad GPO						Balmatta						Mangalore HO						Kutli					
	203						144						145						55					
Services	Past experience	Website	Friends / Family	Telephone	Other Media	Awareness-Yes	Past experience	Website	Friends / Family	Telephone	Other Media	Awareness-Yes	Past experience	Website	Friends / Family	Telephone	Other Media	Awareness-Yes	Past experience	Website	Friends / Family	Telephone	Other Media	Awareness-Yes
Registered Post	106	3	14	5	6	188	149	0	0	0	0	153	127	0	0	0	1	147	52	0	3	0	0	58
Insured post	55	2	10	1	6	101	33	0	102	1	14	152	12	0	1	0	2	50	39	0	2	0	0	42
Parcels	76	3	16	1	7	147	151	0	1	0	0	153	95	2	0	0	2	133	47	0	3	1	0	53
Value payable articles	39	3	9	2	5	85	105	0	27	0	19	152	15	1	0	1	1	45	44	0	2	0	0	46
Banking	75	4	19	0	8	146	148	0	3	0	0	153	99	1	0	0	1	132	51	0	4	0	0	58
Postal life Insurance	39	4	13	0	9	86	8	0	62	0	28	98	8	2	1	0	2	30	43	0	7	0	0	52
Money Order	81	4	17	1	4	152	147	0	1	0	0	150	118	1	1	0	1	144	50	0	4	0	0	57
Instant Money Order	29	7	15	0	11	87	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	2	1	1	28	19	0	1	0	0	22
WU IMTS	17	4	24	1	14	86	42	0	59	0	2	105	9	0	1	0	4	84	27	0	3	0	0	31
Retailing Mutual Funds	7	5	14	0	5	42	0	0	22	0	21	44	3	0	2	0	1	37	26	0	1	0	0	28
Electronic Funds Transfer	10	4	13	0	7	44	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	1	0	1	19	20	0	1	0	0	22
Senior Citizen Account	18	3	18	0	10	68	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	1	11	11	0	0	0	0	11
Speed Post	84	5	15	1	9	172	153	0	0	0	0	153	127	2	0	0	1	148	41	0	11	0	0	55
Express parcel	38	2	16	0	4	94	2	0	9	0	7	19	10	0	1	0	1	44	17	0	1	0	1	20
Media Post	7	5	8	0	8	42	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	2	14	10	0	1	0	0	11
e-post	10	7	7	1	6	47	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	1	3	0	2	32	10	0	1	0	0	11
e-Bill Post	6	2	9	1	3	38	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	3	0	2	18	7	0	2	0	0	10
Other Retail Services	0	0	0	0	0	84	4	0	44	0	9	61	3	0	2	0	1	14	0	0	0	0	0	3
Speed post Passport	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	0	80	0	24	113	11	0	2	1	2	78	0	0	0	0	0	0
Speed post Gold	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	1	15	0	0	0	0	0	0

Source: Primary Data

the customer patronage second to registered post. It has the great potential to cross the registered post patronage as there is rise in the express segment expectations.

As seen from Table 3(A), the difference score between the awareness and past experience for Regd. Post, speed post, money order and Banking, the gap score is 21.62, 23.75, 20.66 and 22.39. It implies that the

patronage rate is almost uniform across the four products. It also leads to the conclusion that these four products are doing consistently well. Also it is interesting to see that the average number of customers who are doing repurchase as evident from the Table 3(A) is 20 out of 100 of 20 services. Also as seen from the gap between the awareness level of a product and its loyalty is about 18%. It implies that

Table 3(A) : Awareness Mapping and the Patronage

	All Four Post Offices (Hyd,Balmatta,Kutli,Mangalore)						
Sample total----->	547						
	Percentages derived from frequencies						
Services	Past experience	Website	Friends / Family	Telephone	Other Media	Awareness-Yes	Awareness Past Experience
Registered Post	75.22	0.52	2.95	0.87	1.21	94.63	21.62
Speed Post	70.19	1.21	4.51	0.17	1.73	91.51	23.75
Money Order	68.63	0.87	3.99	0.17	0.87	87.18	20.66
Banking	64.64	0.87	4.51	0.00	1.56	84.75	22.39
Parcels	63.95	0.87	3.47	0.35	1.56	84.23	22.59
Value payable articles	35.18	0.69	6.59	0.52	4.33	56.85	24.13
Insured post	24.09	0.35	19.93	0.35	3.81	59.79	39.77
Postal life Insurance	16.98	1.04	14.38	0.00	6.76	46.10	32.43
WU IMTS	16.46	0.69	15.08	0.17	3.47	53.03	40.73
Express parcel	11.61	0.35	4.68	0.00	2.25	30.68	21.24
Instant Money Order	8.84	1.21	3.12	0.17	2.08	23.74	16.60
Retailing Mutual Funds	6.24	0.87	6.76	0.00	4.68	26.17	22.20
Electronic Funds Transfer	6.07	0.69	2.60	0.00	1.39	14.73	9.65
Senior Citizen Account	5.72	0.52	3.12	0.00	1.91	15.60	11.00
e-post	3.99	1.39	1.91	0.17	1.39	15.60	12.93
Media Post	3.12	0.87	1.73	0.00	1.73	11.61	9.46
Speed post Passport	2.95	0.00	14.21	0.17	4.51	33.10	33.59
e-Bill Post	2.60	0.52	2.43	0.17	0.87	11.44	9.85
Other Retail Services	1.21	0.00	7.97	0.00	1.73	28.08	29.92
Speed post Gold	0.35	0.00	0.17	0.00	0.17	2.60	2.51
Average	20.34	0.56	5.17	0.14	2.00	36.31	17.79

Source: Primary Data

82% of customers know the product but they are not purchasing. The awareness level from website, friends /family, telephone and other media is also shown in the same Table (Table 3(A)).

As seen from Table 3(A), there is hardly 0.56 % contribution of website of the Postal Department in as much as enabling the consumers get required awareness about the products and services. On account of referencing through friends / family, the product awareness about Insured Post (19.9%), International Money Transfer (15.08%), Postal Life Insurance (14.38%) and Speed Post Passport (14.21%) and totals to 63.57%. Further research is required to know the reasons for referencing for these

products. At present, Speed post Gold service is withdrawn by the Department. The awareness level due to the telephonic communication and other media is almost insignificant.

Hypothesis Testing

The relationship between 'past experience' and 'awareness level' is studied further in the form of hypothesis.

Null hypothesis (H₀)

There is no significant relationship between the level of awareness and the past experience of buying product/service in a post office environment.

In order to test the hypothesis Chi square test is conducted.

Table 4 : Observed Frequencies

	Regd. Post	Insured post	Parcels	VP articles	Banking	Life Insr	MO	iMO	IMTS	MFs	EFT	SrCtzn	SP	EPP	Media Post	e-post	e-Bill Post	Other Retail Services	Pass port	Speed post Gold	Row Total
Past Exp	434	139	369	203	373	98	396	51	95	36	35	33	405	67	18	23	15	7	17	2	2816
Awareness	546	345	486	328	489	266	503	137	306	151	85	90	528	177	67	90	66	162	191	15	5028
Total	980	484	855	531	862	364	899	188	401	187	120	123	933	244	85	113	81	169	208	17	7844

Source: Primary Data

Table 5 : Expected Frequencies

	Regd. Post	Insured post	Parcels	VP articles	Banking	Life Insr	MO	iMO	IMTS	MFs	EFT	SrCtzn	SP	EPP	Media Post	e-post	e-Bill Post	Other Retail Services	Pass port	Speed post Gold	Row Total
Past Exp	351.82	173.76	306.95	190.63	309.46	130.68	322.74	67.49	143.96	67.13	43.08	44.16	334.95	87.6	30.52	40.57	29.08	60.67	74.67	6.1	2816.02
Awareness	628.18	310.24	548.05	340.37	552.54	233.32	576.26	120.51	257.04	119.87	76.92	78.84	598.05	157.4	54.48	72.43	51.92	108.33	133.33	10.9	5027.98
Total	980	484	855	531	862	364	899	188	401	187	120	123	933	244	85	113	81	169	208	17	7844

Source: Primary Data

Table 6 : Chi Square Calculation

	Regd. Post	Insured post	Parcels	VP articles	Banking	Life Insr	MO	iMO	IMTS	MFs	EFT	SrCtzn	SP	EPP	Media Post	e-post	e-Bill Post	Other Retail Services	Pass port	Speed post Gold	Row Total
Past Exp	19.2	6.95	12.54	0.8	13.05	8.17	16.63	4.03	16.65	14.44	1.52	2.82	14.65	4.84	5.14	7.61	6.82	47.48	44.54	2.76	250.63
Awareness	10.75	3.89	7.03	0.45	7.31	4.58	9.31	2.26	9.35	8.08	0.85	1.58	8.21	2.71	2.88	4.26	3.82	26.59	24.94	1.54	140.37
Total	29.95	10.84	19.57	1.25	20.36	12.75	25.94	6.29	25.98	22.52	2.37	4.4	22.86	7.55	8.02	11.87	10.64	74.07	69.48	4.3	391

Chi Square → 390.99 Degrees of Freedom 19 →
Source: Primary Data

From the above, it is seen that the calculated value is more than the Table value. It implies that H₀ is rejected. The conclusion is that there is significant relationship between the level of awareness and the

past experience of a consumer in purchasing certain products and services from post office.

Also Pearson correlation was conducted by using SPSS 16.0. The result is as shown in Table 7.

Table 7 : Correlation

		Past Exp	Awareness
Past exp	Pearson Correlation	1	0.955**
	Sig. (1-tailed)		0
	N	20	20
Awareness	Pearson Correlation	0.955**	1
	Sig. (1-tailed)	0	
	N	20	20

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed)

From the above, the conclusion emerged is that the data is 'strongly correlated' and the variables are strongly associated.

namely Hyderabad GPO, Kuthli Post office and Mangalore post office, mail related survey was done. The results are as follows:

Mail-related Analysis

Further from the same sample of these post offices

Table 8 : Receipt of Mail

	In Number			In %			Overall in Number	Overall in %
	Hyd GPO	Kutli	Mangalore	Hyd GPO	Kutli	Mangalore		
Receive mail at home/office								
Yes	86	51	165	85.15	100	99.4	302	94.97
No	15	0	1	14.85	0	0.6	16	5.03
Total	103	51	166	100	100	100	318	100

Source: Primary Data

From table 8, it is seen that about 95% of mail is received at home.

Table 9: Source of Mail

Sources of Mail	In Number			In %			Overall in Number	Overall %
	Hyd GPO	Kutli	Mangalore	Hyd GPO	Kutli	Mangalore		
Friend/Family	53	36	110	53.54	75	70.96	199	65.91
Bank/Insurance	14	7	31	14.14	14.58	20	52	17.21
Telephone/Mobile	22	4	7	22.22	8.33	4.35	33	10.71
Mutual Fund	0	1	0	0	2.08	0	1	0.32
Promotional Mail	8	0	1	8.08	0	0.62	9	2.92
e-commerce	2	0	6	2.02	0	3.73	8	2.6
Total	99	48	155	100	100	100	302	100

Source: Primary Data

From the mail so received, about 66% of it is from friends / family and about 17% from financial institutions. The mail sent by telephone and mobile

companies accounts for about 11%. There was very less mail received from direct mail companies.

Table 10: Profile of Mail

Profile of Mail	In Number			In %			Overall in Number	Overall in %
	Hyd GPO	Kutli	Mangalore	Hyd GPO	Kutli	Mangalore		
Personal Communication	64	27	101	63.37	67.5	63.19	192	63.82
Gift/Parcels	12	6	8	11.88	15	4.91	26	8.55
Documents	10	4	39	9.9	10	23.93	53	17.43
Bills/Statements	11	3	10	10.89	7.5	6.13	24	7.89
Advertisements	3	0	0	2.97	0	0	3	0.99
e-commerce	1	0	3	0.99	0	1.84	4	1.32
Total	101	40	161	100	100	100	302	100

Source: Primary Data

Also it is seen from the table 10, that personal communication accounts for 63.82% and documents about 17.43%, rest is gifts / parcels and bills / statements.

Table 11: Courier Influence

Mails through Private Courier	In Number			In %			Overall in Number	Overall in %
	Hyd GPO	Kutli	Mangalore	Hyd GPO	Kutli	Mangalore		
Yes	64	11	145	62.24	18.37	87.04	220	69.18
No	37	40	21	37.76	81.63	12.96	98	30.81
Total	101	51	166	100	100	100	318	100

Source: Primary Data

Table 12: Reason for Dissatisfaction

Reason for Dissatisfaction	In Number			Percentage			Overall in Number	Overall in %
	Hyd GPO	Kutli	Mangalore	Hyd GPO	Kutli	Mangalore		
Delay	8	1	3	66.67	100	60	12	66.67
Inconsistent delivery schedule and timing	4	0	2	33.33	0	40	6	33.33
Delivered at Incorrect address/Unauthorized person	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Others	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	12	1	5	100	100	100	18	100

Source: Primary Data

From the Table 11, it is seen that about 69.18% of respondents declared that they do receive mail from couriers. They also stated the reasons for dissatisfaction as mentioned in Table 12. Mail delays accounted for 66.67% and inconsistent delivery timings account for the balance proposition. Further

research may focus on customer satisfaction drivers and those expectations of service. Studies may also focus on the minimum tolerable service standards. The research may also focus on measuring the perceptions of them after availing the postal services.

Table 13 : Complaints Profile

Nature of Complaint	In Number			Percentage			Overall in Number	Overall in %
	Hyd GPO	Kutli	Mangalore	Hyd GPO	Kutli	Mangalore		
Unregistered mail services	1	1	1	5.26	100	6.67	3	8.57
Registered mail services	6	0	4	31.58	0	26.67	10	28.57
Speed Post	9	0	5	47.37	0	33.33	14	40
Parcels	0	0	1	0	0	6.67	1	2.86
Availability of forms & stationery	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Financial Services	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Staff Behaviour	3	0	2	15.79	0	13.33	5	14.29
Others	0	0	2	0	0	13.33	2	5.71
Total	19	1	15	100	100	100	35	100

Source: Primary Data

In the analysis of complaints, registered mail services accounted for 28.57% and speed post 40%. Interestingly these two products have emerged as the most patronage among all services. The speed post sought to be an economic, speedy and time bound service. Reasons for such high percentage of complaints need to be proved further. Also it is seen

that complaints on account of staff behaviour account for 14% which points to the need of attitudinal interventions. Future research may focus on the requirements of customers in terms of tangibles, service quality in terms of functional and technical, responsiveness of the service provider and quality of service encounters.

Table 14: Mode of Complaint

Mode of Complaint	In Number			In Percentage			Overall in Number	Overall in %
	Hyd GPO	Kutli	Mangalore	Hyd GPO	Kutli	Mangalore		
Website	1	0	1	5.88	0	6.67	2	5.88
Personally to Postmaster of local PO/ Other Authority	10	1	3	58.82	50	20	14	41.18
Written complaint	7	0	8	35.29	0	53.33	15	41.18
Over Telephone	0	1	1	0	50	6.67	2	5.88
Others	0	0	2	0	0	13.33	2	5.88
Total	18	2	15	100	100	100	35	100

Source: Primary Data

82.36% of respondents preferred to represent to the Postmaster in person and through written complaint. Very few chose to use web logging and complaining over phone.

Conclusion

The post office has been rendering public service over

157 years. It has a legacy system in executing the service. Time has come to look at the customer and to evolve its processes keeping the customers at its focus. The continued patronage of post office in some areas needs to be extended to other areas. Ultimately, it is the quality that pulls the customers. The service environment of a post office and the service delivery

mechanism require interventions. Induction of IT for the benefit of customers is a thrust area. Attitudinal correction trainings are also required to reorient the staff towards handling present day customers.

Limitations

In the present study, an attempt had been made to understand the Postal Customer in terms of his/her broad preferences of postal services. It needs to be further studied. There are two different, but, integral components of postal service delivery; namely, across the counter and off-counter. These two areas require a detailed process mapping to study the various linkages to meet the customer predictive expectations. The Service Quality measurement should attempt to study in detail the nature of clientele and their perceptions with regard to the existing services. The product research studies can take cues from these kinds of customer expectations research.

Though the final sample size was 547 for conducting an analysis of knowing the awareness and perception of the customers about the Postal products and services and also to perform the Mail related Analysis with the same sample, due to inadequate responses on mail related items the same sample size of 547 could not be adhered to. Therefore, for performing mail related analysis the final sample of 381 was used.

Scope for further Research

The present study would be treated as a first step in the area of quality measurement in the public services especially in Post Offices. Considering the vast network of India Post, further research should take up a representative sample from all geographical regions. Further research should critically look at the expectations of the customers and the perceptions of them. Perhaps studies may be taken up based on SERVQUAL or SERVPERF models. It should also focus on the zone of tolerance of service levels of a customer. Based on the broad-based sample, the study should give the best construct model that could explain the various parameters of service quality as applicable to Indian post offices. This will help the policy makers to redesign the processes of existing

products and go for new products in future aligned with the customer expectations. Such studies would help the organisation to evolve customer retention strategies and to cope up with service faults.

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About the Authors :

M.V. Rama Prasad is a Professor and Head, Dept of Marketing at GITAM Institute of Management. The author can be reached at mvrprasad9@rediffmail.com.

Upender Yennam is a Director at Indian Postal Services. The author can be reached at upen12@hotmail.com.