CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Competition from Substitute Products

Efforts of Pune Zone for Adaptation

- E Post
- Computerisation
- Instant Money Order
8.1 INTRODUCTION:

This chapter presents the conclusions drawn from the primary and secondary data collected by the researcher. This chapter also includes the testing of hypotheses, recommendations and new areas of research. The recommendations are given to DoP and the Government for improving the performance of Pune Zone -- DoP.

8.2 CONCLUSIONS:

Conclusions: Few conclusions drawn from observation and analysis of primary and secondary data, which give an insight into the strengths and the weakness of Pune Zone – DoP, are given below:

8.2.A Conclusions on Questionnaire for customers—Mail services and General

1. Needs of customers in Mofussil divisions are different than customers in East and West division and therefore the usage pattern of services is different.
2. Customers feel secure while interacting with the postman as compared to courier men.
3. During the last 15 years, DoP has lost its business to private courier, more so during the last five years.
4. DoP has failed to create awareness about its newly introduced and premium services among the customers more so in Mofussil area. Among the premium services, awareness about speed post is the highest.
5. Customers prefer e-mail because they value speed and privacy of communication as compared to accessibility of facilities and cost.
6. At present lack of net facility and fear of technology are the two main hindrances in the use of e-mail. But with the spread of computerisation, influence of these factors will be reduced, posing an increasing challenge for postal mail services.

8.2.B Conclusions of Focus Group discussion
(Customers – age group 16 – 25)
1. The hostelites need and use services like money orders and money transfers.
2. Postal mail service is only occasionally used for sending Rakhi, greeting cards for Diwali and New Year and sending applications of competitive examinations.

8.2.C Conclusions on Questionnaire for customers – Financial services
1. MIS and RD schemes are most popular; NSC, Saving Account Scheme and KVP are somewhat popular and PPF and TD are less popular schemes among the investors. Small denomination of investment is an important criterion of investments for customers in Mofussil division.
2. Income tax consultants and advertisements are widely used sources of information about postal investment schemes.
3. DoP still has not exploited fully the investment potential in Pune Zone.

8.2.D Conclusions on Questionnaire for Postal Agents:
1. Postal agents are successful in giving information about new postal saving schemes to their customers regularly.
2. Investors judge the investment scheme based on their own preferences and advantages as explained by postal agents.
3. Pune Zone -- DoP has failed on the front of ‘interaction of postal employees with postal agents’ and providing training to postal employees.
8.2.E Conclusions on interviews of postal employees:
These conclusions are classified under the following headings:

General
- Pune Zone -- DoP is successful in attracting well-qualified and computer literate youth, but finds it difficult to retain them.
- 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.
- DoP has realized the necessity of computerisation in the changing environment and has introduced computers in its offices. However it is slow as regards speed of computerisation, computer maintenance and training of postal employees.
- Though DoP is not successful in increasing staff strength commensurate with the workload, it has started efforts in that direction.
- Staff shortage is an important factor leading to delayed service which affects the satisfaction of customers.

Attitude towards Traditional Services
- Postal employees including the higher authorities are proud of its social character and they want DoP to continue with the post card.
- DoP is also successful in fulfilling its social role by providing money order service and satisfying the money transfer needs of the customers, specially the migrated workers class.

Work Environment:
- Pune Zone in co-operation with employees' union is successful in redressing the grievances of postal employees.
- The senior officers – Pune Zone are successful in creating confidence about their willingness and capacity to redress the grievances of the postmen.
• The DoP has failed to ensure satisfactory security arrangements for keeping cash at the post office as well as carrying it to the collection vehicle, which has seriously affected the morale of postal employees.

Postal Employees
a. Postmasters and postal assistants
• Efforts of DoP towards Provision of proper infrastructure, authority to postmasters and stationary are inadequate.
• DoP has failed to give sufficient authority to postmasters to discharge the responsibilities given to them.

b. Postmen
• Postmen in Pune Zone have empathy towards their colleagues and are emotionally involved with DoP. They are very concerned about the respect the department and its employees should get from public.
• The efforts of DoP towards ensuring staff commensurate with the workload, providing facilities for carrying mail and security of postmen are inadequate.
• The training DoP provides to postmen is inadequate.

8.3 TESTING OF HYPOTHESES:
Hypotheses are tested on the basis of conclusions drawn from primary and secondary data:
8.3.1 Hypothesis—1
Performance of Pune Zone – DoP is satisfactory with reference to Mail services and Financial services.
Evaluation of performance is done on the basis of Performance of Pune Zone –DoP over the research period, Comparison of the Performance of Pune Zone and that of DoP at all India level, customer satisfaction and employee satisfaction.
The hypothesis is divided in sub-hypotheses:
Sub-hypothesis 1
The Performance of Pune Zone – DoP with reference to Mail services and Financial services over the period 1990--91 to 2004--05 is satisfactory. The Parameters used to test the hypothesis are infrastructure, amount Invested in Postal Saving Schemes etc.

Research Study Conclusions
Over the period 1990—91 to 2004--05 performance of Pune Zone -- DoP has improved in relation to infrastructure. The %age increase is: number of post offices (8.6%), letterboxes (13.2%), villages covered (4.2%) and in relation to financial services: amount Invested in Postal saving schemes (555.9%). (Please Ref: Table 1 (Pune General) on page no. 147 and page no. 148)

The Performance of Pune Zone –DoP over the period (2000—01 to 2004—05)
The performance of DoP, for core services is also evaluated separately for the period 2000—01 to 2004—05 as many new product features and services were introduced during this period.
Performance of Pune Zone – DoP 2000—01 to 2004—05

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Particulars</th>
<th>Percentage Increase/ Decrease over the period</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. Of Post Offices</td>
<td>8.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mail Services</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total mail Traffic</td>
<td>17.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registered mail Traffic</td>
<td>84.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unregistered mail Traffic</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Services</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postal saving schemes (No of accounts)</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postal saving schemes (amount Invested)</td>
<td>13.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Money order traffic</td>
<td>-2.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value of MOs transmitted</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLI-- No of Policies Procured</td>
<td>420.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLI-- Sum Assured</td>
<td>827.13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RPLI-- No of Policies Procured</td>
<td>261.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RPLI-- Sum Assured</td>
<td>942.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Premium Products</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revenue on Premium products</td>
<td>159.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Performance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Revenue</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surplus</td>
<td>12.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Indicates %age Decrease  ○ Indicates %age Increase

Research Study Conclusions

Over the period 2000—01 to 2004—05 performance of Pune Zone-- DoP has improved on the parameters like total Mail Traffic (17.3%), {Registered Mail Traffic (984.8%) and unregistered Mail traffic (2.8%)}, Postal saving schemes (No of accounts (8.5%) and Amount Invested, (6.1%)), Value of Money order transmitted (5.2 %). However Money order traffic has decreased by (2.3%).
Thus the sub-hypothesis -- 1 is partially proved.
**Sub-hypothesis 2**
The performance of Pune Zone and East West and Mofussil divisions, with reference to Mail services and Financial services, is on par with the performance of DoP at all India level.
The Parameters used to test the hypothesis are number of post offices, letter boxes etc.

**Research Study Conclusions:**
Over the period 1990—91 to 2004--05
- Infrastructure-wise (area served per post office and ‘increase in number of post offices) Pune Zone fairs better than DOP. *(Please refer page no. 148)*
- For ‘savings mobilised through postal saving schemes’ Pune Zone has failed to maintain a growth rate on par with DoP at all India level. *(Please refer to page no. 149)*

The performance of Pune Zone DoP is also evaluated separately, through comparison with DoP, for the period 2000—01 to 2004—05 as many new product features and services were introduced during this period. It is classified under three heading:

1. **Performance -- Mail Services**
2. **Performance -- Financial Services**
3. **Financial Performance**
Abbreviations used:

**MS** -- More Satisfactory

- More satisfactory performance

**LS** -- Less Satisfactory

- Less satisfactory performance

1. Performance -- Mail Services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr. No.</th>
<th>Service</th>
<th>% Age Increase/ Decrease</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Pune Zone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Mail Traffic</td>
<td>7.9 (MS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Registered Mail Traffic</td>
<td>84.8 (MS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Unregistered Mail Traffic</td>
<td>2.8 (MS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Revenue on Premium Products</td>
<td>159.7 (LS)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

![Performance - Mail Services](chart)

2. Performance -- Financial Services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr. No.</th>
<th>Service</th>
<th>% Age Increase/ Decrease</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Pune Zone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Postal saving schemes (No of accounts)</td>
<td>3.0 (LS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Postal saving schemes (amount Invested)</td>
<td>13.9 (LS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Money order traffic</td>
<td>2.3 (LS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Value of MOs transmitted</td>
<td>5.2 (LS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>PLI-No of Policies Procured</td>
<td>420.6 (MS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>PLI- Sum Assured</td>
<td>827.13 (MS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>RPLI-No of Policies Procured</td>
<td>261.7 (LS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>RPLI-- Sum Assured</td>
<td>942.4 (LS)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. Financial Performance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr. No.</th>
<th>Particulars</th>
<th>% age Increase/ Decrease</th>
<th>Pune Zone</th>
<th>DoP All India</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Total Revenue</td>
<td></td>
<td>10.3 LS</td>
<td>119.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Total Expenditure</td>
<td></td>
<td>26.4 MS</td>
<td>60.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Deficit/Surplus</td>
<td></td>
<td>12.1 MS</td>
<td>-13.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Research Study Conclusions**

- The Performance of Pune Zone relating to Mail and Financial services is **More Satisfactory** than Performance of DoP at all India level on the following grounds: Mail (Registered and Unregistered),
PLI (No of Policies Procured and Sum Assured), total expenditure and Surplus.

- The Performance of Pune Zone relating to Mail and financial services is **Less Satisfactory**, as compared to Performance of DoP at all India level on the following grounds: Postal saving schemes (No of accounts and amount Invested), Money order traffic, Value of MOs transmitted, RPLI (No of Policies Procured and Sum Assured), Premium products and Total Revenue (Financial performance) though division wise performance is different.

- **Thus the Sub-hypothesis -- 2 is partially proved.**

**Sub-hypothesis 3**

Performance of Pune Zone—DoP is leading to satisfied customers and employees.

3. A. Satisfaction of customers with reference to the factors affecting service quality

Parameters used were perception of service quality, the extent to which DoP is successful in satisfying customers from different segments etc.

**Research Study Conclusions**

- **In relation to mail and financial services:**
  - **Pune Zone -- DoP is successful in satisfying customers** on certain grounds like Delivery time, location of post offices, Accurate charging for the services, attending to the customers' complaints, Introduction of changes like introducing new services, changing appearance of post office and computerisation, Different investment schemes to suit needs of different customers, services of postal agents and No corruption.
  - **Pune Zone -- DoP is not successful in satisfying customers** on certain grounds like Working hours, timely delivery, attitudes of the
employees, speed of services, availability of information about new services, provision of cash to satisfy their withdrawal requirements, provision of information about existing services and changes in existing services, promptness in payment, documentation problems, employee customer ratio and quality of stationary.

3. B. Association between Satisfaction of Customers and Demographic Characteristics: The association was studied to find out the extent to which DoP is successful in satisfying customers from different segments.

Research Study Conclusions
It was proved through Chi-Square test that satisfaction of customers and sex are independent variables. Satisfaction of customers and age, occupations, income, and education are dependent variables (Please refer to table no. (5.48) on page no. 323) e.g. customers of age group 36 to 50 are most satisfied and customers of Age group Up to 25 years are least satisfied.

The following table shows percentages of highest and lowest satisfied customers with different demographic characteristics:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic Characteristics</th>
<th>Highest Satisfied Customers</th>
<th>Lowest Satisfied Customers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age (36to50)</td>
<td>(29.2%)</td>
<td>(Up to 25) (4.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education (Graduate)</td>
<td>(18.6%)</td>
<td>(Professional) (4.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupation (Govt. Service)</td>
<td>(17.1%)</td>
<td>(Student) (6.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income (Rs.5000 to Rs.10000)</td>
<td>(22.3%)</td>
<td>(Rs.20000&amp;above) (11.8%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. C. Employee satisfaction
Parameters used were satisfaction of employee with reference to factors of work environment.
Research Study Conclusions

- Employees are satisfied with factors like activities of postal employees' union, willingness and capacity of the senior officers – Pune Zone to redress the grievances of the employees in Pune Zone.
- Employees are not satisfied with the working environment, security arrangements for keeping cash at the post office as well as carrying it to the collection vehicle; authority to postmasters to discharges the responsibilities given to them, availability of proper infrastructure and stationary.

Thus DoP is successful in satisfying customers and employees on certain grounds while it is not successful in satisfying employees on certain other grounds.

Thus the sub-hypothesis -- 3 is partially proved.

8.3.2 Hypothesis: -- 2:
There appears to be difference in perception of customers, in Pune Zone (East West and Mofussil division), about mail services provided by Pune Zone and private couriers.

The parameters used are the factors determining service quality like physical facilities, reliability, attitudes of the employees, assurance & Knowledge (for counter services), reliability, timely delivery and attitudes of employees (for delivery services) and 'quality of mail services considering the cost' (for both counter and delivery service).

The tool used for comparison is the percentage of satisfied customers.

Research Study Conclusions -- on quality of service: Pune Zone
Comparison—Pune Zone—Private Couriers (Customers’ Perception and Satisfaction)

A. Counter and Delivery service: Customers perceive the performance of Pune Zone --DoP as regards, ‘quality of mail &
parcel services considering the cost’ to be much more satisfactory than that of private couriers.

B. **Delivery service:** The performance of Pune Zone –DoP, in relation to timely delivery, is perceived to be ‘Less Satisfactory’ as compared to performance of Private couriers.

Customers perceive the performance of Pune Zone –DoP, in relation to ‘Reliability and Attitudes of employees’ to be on the lower side as compared to the performance of Private couriers.

C. **Counter service:** Performance of Pune Zone –DoP as regards physical facilities, Reliability, Assurance and knowledge of employees, Attitudes of employees is perceived to be ‘Less Satisfactory’ as compared to the performance of Private Couriers.

Thus Performance of Pune Zone, relating to mail services, with reference to customers’ satisfaction is more satisfactory than private couriers on the basis of cost of service compared to quality. It is less satisfactory than private couriers on all other grounds.

**Co-relation between Ranks -- DoP and Private Couriers**

It was proved through Spearman’s Rank Co-relation that in Pune Zone there is no co-relation between the ranks based on %age of satisfied customers of DoP and Private Couriers.

On the basis of on %age of satisfied customers it was proved that the Performance of Pune Zone, relating to mail services, with reference to customers’ satisfaction, is perceived to be more satisfactory than private couriers on the basis of ‘quality of service as compared to cost’. It is less satisfactory than private couriers on all other grounds. {Please refer to Table (5.20) on page no. 301}
Research Study Conclusions -- Division wise Customers’ perception

{Please refer to Table (5.19) on page no. 298}

Counter and Delivery Service:

- The customers perceive the mail services of East, West and Mofussil division—Pune Zone, (Ranks 1, 1, 1 respectively) to be more economical than the services of private couriers (Ranks 2, 7, 4 respectively).

Counter Services:

- Assurance & Knowledge: The customers perceive the services of East and Mofussil division— Pune Zone, (Rank 3, 2 respectively) to be parallel to the services of private couriers on the grounds of 'Assurance & Knowledge’ (Rank 3, 2 respectively). 
  The customers perceive the services of West division-- Pune Zone, (Rank 4) to be less satisfactory than the services of private couriers on the grounds of 'Assurance & Knowledge’. (Rank 2)

- Reliability: The customers perceive the services of Mofussil division Pune Zone, (Rank 2) to be more reliable than the services of private couriers. (Rank 4)

- The customers perceive the services of East, West division Pune Zone, (Ranks 2, 3 respectively) to be less reliable than the services of private couriers. (Ranks 1, 1 respectively)

- Physical facilities: The customers perceive the of East, West and Mofussil division—Pune Zone, (Ranks 6, 7, 3 respectively) to be less satisfactory than the services of private couriers. (Ranks 5, 6, 2 respectively)

- Attitudes of the employees: The customers perceive the attitudes of employees --East, West and Mofussil division—Pune Zone, (Ranks 7, 8, 5 respectively) to be less satisfactory than the services of private couriers. (Ranks 4, 5, 1 respectively)
Delivery Service:

- **Reliability:** The customers perceive the services of West and Mofussil division-- Pune Zone, (Rank 2, 1 respectively) to be more reliable than the services of private couriers (Rank 3, 5).
  The customers perceive the services of East division-- Pune Zone, (Rank 4) to be less reliable than the services of private couriers (Rank 2).

- **Attitudes of the employees:** The customers perceive the attitudes of employees --West and Mofussil division—Pune Zone, (Ranks 5, 4 respectively) to be more satisfactory than the services of private couriers. (Ranks 7, 6 respectively)
  The customers perceive the attitudes of employees of East division—Pune Zone, (Rank 5) to be less satisfactory than the services of private couriers. (Rank 2)

- **Timely delivery:** The customers of East, West and Mofussil division—Pune Zone perceive mail services of DoP, (Ranks 6, 6, 4 respectively) to be less satisfactory than the services of private couriers (Ranks 2,4,3 respectively) as regards timely delivery.

**Co-relation Between division wise Ranks-- DoP and Private Couriers:**

It was proved through Spearman’s Rank Co-relation that there is no co-relation between the ranks based on percentages of satisfied customers of DoP and Private Couriers in the three divisions i.e. they perceive services of DoP and Private Couriers differently.

The Performance of East West and Mofussil division, relating to mail services, is perceived to be more satisfactory than private couriers on the basis of some grounds. It is perceived to be less satisfactory than private couriers on some other grounds.

Thus customers perceive the service quality of mail services provided by Pune Zone and private couriers differently.

Thus hypothesis - 2 is proved.
8.3.3 **Hypothesis: -- 3:**

Pune Zone – DoP appears to be adapting to changing business environment.

The hypothesis is divided in two parts:

1. Business environment is changing.
2. Pune Zone – DoP appears to be changing in order to adapt to changing business environment.

1. **Business environment is changing.**

Parameters used are: Government policy, Competition, Customers’ expectations and use of Technology.

**Research Study Conclusions:**

a. **Changes relating to Mail Services**

   - **Government policy:**

     Government policy has changed in relation to:

     - **Nature of organisation of DoP and its objectives:**

       Both these have changed from pure social character and social objectives to social character and social objectives combined with commercial considerations in the last few years.

     - **Policy relating to Private couriers:**

       - The Government has realised the need of amending Indian Post Office Act 1898, in order to plug-in the loopholes and regulate the private couriers.

       - In the finance bill of year 2006, service tax was imposed on private courier services, which was made applicable from 1st November, 2006.

   - **IT Act:**

     IT Act has given impetus to e-Governance. Central and state Governments are encouraging the use of electronic media for sending and receiving communication with citizens as well as inter departmental
communication. This is going to reduce the need for mail services for sending communication in the form of hard copy thereby affecting the demand for transmission of hard copy of written communication.

- **Competition**

The postal services are facing competition due to following reasons.

  - **Substitute products:** Electronic media like fax, widespread network of landline telephones, mobile phones, laptop, video conferencing, e-mail, and broadband, brought about by technological developments have affected the demand for postal mail services.

  - **Private couriers:** services of DoP are facing tough competition with private couriers. The competition will be intensified due to inclusion of postal services and courier services.
services in the list of Service Sectoral List to G.A.T.S. (by the Secretariat of W.T.O.)

b. Changes relating to Financial Services

Financial services of DoP are facing tough competition with banks, mutual funds and other investment avenues. Before 1990, the range of products offered by banks was limited to current account, saving accounts, fixed deposits and loans for business purposes. Now they have a wide product base like term deposits, recurring deposits, minor saving schemes and many more, targeting different market segments. The mutual funds also offer a combination of investments satisfying multiple objectives of customers.

c. Customer behaviour:
   - Preferences of customers have shifted from regular (low cost) mail to premium mail.
   - For non-official (personal) communication there is increasing preference to media other than postal mail.
   - The customers’ perception about quality of service has changed with reference to both mail and financial services leading to change in their expectations.
   - A large class of customers has emerged preferring quality service with readiness to pay higher charges.
   - Demand for postal mail services has considerably reduced in certain segments like the youngest age group (Up to 25 years), professionally qualified customers, student customers and higher income group customers (income Rs.20000& above).

2. Pune Zone –DoP appears to be changing in order to adapt to the changing business environment.

The parameters used were computerisation, nature of organisation, objectives, new services initiatives, and business process re-engineering and other initiatives.
Research Study Conclusions

a. Computerisation:
Pune Zone—DoP has undertaken computerisation in its operations.

b. Blending of objectives:
There is a shift from pure social organisation to social and commercial organisation. Business Development and Marketing Directorate (BDMD) is established to achieve commercial objectives by focusing on premium products.

c. New services: for facing the competition and meeting customers’ expectations

- Mail services
  - After 1990, Pune Zone --DoP has introduced many new services like speed post, media post, greeting post, meghadoot postcards, ‘One India Rate scheme’, instant money order etc. to cater to the needs of different customers and to face the competition.
  - Pune Zone – DoP has been undertaking systematic market segmentation and is providing different products to fulfill the needs of different segments. The business customers segment is provided with some special services as follows:
    - Considering the requirements of the Bulk Mailer for an end-to-end solution, ‘Total Mailing Solutions’ is being introduced. This will take care of all the mailing related problems of Bulk Mailing Customers like designing, printing, pre-mailing, dispatch and acknowledgement of mail.
    - Pune Zone has recently introduced E-Intimation of Delivery (E-IOD) service which provides electronic information about delivery of articles sent through DoP. E-IOD is a value added service, which is offered initially with Bill Mail Service, and gradually will be provided with other services offered by the DoP.
Financial Services

Finance-Mart:

- By introducing 'One-Stop-Post-Finance-Mart' DoP is providing specialised services in relation to financial products and is trying to adapt to changes in the postal scenario worldwide.

- While implementing 'One-Stop – Post-- Finance-Mart' concept the postal authorities in Pune Zone are emphasising employee communication and consultation.

d. Business Process Reengineering:

Pune Zone has followed DoP as regards business process re-engineering for simplification and speeding up of the procedures and improving the quality of service.

Pune Zone is a step ahead of DoP (all India level) as regards procedural reforms.

e. Other Initiatives:

- Pune Zone has introduced some eye-catching changes like Information Facilitation Centre at the main post offices, specially arranged separate path for physically handicapped customers etc.

- Pune Zone has been inculcating a positive attitude among the postmasters about the changing role of post office and the changing nature of duties of postal employees in view of the changing environment.

- Pune Zone DoP is putting in efforts to make good the reduction in volume of personal mail, through popularising business mail, for maintaining revenue.

- DoP has changed the uniform of the postman from traditional khaki to blue to give a corporate look.
Pune Zone has decided to opt for private contractual mail motor service in order to provide faster and cheaper mail service. Thus hypothesis-3 is proved.

8.4 RECOMMENDATIONS:

The researcher has given following the recommendations for improving the performance of Pune Zone. The recommendations are given in relation to infrastructure, services, financial services, employees, customer service and marketing.

- Infrastructure:
  - DoP should improve the infrastructure of post offices. Drinking water, toilet, light and parking facilities should be provided at every post office. Sitting arrangements and appearance of the post-office should improve. DoP should ensure cleanliness at post offices.
  - In large housing complexes having more than 200 residencies, a letterbox should be provided. At least a letter box in the vicinity of such 3-4 housing complexes together should be provided.
  - DoP should increase the pace of computerisation and ensure their proper maintenance.
  - Quality of papers, other stationery and printing quality should be improved. Sufficient stationery should be made available. Postmen should be provided with waterproof bags to carry the letters.
  - Finance mart building and storage space should be allotted after considering the number of employees and customers, the services to be provided, number of counters etc. In the future finance mart layout, counter arrangements height etc
need to be designed considering the space required for movements, storage etc.

- **Services:**
  - Popularity of traditional services is reducing leading to deduction in revenue generation. Therefore DoP must relook at traditional services.
  - DoP needs to analyse the performance of each premium product in various markets. The marketing policy of DoP should be based on such analysis.
  - DoP should provide timing convenient for the customers. At least some post offices should function early morning and late evening (At least twice a week they should function from 3 to 6.)
  - Pune city is developing in all directions. These newly developed areas need post offices. Till the feasibility study of starting post offices is undertaken, as a stop gap arrangement mobile post services should be provided. Mobile post services should be introduced on a trial basis and once they get established, they should be provided all over the area. The days and timings of mobile services should be effectively advertised, enabling the customers to take advantage of such services.
  - DoP should bring improvements in a phased manner. It should first go for intensive improvements i.e. improvements in services provided at present instead of increasing the service base. This will lead to greater customer satisfaction. After attaining a certain level of customer satisfaction, the post can think of introducing new services.
  - DoP needs to raise revenue. It should grab the opportunity but should not accept each and every proposal on the way.
The employee should be taken into confidence before starting the new activity.

- **Financial Services:**
  - Postal saving schemes (fixed deposits) are for long term. Short term fixed deposits schemes should be introduced.
  - The rate of interest on the MIS as well as RD schemes needs to be changed frequently in view of changes in the other investment avenues.
  - Postal Finance Mart should be run in partnership with private organisations in order to provide adequate guidance to customers for investing in postal saving schemes.
  - Other recommendations: these recommendations refer to simplification of investment and withdrawal procedures.
    - Payment of MIS interest should be done by cheques. In order to avoid load on postal employees post can give advance cheques for a year. By and by this should be replaced by electronic transfer system.
    - At present customers are expected to inform the post office about the withdrawal (for interest on MIS and maturity of other schemes) a day before. This needs to be done away with and payment should be made on maturity without prior intimation.
    - Till the employee records the payment in different registers the customers are required to wait. The employee should record the payment in one register pay the customers and then make entries in other registers. This will save customers’ time.
    - The quality of stationary (deposit and withdrawal slips) should be improved.
- Investment and withdrawal procedure is time consuming on account of insufficient staff. DoP should recruit more employees.

- **Employees:**
  - A scientific study should be undertaken for calculating workload and accordingly staff strength should be provided. Adequate manpower should be recruited to ensure need-based availability of staff at post offices so that lack of sufficient staff does not cause inconvenience to the customers. With the adequacy of staff, the employees would share the burden of work. They will not hesitate in extending their wholehearted co-operation.
  - Functional authority, at least relating to day-to-day routine operations should be delegated up to the post master level in order to ensure flexibility.
  - Training programmes for employees:
    - Comprehensive induction programmes, refresher courses and workshops should be arranged in order to make employees more competitive. Quality of training should be upgraded by paying greater attention to the process of understanding.
    - Employees should be trained to use computers, develop marketing attitudes and being customer-centric. Proper orientation to most postal employees is required to behave warmly with the visiting customers and work more efficiently, politely and speedily, respect the customers and give them information and not to neglect or avoid them.
    - The training should aim at developing communicational skills among the employees. They should be given training to communicate in English.
• **Customer Service:**
  - To satisfy a customer, DoP must maintain good service delivery standards. DoP should take regular feedback from customers measuring their level of satisfactions.
  - Customer Relationship Management: DoP should appoint properly trained and qualified persons with good communication skills as relationship managers for successful implementation of customer relationship management. This will go a long way in developing customers’ loyalty.

• **Marketing:**
  - Inadequate communication about new services and overall performance of DoP has affected business of Pune Zone to a large extent. DoP should highlight its performance and progress at least once a month in the local newspapers. New schemes and interest rates should be advertised repeatedly to enhance customer awareness.
  - DoP should undertake marketing research for understanding requirements of customers. There is a need to make special efforts to attract certain segments of customers e.g. following suggestions are given to attract young customers:
    - Monthly income scheme should be promoted as a gift. This will enable parents to make a fixed monthly allotment to their children.
    - DoP should attempt to sponsor some events in colleges and take this opportunity to make youngsters aware of services of post, especially new services like greeting cards, international money transfers, instant money orders etc.
    - Youngsters are aware of emotional and sentimental value of a letter though they use other means of communication commonly. DoP should capitalise it. One option is to market
post cards with printed messages like ‘I miss you’, ‘I am sorry’, ‘good luck’ etc. Printing of such cards can be outsourced at the local level.

- **Postal Agents:**
  - DoP should provide adequate training to the agents.
  - DoP should authorise the agents to use display boards.
  - DoP should motivate the agents to use varied media of advertisement.
  - With computerisation agents working in multiple post offices should be encouraged.
  - Investment preferences of the customers depend upon monthly income and occupation. Investment preferences of the customers change from segment to segment. DoP should provide services to suit needs of various customer segments.

If these recommendations are implemented, the researcher is sure that DoP will be in better position to face challenges and improve the performance.

8.5 **NEW AREAS OF RESEARCH:**

The researcher feels that there is further scope for research about various areas relating to performance of DoP in general and DoP Pune Zone in particular.

1. The comparative study of postal investment schemes and other investment opportunities
2. Individual, in depth study of each premium product of DoP
3. Case study of Railway Mail Division (RMS) Division of Pune Region.

Ref: 1. ‘Postal Department to hire services of pvt firm’ by Sarang Dastane – Times of India 11.04.08