CHAPTER VII

PRIMARY DATA: PERSONAL INTERVIEWS, OBSERVATIONS, VISITS
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Primary Data:
Personal interviews -- Postal employees and Past employees who have opted for VRS
Questionnaire for Post Master General (PMG) -- Pune Region
Interviews --- Private Couriers Pune Zone (Observations and Conclusions), Personal Visits and Observations through Personal Visits

Introduction:
Right from the pre independence period, DOP has performed a significant role in the development of the communication system of India and mobilization of small saving. After 1990, liberalisation, privatisation and globalisation and the changing business environment in India posed many challenges for DoP. The research aimed at studying the performance of Pune Zone -- DoP in this changed scenario. The researcher felt a need to collect more primary data through interviews, in addition to that collected through questionnaires.

The objectives of collecting qualitative data were:
• To study the perception of postal employees about facilities provided to them, authority given to them, performance of Pune Zone as regards old and new services etc.
• To get a deeper level of understanding about postal mail and financial services, satisfaction of postal employees and the efforts of Pune Zone -- DoP for adapting to the changing business environment.

Interviews were the best tools available to collect qualitative data.

7.1 PERSONAL INTERVIEWS
The details of interviews conducted during the period are as under:
7. A. Post Master General -- Pune Region  
Mr. S. Jarodia 

7. B. Postmasters and Postal Assistants:  

Postmasters:  
1. Mr. Shesrao Khodake: Rajgurunagar Post Office  
2. Mrs. Smita Baokar: Lonavala Post Office  
3. Mr. Dharma Salekar: Bhor Post Office  
4. Mr. Govind Arote: Manchar post office  
5. Mrs. S. M. Dhumal: Shaniwar Peth Post Office  
6. Mrs. M. J. Salve: S. P. College Post Office  
7. Mr. Gadekar, Swargate Post Office 

Postal Assistants:  
1. Mr. Vishal Kumbhar Chakan post office  
2. Ms. Sujata Thakur Chakan post office  
3. Mr. Shrikant Dombale Bhor post office  
4. Deepa warude Rajgurunagar Post Office  
5. Ms. Swati Jahagirdar Rajgurunagar Post Office  
6. Mr. Suresh Hite Bhor post office  
7. Ms. Rajashri Jagtap, Manchar Post office  
8. Mr. A. H. Chaudhary, Swargate Post Office  
9. Mr. Kamble Shaniwar Peth post office 

7. C. Postmen:  
1. Mr. A. R. Patel: Lonavala post office  
2. Mr. B. N. More: Lonavala post office  
3. Mr. V. P. Kamble: Lonavala post office  
4. Mr. V. N. Thorve: Lonavala post office  
5. Mr. D. G. More: Lonavala post office  
6. Mr. K. D. Ware: Lonavala post office  
7. Mr. S.M. Gaikwad: Lonavala post office  
8. Mr. Dattatraya Survey: Bhor Post office  
9. Vandana Seid: Shivajinagar Post office
10. Sambhaji Sarode: Chakan Post office
11. Shivaji Kokane: Chakan Post office
12. Shivaji Savant: Chakan Post office
13. Rambhau wadekar: Chakan Post office
14. Mr. V. P. Kamble: Chakan Post office

7. D. **Ex-employees:**

The researcher also interviewed few postal employees who have opted for Voluntary Retirement scheme (VRS) and Mr. M. R. Joshi -- The Group Leader -- payrolls saving scheme for Government employees, which was run by DoP.

The observations and conclusions based on interviews and FGDs have been summarised.

7. A. **Interview with Post Master General – Pune Region**

**Mr. S. Jarodia**

Currently Mr. S. Jarodia is the Post Master General for Pune Region, which covers eight postal divisions namely Pune – East, West Mofussil and RMS divisions, Pandharpur, Satara, Sholapur and Ahamadnagar. He was interviewed in order to know performance of Pune Zone (East, West and Mofussil division) as regards old and new services and postal reforms. Mr. S. Jarodia has been very co-operative in providing the information. His guidance also helped the researcher in collecting quantitative data relating to performance of Pune Zone.

Q.1. In your opinion what is the image of post office in the minds of the customers?

Ans. It is perceived as a typical Government department with bureaucratic attitudes. But the nuisance value of the department is zero. Customers are scared of some Government departments but DoP is like a harmless cow, taken for granted.
DoP is the department with lowest corruption. The common man is still very much involved with the post office and postal services.

Observation:
As regards bureaucracy DoP is like other Government departments, while it has an image of its own different than other Government departments ‘department with lowest corruption’.

Conclusion:
Though a Government department, DoP is successful in creating the image of its own as ‘Department with lowest corruption’.

Q.2. What is the staff strength as compared to workload?
Ans: Staff strength is not enough. For quiet some time recruitment was not undertaken. Volume of household mail has decreased but business mail has increased. Workload on account of financial services and new services has increased to a larger extent. This puts burden on employees. However, recently recruitment is undertaken. I am very hopeful about the new recruits as most of them are well qualified and computer literate e.g. one of the postal assistant in Mofussil is a computer engineer. She has been transferred to the city area where computerisation in many post offices is already undertaken and her services are being used as a computer analyst.

Observations:
1. Though household mail has decreased, business mail and volume of financial services has increased.
2. Postal staff is not commensurate with the workload.
3. DoP has started recruitment and the new recruits in DoP are well qualified and computer literate.

Conclusions:
1. An effort of DoP towards providing additional staff to handle increased workload has started.
2. Pune Zone is successful in attracting well qualified and computer literate youth.

Q.3. What are the postal reforms likely to be implemented in the near future?

Ans. On the operational level we are thinking of introducing some procedural changes that will help to improve the performance of the department and will finally benefit the customers. For e.g. the new secretary to DoP -- Mr. I.M.G. Khan called for a meeting of all the Post Master Generals to discuss about the practical difficulties faced. He has suggested the following: ---

The bulk mailers submit their mail on the post office counter. Franking of bulk mail takes a long time while the other household customers are required to wait in the queue. Such mail is collected together and sent to RMS office for further processing. Mr. I.M.G. Khan has suggested that this procedure can be simplified by requesting the bulk mailers to give the bulk mail directly to RMS office where it will be processed.

This operational reform will benefit in three ways:

1. The RMS offices will be providing services to bulk mailers while the counter of other post offices will be for household customers. This will speed up the process.

2. The work load in the post office other than RMS office will reduce as this way they will be serving only household customers.

3. The waiting time in the queues for both bulk as well as household customers will reduce. The overall quality of service will improve.

For Pune region the following procedural reform is under consideration in addition to the above. At present pin code numbers are given to different areas. Writing the receivers address followed by pin code numbers speeds up the distribution process. However, a pin code is given to an area which covers few post offices. Thus after the first sorting
according to pin-code number, the letters are required to be sorted again as per the small area covered by post offices. It is suggested that these small areas be given a small code number. The customers will be required to write this small code number in brackets after writing the present code.

Observations:
1. On all India level DoP has started business process reengineering which aims at simplification and speeding up of the procedures and improving the quality of service.
2. DoP is trying to cater to different segments of customers.
3. Pune Zone is not only implementing business process reengineering parallel to DoP, but additionally has its own reforms on the way.

Conclusions:
1. Business process reengineering undertaken by DoP speaks of:
   a. Effort of DoP to change positively (for adapting to changing customers expectations)
   b. Its customer orientation.
2. Pune Zone is a step ahead of DoP (all India level) as regards Procedural reforms.

Q.4. What is the response to the new services introduced by the DoP recently?
Ans. The response is very encouraging in order to facilitate the customers income tax returns were accepted in three head post offices in Pune i.e. G.P.O., City Post and Shivajinagar Post Office. There were long queues for submission and the employees have to work over time till late evening.

   Same response is experienced for passport service. The filled in application form for passport is accepted by postal employees and is forwarded to the passport office. If it is correct and complete in all respects the passport will be delivered to the applicant by postal employee. Earlier
Rs.100 was additionally charged for passport through post office. Now this charge has been cancelled.

Postal finance mart has been started at Shivajinagar post office to provide specialized financial services to the customers. The second finance mart will shortly start functioning at GPO Pune.

**Observation:**
The new services introduced by DoP are well accepted by the customers.

**Conclusion:**
DoP in successful in introducing new need based services while continuing with the old ones.

Q.5. Do you think that there is a need to control private couriers? Will the post office amendment bill help in this respect?
Ans. The control over private couriers is very much required. Only legal framework will not help. There is a need to implement the legal provision more effectively.

Q.6. DoP has taken a decision to start a post office bank. Do you think that this will help the DoP?
Ans. This is not a very new concept. The Department is thinking of starting a bank of its own instead of providing financial services on behalf of the department of finance. In Pune region around 50 odd officers of the post already have undergone basic banking training.

In the city area sizeable banking facilities are available. The private banks are now attracting urban customers. These banks are computerised, branches are linked. Moreover they offer facilities like credit card, debit card, ATM cards, e-banking etc. Many of such banks are recruiting highly qualified personnel like post graduates and MBA’s of renowned management institutes. The infrastructure is modern and developed.
Thus one may doubt the popularity of postal banks in city area. However, in urban areas it has considerable scope. The banking network in rural areas is not developed to meet all the requirements. The chances of private banks going to these areas are very less. The population in these areas has faith and confidence in the post office. The post office bank will also fit in the cultural and social setup in the rural areas and therefore it will be very useful.

**Observations:**
1. A proposal to start a Post Office Bank is in the pipeline for quiet some time.
2. At present saving schemes are implemented by DoP as the agency function. Formation of Post Office Bank will change the status. It will have an important role in the rural area but there will be severe competition in urban area.

**Conclusions:**
1. In Post Office Bank, the role of DoP will be different than the role, now it is playing while providing financial services.
2. In relation to Post Office Bank, DoP will be able to capitalise on the faith and confidence of the rural population developed over the period.

On 23rd Dec 2007, the researcher had a brief interaction with PMG, when he gave information about newly introduced service **Electronic Intimation of Delivery (EIOD)** as follows:

E-Intimation of Delivery (e-IOD) provides electronic information about delivery of articles sent through post. The intimation is sent through e-mail, Department’s web site or electronic web based access to the senders. E-IOD is a value added service, which is offered initially with Bill Mail Service, and gradually it will be provided with other services offered by the DoP.
7. B. Interviews with Post Masters and Postal Assistants

The researcher interviewed postmasters and postal assistants in East and West division (Pune City area) and Mofussil area. The objective was to study their perception about facilities provided to them, authority given to them, staff strength, volume of work, amendment to Post Office Act 1898 and corporatisation of DoP etc. which can help in judging the performance of DoP.

Some questions were asked to both postmasters and postal assistants. The responses to these common questions have been recorded first. The Postmaster is the topmost authority in post office. Considering the position of postmasters in the post office, some specific questions were asked to them. These questions and the responses to them were analysed.

The similar opinions of postmasters from Pune City and Mofussil area have been recorded as one, where as different responses have been recorded separately.

Postmasters interviewed:

1. Mr. Shesrao Khodake, Rajgurunagar Post Office 34 years service, 15 years as a post master.
2. Smita Baokar, Lonavala Post Office, 26 years service
3. Mr. Dharma Salekar: Post Master Bhor Post Office worked at Velhe for 6 years and Khandala for 1 year.
4. Mr. Govind Arote: Post Master Manchar post office 36 years service, 12 years as a post master.
5. Mrs. S. M. Dhumal, Post Master, Shaniwar Peth Post Office, Service 25 Years, 2 Years as Post Master.
7. Mr. Gadekar, Post Master, Swargate Post Office, Experience 33 years as a post master 15 years.
Postal Assistants interviewed:
1. Mr. Vishal Kumbhar, Chakan post office
2. Ms. Sujata Thakur, Chakan post office
3. Mr. Shrikant Dombale, Bhor post office
4. Deepa Warude, Rajgurunagar Post Office
5. Ms. Swati Jahagirdar, Rajgurunagar Post Office
6. Mr. Suresh Hite, Bhor post office
7. Ms. Rajashri Jagtap, Manchar Post office
8. Mr. A. H. Chaudhary, Swargate Post Office
9. Mr. Kamble, Shaniwar Peth post office

Q.1. Is there any difference as regards work in city post office and Mofussil post office?

Responses from Mofussil and city Area
Yes, there is a difference between customers' expectations in city and Mofussil area. The customers in city area demand prompt and efficient service. The customers in Mofussil area are of the more understanding type, e.g. if there is a rush the customers are requested to come the next day for getting their pass books filled in. Usually they don't complain.

Observation:
Postal authorities are aware that area wise customers' needs are different.

Q.2. Do you think that the facilities provided by to the employees by IP are satisfactory? Do you think that IP should provide more facilities to the employees?

Responses from Mofussil Area
1. Being Government employees, medical facility is provided which is quite acceptable. But the conveyance allowance that we get is not enough.
2. The facilities are just enough, they are not satisfactory and more facility should be provided.

**Responses from City Area**

1. Some postmasters and postal assistants said that facilities provided are just enough.
2. The others were not satisfied with the facilities provided. Post offices are more interested in providing better services to customers rather than employees. Some of them were reluctant to comment on the facilities given by the department.
3. The basic facilities are not provided, e.g. the chairs and the setting arrangements for the employees are very uncomfortable. Some of the employees suffer from backaches and spondylitis. The height of the counters also does not match the average height of the employees. It is difficult for the employees to move about in the post office because of lack of sufficient space.

**Observations:**

1. Employees are not happy with facilities provided by DoP- Pune Zone.
2. The expectations of postmasters and postal assistants about services provided to them are different in city and Mofussil area, therefore their satisfaction differs.
3. The postmasters and postal assistants in Mofussil area seemed to be satisfied to some extent. The dissatisfaction about the facilities appears to be more in city area as compared to Mofussil area.

**Conclusion:**

The efforts of DoP as regards the services provided to postmasters are not adequate to satisfy them.

Q.3. Is the staff available enough considering the volume of work?
Responses from Mofussil and City Area

1. The decrease in postal services like post cards inland letters etc. is compensated by increase in demand for other services like business mail, speed post and financial services. Similarly on account of development of new residential areas, the area covered by each post office has expanded. During the last five years approximately 40% increase in workload has been experienced but DoP has not undertaken any recruitment since 1982. As a result the work load is much more compared to the strength of the employees.

2. During the last few years the DoP undertook recruitment of staff, mainly postal assistants. However in Shaniwar Peth Post Office there is no addition to the staff. Swargate Post Office needs at least six additional employees to cope up with the workload.

3. In Bhor post office there are 15,000 recurring deposit accounts. The monthly collection on an average is more than Rs.20 lacks. There is only one counter and one employee handling recurring deposits. The postmaster opined that at least four persons are required to handle this workload.

Observations:

1. The workload has increased but the staff strength has not increased.
2. The needs of business customers and house hold customers are different.
3. The available staff is not enough to give special treatment to business customers.

Conclusions:

1. Pune Zone is successful in getting increasing response from the customers for its services, mainly financial services and speed post (from business customers).
2. DoP is not successful in increasing staff strength commensurate with the workload.

3. Staff strength acts as a limiting factor in the efforts of Pune Zone – DoP towards customer segmentation.

Q.4. Are the postal employees ready for a sales man’s job?

Responses from Mofussil Area
1. Postmaster Bhor post office said that postal employees should be ready for sales man’s job. The new services will help to face the competition. Earlier the basic motive of DoP was ‘service’ but now along with service commercial considerations are also considered important.

2. The employees have no choice but to obey the orders given to them.

Responses from City Area:
1. Postal employees should not be asked to perform sales man job basically because they are not employed to perform such duties.

2. The postmen are overloaded with the mail in city areas. It will be physically impossible for them to carry products for retailing. That is why it is not implemented in Pune city at present.

3. If the DoP is going to gain out of activities like selling some products the employees should go for it, provided facilities like two wheelers are provided to them.

Observations:
1. Attitudes of postmasters in city and Mofussil area towards retailing activities of DoP are different.

2. Even in a place like Bhor the postal employees are aware of the shift of importance from ‘service motive’ to ‘service and commercial motive’.

3. The postmasters have also realized the need to change in order that the DoP faces competition and performs well.
4. If postmen are expected to perform retailing certain additional facilities should be provided to them.

**Conclusion:**

**Pune Zone** is successful in developing positive attitude of the postmasters about changing role of post office and changing nature of duties of postal employees in view of changing environment more so in Mofussil area.

Q.5. Do you think that computerisation will help to improve the performance of DoP?

**Responses from Mofussil Area**

Introduction of computers will help in three ways:

a. The job will be simpler because once the transactions are entered all the four entries will be immediately and automatically recorded.

b. It will surely reduce workload.

c. It will also help to improve the quality of services provided by the post office.

At present few postal employees can use computers, mainly newly appointed postal assistants e.g. in Rajgurunager post office Mr. Sachin knows how to work on computers. Fortunately most of the postal assistants, newly employed are already computer trained. Therefore once the computers are installed there will be no problem in using them. All others employees should be provided with computer training. It will speed up the operations.

In Bhor post office there are four computer trained employees. The newly appointed postal assistant Mr. Shrikant Dombale is right now busy with establishing systems on the computers so that the manual records could be transformed into computer records.

**Responses from City Area:**

1. Introduction of computers will help in many ways:

   - Computer will help to ensure the job in more organized way.
   - The work will be simplified.
• Quality of work will improve.
• Computerisation has surely helped to speed up the operations.
• It will attract more qualified people to the department.

2. Four months before some employees from Shaniwar Peth office underwent computer training. However the computers are not still installed. It may take few more months for their installation. The post master feared that by that time the trained employees may forget a part of training given to them. They may face practical difficulties.

3. Computer maintenance is not satisfactorily undertaken. Once the computers are installed they will perform the job of at least two to three employees. But if there is some problem with the computer and if it is not corrected immediately, it puts additional burden on postal employees.

Observations:
1. DoP has started the process of computerisation but some teething problems are experienced.
2. Postmasters are aware of need and utility of computerisation.
3. Most of the newly appointed postal assistants are computer trained. It is a good policy of DoP to employ the personnel possessing basic computer knowledge. It will reduce the cost of computer training.

Conclusions:
1. DoP has realized the necessity of computerisation in changing environment and has introduced computers in its operations.
2. Computerisation also involves timely maintenance and training. DoP appears to be slow on this second aspect of computerisation.

Q.6. Are you happy about the accounting system in the post office for maintaining records of customers’ accounts?
Responses from City and Mofussil Areas:

The accounting system introduced during the British period is still used. Every transaction is posted in four different records. It is true that it increases paper work but it helps to locate mistakes and reduces the chance of misappropriations and frauds. It is said that post office is the Government department with lowest level of corruption.

All the accounts and records are tallied on a day-to-day basis. The Post master has to ensure this at the end of the day. All said and done the accounting system is old and traditional and needs to be simplified.

Observation:
DoP is using traditional accounting system. Though it prevents frauds and misappropriation of funds, it is old tedious and time consuming.

Conclusions:
1. DoP is the Government department with lowest corruption.
2. DoP is not successful in introducing changes in its system for maintaining records of customers' accounts.

Q.7. Are the security arrangements in the post office are satisfactory?

Responses from Mofussil Area

Basically the money collected is deposited in bank every day, but this is true that lot of cash is collected. In Lonawala post office on account of MIS everyday around Rs. 60000 are collected. The security arrangements are not enough. Some employees have opted for VRS scheme. One major reason for accepting VRS is tensions created because of lack of satisfactory security arrangements.

The security arrangements are not bad. At the end of the day the cash collected is deposited into SBI. If required withdrawal from SBI is allowed.

Responses from City Area:

1. The postmaster, Swargate post office opined that the post offices are allowed to keep limited cash balances. They do not maintain
cash like banks. If the post office is not able to pay cash on withdrawal it can issue cheques to the customers. The security system is just enough to take care of cash balances.

2. The security arrangements are not satisfactory at all. For collection of cash the postal vehicle visits our post office regularly. Usually the vehicle staff is accompanied by only one policeman. The policeman is only for namesake and he even does not carry a gun.

3. The postal employees are supposed to carry the cash up to the vehicle. The policeman does not even get down from the vehicle. For Shaniwar Peth post office the problem is comparatively less serious because the post office is on the main road and the vehicle can be driven up to the gate. However, for the post office situated in small by-lanes, the postal employees take the responsibility of carrying the cash up to the parked vehicle on the main road. It is quite a risky job.

**Observation:**
The security arrangements for keeping cash at the post office as well as carrying it to the collection vehicle are unsatisfactory. This is responsible for generating insecurity feeling among the employees.

**Conclusion:**
The Pune Zone -- DoP has failed to ensure satisfactory security arrangements for keeping cash at the post office as well as carrying it to the collection vehicle. It has serious impact on postal employees.

Q.8. Do you experience any difficulty in meeting the withdrawal demands of the customers?

(This question was asked because many customers complained that many times cash is not available in the post office and therefore they have to wait for their withdrawal. Many times they are asked to come the next day. Some customers also said that they have to inform the post office about their withdrawal a day before.)
Responses from Mofussil Area

Normally the collection from investment, telephone and electricity bills etc. is good enough to meet the withdrawal requirements. There is a problem only if on a particular day a lot of customers come for cash withdrawals during the opening hours of the post. When withdrawals are more than collections, withdrawal from State Bank of India is allowed to meet customers need. State Bank of India branch is near to Rajgurunagar post office and therefore withdrawal is not time consuming. Those post offices which do not have a branch of State Bank of India near by do face some difficulty. In such a situation customers have to wait and the post office is unable to provide satisfactory service to them.

Responses from City Area:

1. Post offices are allowed to keep cash as per the limitations specified. Over and above this limit they cannot keep cash. Therefore at times enough cash is not available for payments to customers.

2. Customers get annoyed. Some of the customers also demand that post offices should be aware of the discharge dates of various certificates and keep the cash ready accordingly. Some customers also expect that post office should inform them regarding the maturity of their investment. However, considering the routine workload and the available staff, we are unable to undertake this additional responsibility.

Observations:

1. The problem of meeting withdrawal requirements of the customers is not faced in Mofussil area but is very much experienced in city area. This is related to safety arrangement.

2. Though it is true that the limitations for keeping cash are specified taking in to consideration the security arrangements, it is pertinent
to note that it adversely affects the quality of service and satisfaction of customers.

Conclusions:
1. At times post offices in Pune city fail to meet the withdrawal requirements of the customers on account of specified limitations for keeping cash. The available security arrangements call for such limitations. This is one of the major reasons of dissatisfaction among the customers.

2. The expectations of the customers about services provided to them are different in city and Mofussil areas. Customers in city are more demanding therefore Pune Zone -- DoP at times has failed to stand to their expectations.

Q.9. What is your experience with postmen and local customers?

Responses from Mofussil Area

Customers:
1. There is rarely a bad experience. In the city area experience may be little different, but in Mofussil area the postal staff not only know most of the customers but develop personal relations with the them. The customers here are not very demanding. The postmen are also accustomed to the customers and work environment in the Mofussil area and they do cooperate. Therefore very few complaints are received.

2. Post offices do get some complaints about money orders. Once the money orders are accepted and forwarded, post offices have no control over them. Follow up is not possible and if the money order does not reach in time, employees are unable to provide any explanation to the customers. As against this if there is any problem on the DD issued by the banks, banks can follow up the matters and provide explanation to customers.
3. At least 15 to 20 days are required to provide explanation after any complaint is received. However customers demand immediate explanation. If the money order is sent to a remote place employees are not authorized to use (STD) telephone for conducting enquiries in this matter hence prompt service cannot be provided.

4. In Manchar post office there are thirty one agents. All agents are very co-operative.

5. The postmaster Bhor post office said that he has been fortunate in getting good subordinates. If the behaviour of the employees with customers is empathetic the customers also co-operate.

Responses from City Area:

1. Though in general customers are co-operative, with the change in their idea about quality of services their expectations have increased. Most of the customers even if not satisfied, are not very eager to register complaints. Some of them orally communicate their complaints. Hardly one percent customers lodge written complaint.

2. Postmaster S. P. College post office has a peculiar and interesting opinion about the customers.

The customers expect too much from the post office. Basically post offices work on the basic principle of services. The customers are therefore used to this fact. Therefore they expect that post office should not raise the rates but at the same time improve the quality of service, e.g. there is increase in the price of day-to-day requirements for instance a cup of tea in a restaurant, it has increased from Rs. 2 to Rs. 10; customers don’t complain but if post office raises the rates of service even slightly there is strong opposition.
The customers behave like a spoilt child, which expects that whatever way he behaves, the parent should provide him with all his needs.'

Postmen:
Experiences of the postman are quite satisfactory. The postman is a very important person in the channel of distribution of postal system. Postmen have a heavy workload. The number of postmen has not increased but area per postman has increased.

Observations:
1. The information system of DoP is slow in providing explanation to the customers in relation to their complaints.
2. Customers have deep-rooted impression of service orientation of DoP. On one hand they have accepted new services of DoP introduced under Business Development directorate (under commercial considerations) they are not willing to accept the prices based on commercial considerations.
3. Like other postal employees workload for postmen has increased.

Conclusions:
1. Efforts of DoP towards speedy services are not adequate to satisfy the customers.
2. Overall post offices are providing satisfactory services to the customers.

Q.10. What is the experience of the postal agents?

Responses from Mofussil Area
We have regular relations with the agents and therefore they do cooperate.
Experience is very encouraging.
In Bhor Post Office there are 24 agents for Mahila Pradhan (Recurring Deposit) Scheme 8 agents for Small Saving Scheme and 14 agents for Pay Roll Scheme. The pay roll scheme is recurring deposit (R.D.) scheme
applicable to Grampanchayat employees. The agents collect the R.D. amount from the salaries of the employees and deposit it in the post office.

Responses from City Area:
Experience with the postal agents is quite satisfactory but the number of agents each post office is required to attend is quite large. It affects the quality of services to the agents.

Observation:
The postmasters are positive about their interaction with the postal agents except for the number of agents they are required to attend to.

Conclusions:
1. Pune Zone is successful in providing satisfactory services to the agents.
2. The number of agents per employee acts as a limiting factor as regards services to the agents.

Q.11. Do you have a postal union? Does it help?

Responses from Mofussil and City Area
There is an active postal union. The union is an important tool to put up demands of the employees with the higher authorities. In some issues it has helped the postal employees.

Postmaster, S. P. College, said that she is aware of the union but she does not take part in union work. She does not attend the meetings.

Observation:
The postmasters and postal assistants are aware about the use of employees' union and its role.

Conclusion:
In Pune Zone Postal employees' union is helpful in resolving their issues.

Q.12. Do you think that the post card and inland letter has become outdated and therefore should be discontinued?
Responses from Mofussil Area

1. The demand for post cards and inland letters has reduced considerably but post cards are still used. Customers from lower income group still do use post card and the post card is basically meant for such a population and therefore even if the business has dropped, it should be continued.

2. The highest reduction in business is in relation to telegrams. When Mr. Shesrao Khodake-- Post Master Rajgurunagar Post Office joined the post office in 1970, it used to get on an average 60 telegrams per day, now it gets hardly one or two telegrams a day.

3. The use of these services has reduced on account of development of telecommunications, fax, cell phones and easy accessibility of STD booths.

Responses from City Area:

1. The post card is still a useful means of communication for poorer sections of the society. The communication can reach any remote place by using a 50 paisa postcard so it should not be discontinued.

2. Few years ago when competition post cards were introduced for participating in various competitions on different television channels, there was a huge demand for them. Initially it was priced at Rs. 2 then it was increased to Rs. 5. At present it is available for Rs. 10. But the demand for these post cards has considerably reduced.

Observation:
The demand for postcards has reduced. It is still useful for the lower income group of the society. The demand for telegrams has drastically reduced.

Conclusions:
1. In spite of decrease in business of post card, it should be continued in social interest.
2. In Pune Zone Postmasters and postal assistants are aware of the social character of DoP.

Q.13. What is the response to investment schemes of the post?

Responses from Mofussil and City Area:

1. The investment counter scheme is the most crowded counter in post offices in city. There is a very good response to all the investment schemes; MIS and RD are especially popular.

2. The collection is deposited into State Bank of India on a day-to-day basis. If DoP is allowed to use any part of this deposit, it will act as motivation.

3. There was good response to postal investment schemes and MIS became very popular when bank rate of interest was low. Now as bank rate of interest has started increasing, popularity of MIS and other schemes has reduced.

4. Many customers give standing instructions to transfer their interest on MIS to saving account and issue cheques from their savings account. Post does not charge them anything for this transfer. Employees are overburdened with the tremendous work load of these transfers.

5. In Rajgurunagar Post Office, RD and MIS are the most popular schemes. During the month of July 2006 the collection of MIS scheme was in between 30-35 lacks. The post master Bhor post office gave the following information:

   a. The post office at Bhor has 37 branch offices. Some of them are Sambare, Ambawade, Ashti, Bharawadi. The post office saving account opened at any branch office is treated as an account of Bhor post office. The branch office has the authority to sanction the withdrawal up to Rs. 2,000/- and any withdrawal above Rs. 2,000/- needs to be sanctioned by Bhor post office. After it is sanctioned
the necessary cash is send to concerned branch office and the payment is made.

b. Since 2005, Bhor is “higher selection grade office”.

Figures for the month of August 2006 (Bhor Post office)

- Recurring deposit Rs. 21,01,665/-
  (15,000 accounts)
- Monthly income scheme Rs. 19,42,000/-
- Money order business Rs. 2,37,838/-
- Postal Life insurance Rs. 1,66,570/-
- Rural Postal Life insurance Rs. 1,86,247/-

c. Recently the response to postal life insurance has improved. In the past it was not advertised, customers were not aware of it. For the last few years post offices have been given fixed targets to be attained, therefore performance in this area has considerably improved.

d. Moreover a postal employee gets commission of Rs. 250/- (one time) for insurance policy of Rs. 1 lakh. The postal employee is responsible only for getting the customers and delivering the policies to the customers. He is not responsible for collection of the premiums.

e. The policies are issued from the central office and therefore it's a lengthy and time consuming process.

f. In Manchar post office there is good response to financial services of the post office. Now rural life insurance scheme is picking up among the rural population. The premium collected per month on an average is more than rupees one lakh. People believe in postal saving schemes more than credit co-operative societies.
**Observations:**

1. Postal saving schemes are popular instruments of investments in city and Mofussil area.
2. Recurring Deposit Scheme (RD) and Monthly Income Scheme (MIS) are the most preferred schemes by customers. The preference to PRLI has recently picked up.
3. The demand for postal saving schemes increased due to decrease in the bank rate of interest.

**Conclusions:**

1. Rate of interest is one of the important considerations of investors.
2. Postal Investment schemes are very useful to mobilize the savings of households and businessman in Mofussil and city area.
3. **Pune Zone -- DoP** is successful in mobilising savings in city and Mofussil area.

Q.14. What is the response to money order business?

**Responses from Mofussil Area**

Money order and speed post collection is quite sizeable. It is basically because Rajgurunagar and Chakan are surrounded by industries and therefore there are many workers who regularly send money to their native place and there are many business customers because of industries.

The money orders reach even the remote areas. If the bank draft is sent to a person in remote area, for encashing it, he has to visit a taluka place. Therefore the working community prefers to use money orders.

**City Area:**

Pune has lot of industrial, commercial and construction activity, where uneducated as well as educated employees from remote places in Maharashtra and other states are employed. Money order is the most convenient mode of sending money to their native places. That is why there is rush in post offices at money order counter during the first week of the month.
Observation:
Money order is still an important means of money transfers for a particular class of society.

Conclusions:
1. Through Money orders Pune Zone --DoP is successful in satisfying the money transfer needs of the customers, specially migrated workers class.
2. Thus Pune Zone --DoP is successful in fulfilling its social role.

Q.15. What is the response to the new services like passport, international money order etc.?

Responses from Mofussil Area
Customers are not aware of them and very few customers ask for these facilities. Bhor Post Office does provide International Money Transfers but till date no transfer is transacted.

City Area:
1. Selected post offices in the city are authorized to authorised to accept applications for passport and send International Money Transfer some offices can only receive money on International Money Transfer for the customers.
2. The new services provided by the post like International Money Transfer are gaining popularity with the customers quite slowly. There is a need to inform and motivate the customers to use these services.
3. Mr. Gadekar, Post Master, Swargate Post Office said that very few customers use these services. They should be provided only at head post offices.
Observation:
The new services have a weak response in Mofussil area and a lukewarm response in Pune city. The customers demand for new services is slowly picking up.

Conclusion:
The efforts of Pune Zone -- DoP towards informing the customers about new services and marketing of new services are inadequate.

Q.16. What is the response to retailing activity of DoP?

Responses from Mofussil Area

1. In Lonavala the postmen sell Emami products door-to-door. It is highly convenient for the customers that the products are available at their doorsteps.
2. In Bhor post office these products are sold on the counter and not door-to-door. There is a good response for the two products Navaratna Tel and Emami Balm which are sold off the post office counter.

Responses from City Area:

1. Shaniwar Peth Post Office provides bill collection facility only for telephone bills. In Pune City retailing was tried but now it is limited to only Prasad of few temples.
2. Mr. Gadekar, Post Master, Swargate Post Office is of the opinion that retailing activities should be encouraged. Employees should be given incentives for undertaking such activities.

Observation:
Retailing activities are mainly introduced in Mofussil area but the nature of service differs.

Conclusion:
It seems that there is no uniformity as regards the policy of retailing even in Mofussil area.
Questions for Post Masters

Q.1. What is your opinion about the proposed amendment to Indian Post Office Act 1898? Should IP go for monopoly for letters below the weight of 300 grams?

Responses from Mofussil and City Area

1. Some postmasters have not heard about the proposed amendment to the Indian Post Office Act 1898. After this comment the researcher explained to them about the proposed amendment upon which they expressed their inability to give any opinion.

2. The proposed amendment is really required because the couriers are taking away the business of India post to a large extent. It is felt that only passing of the law will not help. It should be strictly implemented.

3. The workload will increase tremendously because of this amendment. This may create problem for the employees unless new staff is appointed. However it will surely benefit DoP.

Observations:

1. Some postmasters are not aware of proposed amendment to the Indian Post Office Act 1898 while some of them believe that it is required for facing the competition with private couriers.

2. The postmasters are also aware of the effect of the proposed amendment on the employees and workload.

Conclusion:

Mixed responses have been received from the postmasters regarding amendment to Indian Post Office Act 1898.

Q.2. Are the authorities you posses enough to fulfill your responsibilities? Are the authorities enough to get the job done from the employees?
Responses from City and Mofussil Area

1. The postmasters possess very limited authority. They do not have any authority to take action against subordinates, e.g. they are not authorized to instruct the employees not to leave the office unless the job for the day is completed. If after the working hours are over employee leaves the office they cannot be forced to complete the job. The only control is the time limit. They do not have any authority to take action against employees who are not discharging their responsibilities satisfactorily.

2. The other side of the picture is that the post of post master is not given by selection but by promotion. Experience plays a very important role. Once the employee gets basic experience he performs all the duties allotted to him satisfactorily and only general supervision is required. The need to control the subordinates is rarely felt.

3. The Postmasters lack functional authority, e.g. in the Swargate post office the computer was not working for one month. The postmaster does not have authority to get is repaired. Therefore the computerised record could not be maintained.

4. There is no authority to spend a single rupee without prior sanction of higher authorities. Even for buying a tube light or an electric bulb prior sanction is required, e.g. Manchar post office has a budget of Rs. 350 per month.

5. Certain expenditure is sanctioned as a budget on a yearly basis by the Regional office. Accordingly the monthly budget is decided. The budget is for the sundry expenses like gum, thread etc. and is of very small amount.

6. The post master's responsibilities are quite parallel to that of LIC and bank officers, however lacks that status. Postmasters feel that the post office should be recognized as a saving bank and postmasters should be given more authorities.
7. The authorities are not enough, however the postal employees now have got used to it. Whatever facilities are available their conscience makes them work sincerely. The employees are aware of the fact that the Government is running the DoP as a service and therefore they should put their heart in their work.

Observations:
1. Post masters are in charge of the post office but they possess limited authority in relation to subordinates and do not possess authority in relation to finances.
2. Post masters are aware of the social character of postal organisation and posses the sense of responsibility.

Conclusions:
1. DoP has failed to give sufficient authority to the postmasters to discharges the responsibilities given to them.
2. In spite of limited authority their sense of responsibility makes the post masters in Pune Zone put in their best.

Q.3. Do you think that post office should be corporatised? Will it help the development of IP?

Responses from Mofussil Area
1. One postmaster was unwilling to comment on this issue while another feared that with corporatisation the service motto will be sidetracked.
2. One was not sure whether corporatisation will help.
3. Only change in the form of organization will not be enough. There are some other areas where improvement is required for e.g. the work culture needs to be developed.
4. At present the post offices are providing the facilities depending upon the available infrastructure. But if corporatisation will provide better infrastructure the atmosphere in the post office will change

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and the post offices will be able to provide better services, rather quality service to the customers.

5. At present post office cannot use the cash collected on saving schemes. With the independent entity it will be able to utilize the cash for its own purposes.

Responses from City Area:
1. DoP should not be corporatised. It has been a Government department and it should continue to work as a Government department.
2. Postmasters were not sure if corporatisation will lead to increase in workload. But the existing workload is too much for the employees.

Observation:
Positive negative as well as neutral opinions about the effects of corporatisation of DoP were expressed by the postmasters.

Conclusion:
Postmasters have not thought seriously about the corporatisation of DoP.

Q.4. Do you think that the young generation would give higher preference to employment in post office?

Responses from Mofussil Area
The young employee (postal assistant) sitting next to the post master immediately said “no”. The post master did not offer any response to this question.

Responses from City Area:
1. The employment in the post office is no more attractive for the new generation because the staff is not enough as compared to the workload.
2. Mass unemployment in the country makes the youngsters accept jobs in the post office. But they quit as soon as they get an opportunity elsewhere.
Observation:
The young generation gives lower preference to employment in post office.

Conclusion:
DoP has failed to provide attractive employment to the young generation.

Q.5. Apart from competition, do you think there is need for change in any other area?

Responses from Mofussil and City Area
1. The area where major change is required is infrastructure. Many of the post offices are situated in rented buildings. The rent agreement is usually for five years. The building owners usually expect increase in the rent every time a new contract is signed. Depending upon the increase in rent the facilities are provided.
2. Though DoP has started advertising its services, the frequency should be increased.
3. The post master does not possess the authority to undertake routine maintenance for e.g. to buy an electric bulb.
4. At times even the stationary issued is limited and is not enough for the operations.
5. Like other Government departments for e.g. Indian Railways DoP should also have a separate budget.
6. The employees should have empathy towards the customers in order to retain the customers.

Observation:
Postmasters are aware of the need to improve in certain areas like infrastructure, delegation of authority to postmasters, provision of sufficient stationary, advertisements of its products etc.

Conclusion:
Efforts of DoP towards Provision of proper infrastructure, authority to postmasters, advertisements of its products etc and stationary are
inadequate. (Please refer to Appendix—6, for a few advertisements issued by the DoP.)

7. C. **Interviews with Postmen: ---**

The Postman is an important link in the channel of mail distribution. In olden days he was a part of folk life. Stories and novels have been written with the postman as a central character. The Researcher interviewed the postmen in order to know the nature and volume of their work, difficulties they face, training given to them, facilities provided to them and their perception about job satisfaction. Postmen from city and Mofussil area were interviewed and their responses were recorded as follows: ---

Q.1 Is there any change in the nature and volume of your work?
Ans. The nature of job has changed. The basic business of letters i.e. post card and inland letters has reduced a lot because of the spread of telephone, e-mail and cell phones. That is why post is not recruiting new employees in the place of retired employees.

In order to survive, DoP has introduced new services. There is an overwhelming response to postal saving schemes. The PLI was earlier applicable to only Government and postal employees but now they are made open to general public. There is good response to the oriental insurance schemes implemented through post office.

Post offices are offering the products of Emami Company. This is one of the additional activities undertaken by DoP for additional revenue generation.

In Lonavala postmen undertake the collection of the premium for rural postal life insurance and sale of Emami products.

Though personal household postal communication has reduced correspondence from banks insurance companies, schools and colleges has considerable increased. So in all the volume of mail has increased.
The post woman in Pune university area has to distribute on an average 70 – 80 letters per day in Pune University.

Thus on account of new services, volume of work has increased a lot. More over the area to be covered by each postman has increased a lot and that is why the efficiency cannot be attained.

Observations:
1. The use of letter and inland letters for personal communication has reduced but business communication has increased.
2. For additional revenue generation DoP has introduced new services.
3. There is a good response to retailing activities of DoP in rural area.
4. Volume of work and area covered per postman has increased, but additional postmen are not appointed.

Conclusions:
1. DoP is putting in efforts to make good the reduction in volume of personal mail through popularising business mail.
2. Pune Zone -- DoP is successful in generating additional revenue through new services e.g. retailing activities of DoP are generating additional revenue in rural area.
3. DoP is not successful in employing additional postmen to handle increased workload.

Q.2 What are the difficulties you face on the job?
Ans. One difficulty now they face is distribution of letters in sky scrapers. In spite of request by department of post some housing societies do not have letterboxes fitted on the ground floor. Some customers still expect that the letter should be delivered to their doorsteps. This poses problem for us. Distributing the letters this way is quite a tiring job.

Mr. V. P. Kamble commented that all customers are not like this. Most of them are considerate and humane. And that is why the postman enjoys a social bond with the customers in the area they work.
Vandana Seid, post women Shivajinagar Post office narrated the difficulties as follows:

1. She has to go cycling for on an average 5 hours, covering 20 km and carrying 35 kg of weight per day.
2. When the quantum of mail for delivery is difficult to carry, priority mail is distributed and delivery of the magazines and books is postponed for next day.
3. On one hand, area and workload have tremendously increased but on the other hand the number of postman is reduced from 20 to 17.
4. On account of risk involved in carrying big sums, at times the customers are requested to collect cash from the post office and home delivery to customers cannot be given.

Observations:

1. The difficulties faced by the postmen are increased workload, increased area covered and risk in carrying money order money.
2. Postmen have developed insecurity with the increasing amount of money orders and social changes.

Conclusions:
The efforts of DoP towards ensuring staff commensurate with the workload and security for postmen are inadequate.

Q.3. Are you satisfied with the training given to you?

1. All postmen do not undergo a formal training. Initially their superiors explain to them the nature of their work and whenever they commit some mistakes they are corrected. They expressed their opinion that they would be happy to get training while, postman Mr. A. R. Patel commented that as regards treating the customers there is no need of any training and the natural human instincts tell them how to behave with the customers.
2. Mr. Dattatraya Survey postman Bhor Post office said that he has undergone a basic training for ten days, which was very useful. It included training to classify and arrange the mail, keep various records and procedure for registration etc.

**Observation:**
The postmen need training for discharging their duties efficiently.

**Conclusion:**
The training DoP provides to postmen is inadequate.

Q.4 Are you happy about the facilities provided by the post? Does DoP provide you with cycles?

Facilities provided are similar to other Government employees and are satisfactory. Some of them in Mofussil area walk all the way distributing the letters. They will be happy if DoP gives them cycles. Postmen in city area said that if it is not possible for DoP to provide us with vehicles, petrol allowance should be given.

Mr. A. D. Ware said that as soon as they get cycles the area to be covered will increase. They are ready to distribute letters over more area but this may lead to reduction in number of postman. Some of their fellow postman will loose their job that is why they are happy walking all the way. Earlier department of post used to distribute rain coats to the postmen. Now once in three years an umbrella is provided. Postmen suggested that instead raincoat should be provided. They gives proper protection while cycling.

Now DoP is offering pick up facilities to business customers under premium products. For such collection two wheelers are provided as time sensitivity is top priority in such services.

**Observations:**
1. Except for the mode of transport postmen are satisfied about the facilities provided to them.
2. For distribution of traditional mail (most of them being subsidised) DoP does not provide cycles to the postmen. But for some of the services undertaken on commercial basis it does provide two wheelers.

3. Postmen have such a powerful emotional attachment to their fellow members that they are ready to bear inconvenience for the continued employment of their fellow members.

**Conclusions:**

1. DoP has been providing tradition mail services. Now it offers services based on commercial considerations mainly for business customers. DoP is successful in giving different treatment to these services based on their nature.

2. In Pune Zone -- DoP Postmen have empathy towards their colleagues.

Q.5 As per the announcement of DoP, would you like to use blue uniform?

Ans. All of them said that they like their uniform rather they are proud to wear the uniform as it is respected. The new uniform does give a corporate look, but as compared to the old khaki uniform it is difficult to maintain.

  The new uniform is light in colour and looks better. However it does not have the respect the khaki Government uniform has. But slowly customers of DoP will accept it.

**Observation:**

Postmen like wearing uniforms and are happy about new blue uniform having corporate look.

**Conclusions:**

1. Introduction of blue uniform for postmen by DoP is one step towards giving a corporate look to the department.
2. **Pune Zone** ---DoP is successful in making postmen accept the change in uniform.

Q.6 Does computerisation of post offices help you?

1. Introduction of computers in the post office has not changed postmen's job. Their work is to distribute letters, registered letters and money orders. The advancement of technology no way helps their job.

2. Only difference is that the record to be maintained for registered post can be now maintained with the help of computers. However, this record is required to be prepared manually sometimes, when computers are not working or power cut problem is there.

**Observation:**
Computerisation has not changed postmen's job.

**Conclusion:**
The nature Postmen's job is such that computerisation can not change it.

Q.7 Do you have any machinery for redressal of your grievances?

Ans. A postman said that he does not attend union meetings.

Mr. S. M. Gaikwad --- postman Lonavala post office expressed happiness about activities of their union --- National Federation of Postal Employees Union (NFPEU). It has a separate wing for the postmen (grade D-4) which has an office in the Swargate area.

Once in a month a union meeting is organized where representatives of the postal employees discuss various complaints of the employees. They are then communicated to the Senior Superintendent of the concerned division. Usually the complaints are initially communicated orally.

The Senior Superintendents East, West and Mofussil division are very co-operative and they listen to these representatives and initiate corrective action for solving the problem. If the action to be taken is not
within the authority of the Senior Superintendent it is further communicated to PMG -- Pune Region. PMG tries to redress the complaint.

PMG often visits different post offices to ensure that the post offices are working satisfactorily. He also guides and directs the employees on various issues.

**Observation:**
The grievances of the postmen are successfully redressed through co-operative efforts of Senior Superintendents East, West and Mofussil division and Post Master General and employees’ union.

**Conclusions:**
1. **Pune Zone** in co-operation with employees’ union is successful in redressing the grievances of postmen.
2. The senior officers – **Pune Zone** are successful in creating confidence about their willingness and capacity to redress the grievances of the postmen.

Q.8. Should India Post provide mail & parcel Service and/or financial services and/or new services like international money transfer passport service and sale of some articles etc?

Ans. The senior most postman Mr. V. N. Thorve said that post should concentrate only on mail service, financial services and newly introduce **premium services**. Premium services are necessary for facing competition with the couriers.

Selling the products in the post office like tea, bread, biscuits will adversely effect the reputation of the post. The businessmen sarcastically talk about such activities of the post office. Only for generating revenue the post office should not undertake such activities.

Post office should provide only those services which will add to the grace of the department. He also added that he gets a lot of respect from
the customers in his area and he would also like his son to work as a postman.

**Observation:**
1. The postmen are not ready to undertake any activities for revenue generation, which will be disgraceful to DoP.
2. In **Pune Zone** Postmen are emotionally involved with DoP and are very much concerned about the respect the department and its employees should get from the public.

**Conclusion:**
DoP is not successful in marketing the idea of new services to internal customers.

Q.9. What is your reaction about door-to-door selling of products undertaken by the post?

Ans. The postmen in rural areas are selling Emami products, tea powder, cashew nuts, almonds etc. It is proposed to extend this activity to the urban area also. If at all postmen are required to do it, they will not have choice. However, it will be difficult because now the letters are put letters into letterboxes. But for selling the products postmen will have to climb the stairs in multi storied buildings. If they have to undertake this job they should be trained for that.

**Observation:**
Door to door selling of products is at present limited to the Mofussil area. In the city area, if introduced, it will put additional burden on postmen and will necessitate training them for the job.

**Conclusion:**
DoP has been cautious about introducing door-to-door selling of products by the postman in city area.

Q.10. What is your opinion about the proposed amendment to Indian Post Office Act 1898?
Ans. The postmen said that the amendment should be made. Post office should enjoy monopoly and there is a need to control private couriers.

**Observation:**
Postmen, (even if employees at the lower level in the postal organisation) are aware of competition it is facing and the proposed amendment to control couriers.

**Conclusion:**
In Pune Zone Postmen have an involvement with the DoP, are bothered about the problems it is facing and need to overcome them.

7. D. **Interviews with Ex-employees:**

These include:
- Interviews -- Past employees who have opted for VRS
- Interview Mr. Joshi Group Leader -- payrolls saving scheme of Government employees run by DoP
- **Interviews -- Past employees who have opted for VRS**

The researcher interviewed a few employees who have taken VRS from the Pune Zone -- DoP. They provided their views and opinions about certain factors relating to the performance of Pune Zone -- DoP with a request to withhold their identity. The important points are summarised as follows:

**Employees appear to be satisfied about following points:**

1. Employees are transferred after every four years. Their convenience and personal background is considered.
2. Employees union has good rapport with Postal authorities.
3. The interpersonal relationships among the postal employees are very healthy. An employee going on leave does not feel it necessary to count the cash or stamps before handing over charge to his colleague. They have full trust and confidence about the honesty of their fellow employees.
4. Medical facilities are satisfactory.
5. The system of maintaining accounts prevents frauds.
6. With computerization, the speed of work will increase and accuracy will be ensured.
7. DoP-Pune Zone is trying to improve on infrastructure.
8. Customers have emotional attachment with DoP Pune Zone.
9. More than ninety percent of the mail is delivered.
10. With introduction of ‘Speed Post’ and ‘One India Rate for Speed Post’ it is trying to improve on delivery time.

**Employees appear to be unsatisfied about following points:**
1. Though employees on all counters handle cash there are no cabins like banks have for cashiers.
2. Induction training is given to promotee employees for three months. Training for other employees is provided after an interval of eight years. It is not enough to achieve expected efficiency. The period for training of promotee employees and frequency of training for other employees should be increased.
3. The system of maintaining accounts is old and tedious.
4. DoP-- Pune Zone is not always in a position to assure timely delivery.
5. The rate at which the infrastructure is being improved is slow.
6. DoP is not always in a position to assure timely delivery.

**Observation:**
Postal employees are not satisfied about infrastructure and training but they are happy about interpersonal relationships and cooperative atmosphere in post offices.

**Conclusion:**
DoP – Pune Zone is successful in satisfying the employees on certain grounds while it is not successful in satisfying the employees on certain other grounds.

- Interview Mr. Joshi -- Group Leader -- payrolls saving scheme of Government employees run by DoP
Mr. M. R. Joshi is a Senior Citizen who retired from Yerawada Press, Pune. Mr. Joshi has involvement with the DoP. His father was a postmaster who retired as supervisor. Most of the times he was required to work late hours till the accounts tallied. During the British period if there was any shortage at the end of the day it was required to be reported to the police.

In olden days he and his friends used postal services very frequently. Two deliveries were undertaken every day. A letter received in the first delivery was read and the response was sent by the second delivery in the same day. The term “return mail” was used to describe such type of communication. Even on Sunday one delivery was undertaken.

Earlier postman had personal dialogue with the customers as the letters were delivered in the hands of the customers. However, now the letters are put in the letterbox, especially in multi-storied buildings and therefore this personal touch is lost.

Mr. Joshi recalls that when he was 14 years old he used to write at least a 10 page letter to his friend per day. His friends used to write to him addressing the letters to the nicknames given to him. The postman however, knew all his nicknames and therefore used to deliver him his letters.

He narrated a very interesting incidence;

In those days for local letters two paisa stamps and for outstation letters three paisa stamp was required. Mr. A, (Mr. Joshi’s relative) was traveling from Ahmednagar to Mumbai via Pune. In order to save one paisa on stamp he posted a letter to Mr. Joshi on Pune station letterbox. While delivering the letter the postman saw the senders Ahmednagar address and collected the penalty for undervalue postage from Mrs. Joshi. Mr. Joshi realised it and complained to the postmaster checked the
register for “due letters” (letters with undervalued stamps) Mr. Joshi’s letter was not there in this record. The postmaster accepted the fault of his subordinate. He told Mr. Joshi that the postman would lose the job if Mr. Joshi complained in writing, but at the same time accepted that he should be punished. After working hours he called a meeting of all the employees and Mr. Joshi and the postman was made to apologise for his fault.

Mr. Joshi has worked as a Group Leader for continuous 27 years on payrolls saving scheme of Government employees run by DoP then. Now post has discontinued this scheme.

Through this scheme, the Government employees could invest in two saving schemes recurring deposit and national saving scheme. One of the employees was appointed as a group leader with the consent of the employer. The amount to be invested was deducted from the salaries of the concerned employees. The group leader was required to deposit the amount into the post office, keep the passbooks for recurring deposit and get them updated from the postal employees. The group leader was paid a commission of one percent on the amount invested.

The National Saving Scheme was very useful for the poorer sections of the society. The minimum denomination of a post office saving certificate was Rs.10. However, those employees who could not invest even Rs.10 at a time could invest amount even less than Rs.10 as per their convenience. For such amount they were required to buy postal stamps and paste them on the declaration card issued in their name by the post office. As the stamp value equals or crosses Rs.10 they could surrender these stamps and get a saving certificate for each Rs.10. The employees were allowed to withdraw 50% of the amount deposited from recurring deposits.

Mr. Joshi also worked in the capacity of union leader in Yerawada Press. He narrated one instance how postal investments helped the press employees. During a strike in the year 1978, in order to protest against Government the union directed him not to deposit the employees'
contribution under this scheme. However, Mr. Joshi paid the contribution out of his savings. The day before the strike he advised the employees to collect their recurring deposit passbooks. The employees could withdraw from their recurring deposits during the strike which lasted for two months.

7.2 QUESTIONNAIRE FOR POST MASTER GENERAL (PUNE REGION)

This part of the chapter deals with the findings of the study conducted by the researcher derived from the questionnaire for Present and Ex-Post Master General (PMG) —Pune Zone. The responses of Mr. S. Jarodia --present Post Master General and Mr. K.R. Rambhad --Ex-Post Master General were recorded.

The objective of this questionnaire was to study the opinions of top management postal authorities regarding the policies of DoP at all India level (relating to subsidy on postal products, corporatisation etc.). The questionnaire also aimed at studying their views regarding amendment to Indian Postal Act 1898, changing business environment, efforts of Pune Zone -- DoP for adapting accordingly, training to employees, efforts of DoP—Pune Zone towards customers’ and employee satisfaction etc. The questions were under the following headings: Mail Service and General, Financial services, Customer orientation and Employee orientation.

Questionnaire analysis

The PMGs were requested to give their opinions about the policies of DoP and the various factors affecting the performance of DoP and Pune Zone in particular.

A. PMG’s were requested to state weather they agree or disagree on the given statements.

a. Both PMGs agreed with the following statements:

1. Mail service is still a core activity of IP.
2. Considering the stage in the life cycle of a product, traditional products which are on the downfall side (postcard, inland letter) can be revived.
3. IP should continue with the subsidy on some products.
4. There is a need to control private couriers.
5. The proposed Amendment 2006 to Indian Post Office Act 1898 is a right step in this direction.
6. In the current wave of liberalisation the amendment is justified.
7. The subsidy on products like Postcard and Inland letter is justified on the following grounds:
   • Service character of IP
   • UPU obligation
   • Improvement in quality of life of the downtrodden
8. The joint ventures/tie-ups with private organisations will help to improve the performance of IP.
9. IP network should be developed to provide banking services.
10. IP should be awarded financial autonomy.
11. The present structure of IP is responsible for lack of accountability and leads to inefficiencies.
12. IP considers the needs of the customers as a base while designing and providing the services.
13. IP is trying to provide variety of services to satisfy diversified needs of different segments of the customers.
14. Employees of IP need more training in view of computerisation and changing expectations of the customers.
15. The work culture in IP needs to be changed.
16. A healthy competition between IP and private couriers can be developed.
   Ex-PMG is of the opinion that IP can face the competition with private couriers. For niche market the private couriers can score
over DoP. However as a general service across the whole country, they in no way compete with the post.

17. Pune Zone -- IP is marching ahead on the path laid down by its mission statement.

18. Pune Zone -- IP is adapting to the changing business environment in the Zone.

19. There exist some inefficiencies in IP as regards mail service especially with reference to Pune Zone.

20. IP has less work force considering the increasing workload.

21. Pune Zone -- DoP is able to creat satisfied work force.

b. Both PMGs disagreed with the following statement:
The general belief that Private Couriers provide more efficient services as compared to IP holds good.

c. The opinions of PMGs are different with reference to the following statements

Present PMG agrees and Ex – PMG disagrees with the following statements:

1. The proposed Amendment 2006 to Indian post Office Act 1898 will establish monopoly for IP.

2. Training provided to its employees by IP has produced satisfactory results.

B. Factors affecting performance of DoP:

PMG’s were requested to rate the factors affecting performance of DoP at all India level and Pune Zone DoP in particular:

Their responses were as follows:

1. Both PMGs have rated marketing policies of IP as ‘satisfactory.’

2. Both PMGs have rated the performance of IP as regards customer oriented marketing policies in relation to mail services as ‘satisfactory’.

3. Ex-PMG has rated the performance of Pune Zone -- IP as regards premium services as highly satisfactory and Present PMG has
rated the performance of IP as regards premium services as ‘satisfactory’.

4. Both PMGs have rated the performance of Pune Zone -- IP on the financial services front as ‘satisfactory.’

5. Present PMG has rated the extent to which the private couriers have created and are going to create threats to postal services, especially with reference to Pune Zone as ‘Low’ and Ex-PMG has rated the threats to postal services as ‘Moderate’.

6. Present PMG has rated the extent to which the technological developments like fax telephone mobile phone internet etc. has created and is going to create challenges for postal services especially with reference to Pune Zone as ‘Low’ and Ex-PMG has rated the threats to postal services as ‘Moderate’.

7. Both PMGs have rated the customers satisfaction generated by services of IP especially with reference to Pune Zone as ‘High’.

Observations:
1. Both PMG’s have rated the performance of Pune Zone -- IP as regards marketing policies, customer orientation, premium services and financial services as ‘satisfactory.’

2. Both PMGs have rated threats and challenges created by private couriers and technological developments like fax telephone mobile phone internet etc, for postal services especially with reference to Pune Zone as ‘Low’/’Moderate’.

Conclusions:
1. Pune Zone -- IP is successful on the fronts of marketing policies, customer orientation, premium services and financial services.

2. Private couriers and technological developments have not created serious threats and challenges for Pune Zone—IP.

C. Views of PMG’s relating to some important aspects:
1. Subsidy: The subsidy on products like postcard and inland letter is justified on the following grounds:
For dissemination of knowledge and information among rank and file the subsidised delivery of newspapers is utmost necessary. This is also recommended by Universal postal Union.

2. Control over private couriers

Reasons for controlling private couriers:

The options given were:

- Private couriers are eating up market share of IP
- Private couriers are providing services mainly in urban area leaving the rural less/no profitable area to IP
- Any other, mention--

According to Ex-PMG there is no need to control private couriers for any reasons mentioned in the questionnaire. He is of the opinion that DoP is capable of competing with the private couriers on the service efficiency and cost front. The control on private couriers is necessary in order to protect the interest of customers.

3. Inefficiencies in postal mail service:

They are:

- High probability of failure to meet the delivery norms
- Failure to clear letter boxes on time
- Failure to deliver the acknowledgements on time

4. Deficiencies in training system of DoP:

- Ex-PMG has pointed out some deficiencies in the training system of DoP like absence of consistent policy, inadequate training at the operative level, casual attitude of trainees etc.
- He has also pointed out that sometimes the training for managers is used as an escape from an inconvenient place and after the training the employee is not posted to a position where the training would be useful.
- Computerisation has created a need to have more systems managers in the DoP. Operative staff needs to undergo refresher
training in computers periodically to get them familiarised with the latest developments.

5. **Suggestions given:**

**To overcome the inefficiencies in postal mail service**

- Management should emphasise that mail is the core business and post exists because of mail.
- Management should make the public aware and appeal them to watch the timely clearance of letterboxes.
- The acknowledge cards should be smooth like post cards for ease in handling.

**To change the work culture in IP:**

- The bureaucratic culture should be changed to business culture.
- Managers should act as business leaders. They should have the courage to take risk, they should be made more accountable. The social audit of DoP, performance audit of all officers above the senior scale level should be undertaken.
- Managers should be also well acquainted with the business environment. This will enable them to notice and anticipate the opportunities for DoP in business world.

**Observations on important aspects:**

1. Subsidy on some postal services is necessary to enable DoP to play its social role.
2. There are many deficiencies in postal mail service and training system of DoP.

**Conclusions on important aspects:**

1. The present development stage of the country calls for some subsidised postal services.
2. DoP-- Pune Zone has failed to provide satisfactory mail services and adequate training to the employees.
7.3 INTERVIEWS—PRIVATE COURIERS—PUNE:

Private Couriers have come up like mushrooms at local, national and international level. The researcher has interviewed few local courier owners with the objective of finding out the nature and extent of competition of local private couriers with DoP, strengths and weaknesses of private couriers vis-à-vis DoP and future of both.

On analysing the questionnaire for customers – mail and general, the researcher found that out of the respondents using private couriers highest number of respondents has used Palande Couriers. Therefore the researcher visited Palande Couriers and interviewed Mr. Palande. The objective was to study Palande Couriers, courier market in Pune in general and competition among couriers and DoP in Pune.

A. Interview -- Mr. Palande --Owner -- Palande Couriers

Q.1. Your courier seems to be popular among customers in Pune. Is it the oldest one?
Ans. We are in the market for a considerably long time but ours is not the oldest one. Two private couriers started before us - Pravasi and Modak Couriers. Pravasi is now working as our franchisee. Modak Couriers specialise in Mumbai – Pune traffic.

Q.2. What caused private couriers flourish in Pune market?
Ans. Couriers flourished in Pune when Prime Minister Rajeev Gandhi’s ministry took an important decision relating to bank operations. It was made mandatory for the banks to clear all cheques (local or intercity) within maximum 14 days. However, then postal mail services were in very bad shape. At times it took 7 - 8 days for Pune-Bombay or Bombay-Pune deliveries. In order to fulfill the stipulated requirement of cheque clearance within specified time limit banks approached couriers, then operating in the market. This was a good opportunity for couriers, which they picked up and flourished. Later many new players jumped into the market.
Q.3 Does courier business require any registration?
Ans. No registration is required as a courier organization. No Government department including DoP has any control over private couriers in relation to registration. Registration is required only under Shop Act. Since service tax has covered courier service, registration under Service Tax Act is required. When courier business was covered under Service Tax in the Finance Act, the couriers having annual turnover Rs.4 lakh were to register and pay Service Tax. Later this limit is raised to Rs.8 lakh.

Q.4 What is the present status of courier business in Pune?
Ans. There are around 200 local private couriers in Pune. Out of 200 and odd local couriers around 100 couriers are medium size and remaining (around 100) are small scale couriers. Their establishment expenses and overheads of the small couriers are low. So when they get sizably big orders they are in a position to charge less then DoP. The small-scale couriers satisfy specific needs of customer and provide quality service.

In addition there are around 25 big players in courier market like DHL, Blue Dart, First Flight etc. Most of them are registered as companies. Recently Blue Dart was taken over by DHL. They have their Association in Mumbai, Andheri. The big couriers operate all over India mainly in Metropolitan cities and on the international level.
Their share in the market is slowly increasing. Their charges are higher as compared to that of DoP and other local couriers. Large couriers have different business and local couriers have different business. Increase in their market share will not affect our business.

Q.5 Are the private couriers competing with postal mail in Pune?
Ans. Yes they do. The private couriers are able to satisfy the time sensitivity need of the mainly business customers (house hold customers
as well). Though during last few years DoP is trying to improve and the results are also seen in Pune (e.g. two wheelers are given to postman for faster collection of speed post and pre-mailing activities are undertaken for the customers), it is very difficult for DoP to ensure the extent of time sensitive services needed. So on this front, private couriers have wide scope.

Q.6 Do you have association of couriers?
Ans. Private Couriers in Pune were not organized. Earlier efforts were made to form an association. But the response was not very encouraging. When the couriers feared control through the Proposed Amendment to Indian Post Office Act 1998, again the couriers in Pune came together and the Pune Courier Association was formed. At present there are 30 members and Mr. Kelkar --proprietor Kelcon couriers is the chairman.

Q.7. Do you think that proposed amendment to Indian Post Office Act 1898 will affect private couriers?
Ans. The three important provisions of this proposed amendment are detrimental to the interest of couriers.

a. Registration fee Rs.10 lakh (intention behind this is only few large players will remain in the market other will be forced to quit)

b. Contribution to Universal Postal Union fund 10%.

c. Private couriers will be allowed to carry mail only above 300 grams weight. Large business of couriers consists of mail below 300 grams. It is feared that about 100 small-scale couriers in Pune will be closed down if this provision is incorporated in the Act. Most of bank packets the couriers deliver are even less than 50 grams so this amendment if implemented will hardly hit them.

Q.8 Will the spread of computers and increasing use of e-mail will affect courier business?
Ans. Even if internet is being increasingly used hard copy of the document is required. Therefore these technology developments are not going to affect courier business. ‘Palande couriers’ has reached interior parts of Kokan area where computer literacy is low. At least it will take 10 years more for computer to reach there.

Q.9. How do you rate the customers' satisfaction?
Ans. There are few uncontrollable human errors. ‘Palande Couriers’ is able to satisfy 98% of their customers.

Q.10. What are the problems faced?
Ans. The private couriers are mainly facing problems in getting reliable personnel for delivery and increasing salary expectations of the employees.

B. Interview with Mr. D.P. Modak- owner of Modak Couriers, Pune
Profile:
Started in 1962 by Mr. D.P. Modak as an individual activity and now three generations, his son and grandson are in the same occupation. It is a sole proprietary concern.

Q.1. Is your courier the oldest one in Pune?
Ans. Before I started, one private courier “Pravasi” was already functional. But now, it has closed its own business and now, it runs a franchisee for Palande Couriers. Thus, out of the private couriers, functioning in Pune now, ours is the oldest one.
In those days, running a courier business was not considered as a very respectable activity. But now, citizens have realised the need and utility of couriers and it is being accepted as a profession.

Q.2. What is the area covered by your courier?
Ans. We specialise in Mumbai - Pune business. Only on request of our permanent customers and only in exceptional situations, do we deliver to other areas.

Q.3. Which are the customers you cater to?
Ans. We have individual household as well as business customers. But the main business is of business customers because their needs are of repetitive nature. We have twelve business customers working with us for a long time. We undertake deliveries for these permanent customers like Bharat Forge, Pandit Automotives and Neotronics ltd. on month to month basis. Earlier we undertook collection and deliveries even for Bharat forge and Ruston Group. However now these two organisations have reduced their operations in Pune and therefore the scale of their business with us has also considerably reduced.

We also undertake deliveries of newspapers like Kesari and Prabhat to Mumbai. These deliveries are not for customers, but for reference records of newspaper offices, advertisers in newspaper, and Government office. DoP still has all the business of newspaper deliveries for the customers.

Q.4. What are the services offered to the customers?
Ans. We undertake collection of letters and parcels for our regular customers. We have two collection boys responsible for collection from Pune city, Pimpri Chinchwad, and Hadapsar industrial area, as well as newly developed areas like Hinjewadi, Kalyaninagar, Fatimanagar, etc. The collection time is flexible to suit the requirements of customers. If needed, collection is also arranged on Sundays.

The delivery is given on the next day in Mumbai, except holidays and Sundays. Timely delivery is the soul of our business. We have delivery boys in Mumbai, but if they are absent for some reason or the other, I personally deliver the letters and parcels. It is required in order to
maintain the customers. If the customer is lost because of delay in deliveries, it is very difficult to regain such a customer. A customer lost is lost forever.

The very important service we offer that we deliver the acknowledgement of the delivery the next day.

Q.5. Are your rates comparable with the rates charged by DoP?
Ans. Our rates are comparatively higher. However, for timely delivery, customers are ready to pay more. However, after DoP introduced One India rate scheme of speed post some of our customers requested us to reduce the rates. We have not changed the rates and these customers continue to have business with us.

Rates are dependant on areas. For the deliveries in proper Mumbai (Dadar, Chuchgate and Bandra), Rs. 25 are charged for a letter unto 50 gm. and for suburbs, like Thane, Dombivali, Borivali Rs. 50 are charged. For a parcel per Kg. Rs. 30 and Rs. 60 are charged respectively. We normally deliver small parcels.

Observations:
1. Private couriers are area specific and cater mainly to the urban area.
2. Private couriers do not deal in deliveries of newspapers for customers.
3. The inability of DoP to ensure faster deliveries gave birth to private couriers.
4. Collection at doorsteps, timely delivery, and acknowledgement of delivery the next day are special services provided by Private Couriers.
5. Though private couriers charge higher than DoP, they ensure more timely delivery of mail as compared to DoP.
6. In spite of higher charges private couriers have a loyal customer base.
7. The proposed amendment to Indian Post Office Act 1898 is going to affect the private couriers adversely.

Conclusions:
1. Though the reach of postal mail service is more, private couriers fare better in relation to timely delivery.
2. There is a class of customers ready to pay higher charges for quality service, while some customers want reasonable prices for moderate quality service.

7.4 PERSONAL VISITS:

7.4.A Visit to Business Development Group -- Pune Region Office

The researcher visited Business Development Group -- Pune Region Office on 13th February 2006. The researcher had an interaction with Mr. T. D. Kale, Manager BDG and Mr. Anil Chinchane --Marketing Executive and collected information. The objective was to find out the efforts of Pune Zone -- DoP in relation to the premium products introduced. The important points are given below:
1. This Office was started in November 1998 and was shifted to the present establishment on 20th December 2004, since when it has been more active.
2. Retail selling of products like cashew nuts was introduced and later discontinued for lack of customers’ response.
3. The Business Development Directorate has undertaken data curing, address and identity verification service for business customers like Hutch and BSNL.
4. It provides BNPL facility for customers – Book Now Pay Later. Under this service credit facility is offered for one month.
5. ‘Prasad’ service for Dagdu Sheth Halwai Temple during Ganapati Festival.
6. Media Post Service is used by Kirloskar Oil Engines.
7. Direct Post service is used by Big Bazaar, Prestige Cooker, Titan Industries, Golden Tiger Private Limited.

Customers:
Symbiosis Distance Learning Centre, ICICI, SBI, LIC of India, Bajaj Allianz General Insurance Company Limited, SKF, Sandvik Asia, MKCL (Maharashtra Knowledge Corporation Limited).

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<tr>
<th>Traffic Handled</th>
<th>Average Traffic Per Month (No.)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Booking of speed post articles</td>
<td>112775</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delivery of speed post articles</td>
<td>63215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Booking of Express Parcel Post</td>
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<tr>
<td>Handling Business Post</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Revenue Realised</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
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Average number of articles delivered per customer per day is 520.

7.4B. Visit to Mail Business Centre (MBC) at Vishrambaug Vada

The researcher visited Mail Business Centre on 10\textsuperscript{th} March 2007. The objective was to study the services offered by DoP Pune Zone for Business Customers. The researcher had an interaction with Mr. Shedge, Manager, Mail Business Centre, following information was collected:

This Centre is established at Vishrambaug Vada specially to take care of Business Customers. To start with, 20 Business Customers were identified and approached.

1. The MBC undertakes following activities:
   - Pre-mailing activities of all articles
   - Franking, sorting and dispatch
   - Delivery of fully prepared unregistered articles to key customers
Dealing with complaints related to registered letters of M/s Bajaj Allianz Life Insurance Limited booked at MBC.

2. There are seven employees in the centre (Group C – 3 and Group D – 4). Depending upon work load College students are employed on contractual basis from relatives and friends of the employees and through colleges if need be. They are paid on piece rate basis.

3. The centre has 5 electronic high speed franking machines taken on hire from Pitney Bowes India Private Limited, which looks after the maintenance and is paid a commission at 5 paise per click.

4. All pre mailing activities are undertaken manually and per envelope Rs. 0.70 is charged to Business Customers. They find it very reasonable. Ordinary as well as registered post is accepted.

Customers availing Speed Post Service:
LiC of India – various branches, Allana Institute of Management, Kirloskar Brothers, Mr. S.B.Colle, Mr. Nilesh Magae etc.

Customers availing BNPL facility under Speed Post Service:
LiC of India, SSK Infotech Limited Pune, University of Pune

Observation: Pune Zone -- DoP is putting efforts for development of premium services and providing special facilities for business customers.

Conclusion: Pune Zone -- DoP is successful in giving special treatment to premium products (which aim at revenue generation) and providing need based facilities for business customers segment.

7.4C. Dak Seva Puraskar Function Attended

The researcher attended Dak Seva Puraskar function for Pune Region on 20th February 2008. Chief PMG, Mumbai, Mr. M. G. Rajan presided over the function. The important officers of Pune Region few employees and representative business customers were invited.

Prizes were given for exemplary achievements of Postal Employees at the hands of Vice Chancellor Pune University, Dr. Narendra Jadhav. The prizes consisted of Rs. 5000 each and a memento. This was
to appreciate the extraordinary performance of the selected employees e.g. a Postmen in Chiplun was awarded Dak Seva Puraskar for maximising the business of international Money Transfers in Chiplun area. Another employee was appreciated for his novel idea of decorating the Post Office at Mumbai Air-Port with flowers, aquarium and philately stamps.

**Observation:** Creativity and novelty in services of employees is appreciated by Pune Zone -- DoP.

**Conclusion:** Pune Zone -- DoP is motivating the sincere and creative employees.

7.5 **OBSERVATIONS THROUGH PERSONAL VISITS:**

The researcher visited a few post offices and observations were recorded. The objective was to observe and analyse the interactions of postal employees with customers. Some positive and some negative interactions were as follows:

**Positive Interactions:**

1. **SP College Post Office**

   A customer came for collecting his son’s passport. The postal employee expressed his inability to issue the passport. The rule says that the person should be personally present for collecting his passport. The customer was repeatedly requesting the employee to issue the same and the employee patiently repeated the explanation. Finally, the customer approached the postmaster. The postmaster explained to him the legal provision and the reason behind the same. She also referred to newspaper news referring to fraud passports being issued and the serious repercussions involved. She firmly told the customer that neither will she go for any illegal issue nor will she allow her subordinates to do so.

2. **Model colony post office:**
There was a notice put up saying that DoP has stopped issuing revenue stamps. A customer asked for revenue stamps, upon which the employee issued the stamp saying that till the stock is available stamps will be issued. She further explained the reasons for post office not selling revenue stamps (DoP did not get the commission due for a long time) and the place where customers can get them.

3. Rajgurunagar Post Office

1. Retailing:
   - The advertisement for Emami products was exhibited in the post office at a prominent place so that the customers get enough of information about the products available in the post office.
   - The products available at post office are limited to only Emami products and that too only in Mofussil area. In city area it is limited to only prasadam.

2. While the researcher was discussing certain matters with the employees a customer came for attestation of certain documents. The postmaster explained to the customer in detail how he is not the proper authority for the same.

3. The postmaster was aware of:
   - The reduction of business of post office in certain services like telegrams, post cards etc. because of technological developments.
   - The social nature and the social responsibility of DoP.
   - Special needs of business customers vis-à-vis house hold customers and need to give special treatment to business customers.
   - Inadequate financial motivations to the post office staff in relation to financial services.
   - The strengths of the post office. What is more important is he is aware of the weaknesses of the post office, e.g. lack of proper work culture and attitudes of the employees.
4. Lonavala post office:
Customers were entertained during lunch break also as it was rainy season and it was about to rain.
The postmaster was aware of:
  o The need of legal knowledge for discharging day-to-day responsibilities.
  o The need for training for handling human resource.

5. Bhor Post Office:
The postmaster is aware of the fact that the employees should have empathy towards the customers in order to retain the customers.
The products are sold across the counter of post offices only in Mofussil area. The range of products is very limited.

In Mofussil area the post office staff personally knows many customers. Postal employees in Mofussil area have more positive attitude towards the customers.

**Negative interactions**

A customer wanted to post a registered letter. The timing for accepting registered letters at this post office was over. The customer wanted to know the nearby post office that will provide the registration service at that point of time. The employee refused to give the information saying that she does not know. The customer was repeatedly requesting for the information. The employee refused.

Other customers tried to interfere to end the matter. Finally one of the customers provided with the required information. After the customer left the researcher discussed the matter with the employee.

**Employee’s Response:**

1. Initially I did not understand what he was asking for as he spoke in English.
2. Then I realized the information he needed. But because he behaved rudely I did not feel like giving him the required information.

3. When discussed with her at length she accepted that it is her responsibility to provide required information to the customers.

4. She also added that the post office being a small one she has to perform a variety of jobs. That is why she thought that she is wasting her time providing such information to the customers.

2. **Shaniwar Peth Post Office** (20th September 2005)

A customer came at a time when official lunchtime was over. He wanted to send a letter by airmail. He presented the letter on the registration counter and enquired about value of stamps to be affixed and demanded A.D. (acknowledgement due) card. The postal employee on the counter gave him white card upon which the customer demanded a pink card because for airmail letters pink acknowledgement card should be used. The employee said that she is unaware of it and the customer will have to wait for the postmaster to finish lunch. The customer was very much upset and left the post office saying that he has no time to wait and he will go to city post office, which is the nearest one. The counter employee failed to respond.

The researcher tried to discuss the problem with the postmaster. He explained that there are few employees in the office. There were many customers waiting in the queue at 1 p.m. when official lunchtime starts. He was required to attend to all of them before he could proceed for lunch at about 1.20 p.m. that is why he could not entertain the customer even if lunchtime was over and the counter employee was unaware of rules regarding airmail as the post office receives few airmails.

3. **Observations made on 09.10.2005**

On 09.10.2005, on the occasion of “World Postal Day”, India Post advertised in Daily Sakal. This advertisement contained information about
services provided by India Post. It also mentioned e-mail I.D. for India post. On the same day, the same newspaper contained a declaration by Mr. Anil Joshi—P.M.G., Pune, mentioning the ‘various days’ India Post has organised on this occasion—business development day, philately day, saving bank day, dialogue with customers, competitions for students etc. The researcher sent an e-mail on this address on the same day, requesting the postal authorities to give the particulars of the programmes organised on these days. The researcher intended to attend these programmes in order to collect required information for the research. Unfortunately there was no response.

4. **Rambag Colony post office:**

   The post office was overcrowded with postal agents and customers. Customers were waiting in a queue for collecting MIS interest for more than an hour.

   The post office has specified hours for agents but considering the number of customers visiting the post office for collecting MIS interest especially in the first week of the month is so large that the timings overlap.

5. **SP College Post Office**

   A large number of pensioners were waiting in the queue for collecting their pension. The waiting period on an average was more than 45 minutes. The steps towards the post office do not have railing for the pensioners’ convenience. The seating provision is not adequate.

**Observations:**

1. The employees of the post are aware of their responsibilities and the legal implications involved in their job.
2. The postmaster supported his subordinate when the subordinate was right.
3. Some Postal employees are unable to communicate in English.
4. Some Postal employees lack basic knowledge of various services provided by the post and customer orientation.

5. Some postal employees were neither bothered about the inconvenience to customers nor about loosing the customer.

6. The volume of work as compared to number of employees is on the higher side during the peak period.

7. There is good response to the postal saving schemes but the staff to customers ratio is inadequate on financial services counter more so in the first week of the month.

8. The facilities for senior citizens are inadequate.

Conclusions:
1. DoP is successful in developing a sense of responsibility among its employees and healthy superior subordinate relationships.

2. The environment in the rural area is different than that in the urban area. The perception about quality of service and employee attitudes is different.

3. Importance of courteous behaviour with the customers is not realised by many postal employees.

4. Efforts of DoP towards training employees as regards communication in English and customer orientation are inadequate.

5. Efforts of DoP towards providing information about various postal services to its employees and as a result to the customers are inadequate.

6. Employees in DoP are slow in adapting to modern technology.

7. The volume of work in post offices fluctuates.

8. Quality of work and services to customers gets affected on account of inadequate staff.

9. DoP has failed to provide satisfactory infrastructure for senior citizens. (Where pensions are distributed)