Chapter – VII

Summary of Findings, Suggestions and Conclusion
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7.1 INTRODUCTION

India post is the bridge across physical distance and is committed to deploy efficient means to reduce the time between sending a message to receiving it. India post is forward-looking and modern. It embraces change and incorporates services to fulfill the requirements of its customers. India post makes social, commercial and industrial life possible in modern India.

Indian post brings to the mind a universe of intricate network of post offices through the length and breadth of the country. This network forms the largest postal system in the world with an array of about 1,55,015 post offices; It dwarfs all other postal systems in sheer numbers. There are 5,468 Panchayat Sanchar Sewa Kendras to provide basic postal services in the rural areas, in addition to 1,55,015 post offices.

The postal department, at the present juncture, faces the twin challenges posed by the private courier industry and continuing advances in communication technology, especially mobile telephony and the World Wide Web (www). Being aware that an organization can exist in isolation at its own peril, the department has devised a sound strategy to meet these challenges. It is quite often, in organizational Transformation, a mismatch occurs between objectives and outcomes. Accordingly the postal department has planned a comprehensive model of transformation. This modeling is predicated upon the fact that transformation is a multidimensional process and, hence, any attempt at changing the postal department must be at multiple levels. A multi-pronged strategy has been devised to augur transformation and further improve upon postal services.

The postal department cherishes its own staff as the most significant resource. Hence, any step towards repositioning the postal department has to be first and foremost at the level of human resource. As such, an outlay of ₹1249.2million has been earmarked in the 11th five year plan for providing quality training to all categories of staff.
India Post is expected to ensure provision of quality and basic postal services on regular basis to all the users at all points in the country at affordable prices as part of its Universal Service Obligation. The cost of providing these services has to be assessed systematically and fully funded. The source of funding needs to be determined and set in ways that ensure the financial self-sufficiency of India post and allow it to make decisions relating to growth and development. A sustainable tariff policy for providing the basic postal services also has to be determined. In view of the increasing participation in mail services by private players there is a need to address the issue in a holistic manner.

The department of Posts is a part of the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology, Government of India. The Secretary, Department of Posts, as the Chief Executive of the Department, is also the Chairperson of the postal services board and Director General, India Post. There is a need to revisit India Post's governance structure to provide an effective line of command so that India Post is able to meet the challenges of current market conditions vis-à-vis other players in the postal sector. India post recognizes the presence of private competitors in the market, but there is also a need for regulating the sector to ensure disciplined functioning and growth.

The advent of courier services has reduced the business of postal services in Urban areas. It continues to be patronized by rural population for savings deposit, postal insurance, village telephone etc. in addition to the regular postal services. Sensing an opportunity to increase the revenue and compensate for the reduction in person-to-person mailing, India post has decided to increase the number of life insurance schemes in rural areas along with the introduction of new schemes. The Indian postal network, the largest in the world, plans to tap rural families with its array of products. India post is leveraging the personal contact and first-hand understanding of the local people by the postal staff to market the new service products in the rural areas. India post is targeting about 50% of the revenue being generated from non-postal services. For the effective implementation of the marketing efforts, India post has decentralized the marketing and sales function to the divisional level.
7.2 POSTAL NETWORK

The postal network consists of four categories of post offices viz., Head post offices, sub-post offices and Extra – departmental sub-post offices and Extra – departmental branch post offices. All categories of post offices offer similar postal services, delivery function being restricted to only earmarked offices in terms of management control. Accounts are consolidated progressively from branch post office to sub post office and finally at head post office.

Expansion of the postal network in the country, especially in rural area has taken place mainly through opening of Extra Departmental post offices and on a smaller scale by opening departmental post offices. The extra departmental post office functions on a part time basis for a minimum of three hours and a maximum of 5 hours. They are manned by part-time locally recruited employees, who are paid allowances for the services they render. The departmental post offices function for a period of 8 hours and are manned by full – fledged departmental employees.

Post offices are opened subject to distance, population and income norms fixed for the purpose. In order to fulfill Universal Service Obligation, subsidy is provided to all post offices in rural areas, which range from 66.67% in normal rural areas to 85% in hilly, tribal, desert and remote areas. However, no subsidy is offered to post offices in urban areas, as they are expected to be financially self-sufficient and earn 5% more than their cost after first year.

7.3 PROJECT ARROW

Project Arrow was conceived in April 2008. The Project envisages upgradation of post offices in urban and rural areas both in terms of upgrading and enhancing the quality of service in ‘core areas’ and improving the ‘Look and feel’ of identified post offices. The project arrow aims at creating a conducive and friendly work environment both for the staff and the customers visiting the post offices, providing all IT enabled services through secure connectivity, improving the service quality levels in the core business areas e.g. mail delivery, Remittances both electronic and manual and postal savings schemes.
7.4 MARKETING MIX FOR POSTAL SERVICES

The marketing mix concept plays a significant role in marketing of postal services. Since, India post deals with both products and service, it has cleverly combined the traditional 4 P's of marketing mix with extended marketing mix to include people, process and physical evidence in-order to meet the challenges posed by unique characteristics of services.

7.4.1 Product Mix

Due to hectic competition, the postal organizations are forced to formulate a sound product mix. A sound product enables the postal authorities to understand the changing needs and requirements to different segments of areas on prospects.

The product and services offered by India post are as follows.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mail Communication Products &amp; Services</th>
<th>Post Cards, Inland Letter, Postal Envelope, Book Post, Registered Post, Certificate of Posting, Registered Insured Post, Business Reply Post, Value Payable Post.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>Parcel &amp; Cargo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Premium and Value added Services</td>
<td>Speed Post, Business Post, Media Post, Retail Post, Greetings Post, Direct Post, e-Post, Logistics Post and e.payment.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The postal organizations mainly deal in core products like supply of postal covers, stamps, cards, postal orders etc. Besides these, value additions are given by supplying augmented products like banking services, money order services, insurance services etc. To make the postal services more attractive to customers. Today they have gone to the 'potential level' by supplying consumer products to bring pleasant surprise to their customers.

The Product mix must inform the prospects in different types of services for the different types of users. While designing the product mix, both the high profit services as well as the low profit services must be included.

7.4.2 Price Mix

A Pricing decision has to be taken rationally, as on the one hand the postal department has to maintain their commercial viability while on the other hand they must fulfill the interests of the different segments of the society. Hence, the postal organizations have to fix the price in such a way that even the weaker sections of the society find it convenient to use their services.

A rational tariff policy is a difficult task which requires professional skill. However, the postal services make the pricing decisions more scientific and progressive. They have a high tariff for dispatching valuable documents and papers and charging low structure for the regular customers. This method helps to increase the market share and therefore the tariff structure should not be more than the tariff for other communication services. On the whole, the pricing method is a kind of cost plus pricing since cost becomes the primary basis for price determination.

7.4.3 Place Mix

The place mix has two important issues.

1. The postal departments have to process the services without any gap between the services furnished and services offered.

2. The offices of the postal organizations must be located at a sensitive point.

Realizing this, India post has adopted a viable policy of locating its offices mainly both rural and semi urban areas and at the same time touching the urban areas
too. The channel of distribution for postal services are direct and short in the sense that product and services flow directly from marketers to ultimate consumers.

7.4.4 Promotion Mix

The promotion mix must inform the prospects in a creative way. The promotion mix includes the following components.

- Advertising
- Publicity
- Personal Selling
- Word of Mouth promotion
- Sales promotion
- Tele Marketing

By using the above measures of sales promotion, the postal organizations and the marketing professionals are able to mix the different constituents in such a way that the prospects are stimulated and the dialogue is transformed into a deal.

7.4.5 People Mix

It involves the different categories of employees’ serving the postal organizations at head or branch offices. The personnel working in postal services function as the marketing professionals. It is a fact that employees’ play an important role in improving the quality of postal services.

7.4.6 Process Mix

The process has been given much attention in the postal service sector very recently. The postal organizations identify the needs and want in the market place so that they can design the service process so as to ensure service quality. They pay meticulous attention to service delivery processes which are designed, implemented and monitored effectively by the department. However the greatest impact on the process element of postal marketing mix has been due to technological developments, enabling automated service.
7.4.7 Physical Evidence

The postal department offers tangible evidence of the nature of services provided by it. The service environment in which interaction takes place consists of Physical evidence as well as the social settings. Realizing this, the postal organizations aim at enhancing the customer perception of the service by providing the right physical evidence.

7.5 NEED FOR THE PRESENT STUDY

In India and foreign countries, various researches have been undertaken in various dimensions of postal services. But very few attempts have been made to analyze the commercialization of postal products and services. The present study on “marketing of postal services by India post with reference to Salem west division” has been undertaken to fill up the gap in the research. This study has been made to solve the problems of postmasters and postmen dealing with postal product. The attitude of customers towards the postal services has been studied through survey to understand their requirements.

7.6 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Postal administration faces a very severe challenge posed by the growing volume of mail; need to deliver services faster to the customers, administrated prices and poor technology.

After the advent of cell phones, messages and enquiries are conveyed through S.M.S. The revolution taken place in the IT sector has enabled a common man to talk to any body in India spending just ‘One rupee’ with the help of the public telephones which are very freely available in all places. This has also contributed to the setback of the postal department.

There prevails a dearth of postal employees which affects sorting and delivery of mails. This is because, as a measure of economy, recruitments have been very limited. Since sufficient manpower is not available, the post master himself is compelled to attend to duties meant for his subordinates. He finds no time to explain to the public various new services introduced in the postal sector.
The public usually make the postman wait for the delivery of mails and naturally, the postman is not able to complete the delivery in time. He has to wait sometimes for long time in front of a house to deliver the letters. Many public fail to inform the postman about the change in their residences. The postman, in this situation, has no other option but to redirect the mails to the respective senders.

When a postman is transferred, the new postman takes a very long time to become familiar with the new area. This results in delay in the delivery of mails or in wrong delivery.

In some places, door numbers, the names of the streets etc., are not clearly indicated with the result the postmen are compelled to make enquiries about the correct addressees. This not only adds to his already heavy work but causes undue delay also.

Very sincere and hard working postmen are not suitably rewarded or appreciated. And their services go unrewarded and the postmen have a feeling of doing a thankless job.

Village postmen serving in rural areas are paid salary only, which is low. They are not paid other allowances. They are not at present eligible for pension. They are not provided with the basic accommodation.

7.7 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The Scope of study is restricted to the postal services offered by post offices which come under the Salem West Division. The opinion of postal customers, postmasters, and postmen and women regarding postal services have been analysed to identify the factors which contribute to the effective marketing of postal services.

Among the mail communication services, postcard, inland letter, registered post, certificate of posting and book post are considered for this study since the postal department suffers heavy losses than the other services.

Among the financial services, the money order service alone is taken into account since this service is very popular in the rural areas.

Among the premium and value added services speed post alone is considered since this service is only available in the urban areas of the west division.
7.8 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY
The study has been made with the following set of objectives.

- To describe the different postal services offered by India post.
- To analyse the opinion of the postmasters regarding postal services.
- To examine the level of satisfaction of the postal employees regarding postal services.
- To assess the opinion of the customers towards postal services.
- To offer suggestions for the improvement of postal services offered by India post.

7.9 HYPOTHESES
The analysis of the study has been preceded with the following set of hypotheses.

- The opinion about types of products, rates charged and overall satisfaction about postal services does not vary significantly based on Gender, Education, location of the post office, Monthly income, Years of experience of the post masters.
- There is no relationship between different types of postal services, customers served per day and overall satisfaction on the job and Gender, Age, Education, Basis of Appointment, Monthly income, Grades held, Hours worked per day and area covered by the postmen / postal women.
- Opinion score on satisfaction on salary and over all job satisfaction does not vary significantly based on demographic factors of the postmen / postal women.
- There is no significant association between visits to post office, Rates charged, Festival services, Complaints, Advertisement and the Demographic profile of the customers like Age, Gender, Literacy level, Monthly income and Occupation.
- The number of customers using ordinary post card, competition post card, and acknowledgement card do not vary significantly based on location of the post office.
- The opinion scores on postal charges, complaints and postal services do not vary significantly based on demographic profile of the customers.
7.10 METHODOLOGY
The study is both a descriptive and analytical one and it was carried out through sampling. The primary data have been collected directly from the post offices of Salem West Division in Salem District and the customers of post offices through a pretested interview schedule. The Secondary data have been collected from the published documents like, Annual reports, Information booklets, Hand books of postal products and services, Hand books of postal Training College and other relevant books and journals.

7.11 SAMPLING
The sampling was done in two stages for postmasters and postmen/postal women. Regarding customers, it was done in 3 stages. In the first stage, out of 2 divisions, west division was identified as the target sampling area. This was chosen purposively since west division covered more area. In the second stage, 80% of the postmasters were chosen randomly out of a total 253 post masters available. Since, the post masters population was small enough the sample size was increased considerably.

Out of 400 post men and postal women, available in the west division, 50% of them were chosen for this study.

For customers, 15% of the total number of post offices was chosen. This comes to around 38 post offices which were rounded off to 40 for arithmetic convenience. In the third stage, out of the 40 post offices identified, 10 customers from each post office were randomly chosen. Simple random sampling was adopted to choose the respondents (Post masters, postmen / postal women and Customers)

7.12 PERIOD OF STUDY
The present study covers a period of 3 years from 2006-2009.

7.13 APPLICATION OF STATISTICAL TOOLS
For the study, descriptive statistics namely,

- Percentages,

- Mean and standard deviation were used to understand the nature of the sample.
Inferential statistics namely,
- Chi-square Test
- t-test and
- ANOVA were used to test the hypothesis framed for the study.

Kendall's co-efficient was used for ordinal type of data (ranked data) to find
the similarity among the respondents in ordering the item.

7.14 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study is subject to the following limitations.

- The Size of the sample preferred for contacting the customers and postmen is
  low due to paucity of time and cost. However an earnest attempt has been
  made to have the sample as a representative of the universe.
- The researcher has collected the data from the village members also who are
  mostly illiterates. Hence, the figures given by them could not be relied on as
  cent percent accurate.
- The design of the research is descriptive, and therefore, the approach to the
  problem is made at a higher narrative level than exercising an in-depth case
  study or experimentation.
- It has been the experience of the researcher that data collection is very time
  consuming. The rural post offices are almost a 'one-man show' and
  consequently, the postmasters are not normally in a position to spare time for
  any non-business activity like responding to the questionnaire owing to their
  heavy schedule of engagements in business activities. Because of this, it was
  necessary to make at least 2 or 3 visits to post offices to collect data. Besides,
  their responses to the questions were subjected to several distractions of an
  unavoidable nature.
- The postal services include so many services like mail communication
  services, transportation services, financial services, premium and value added
  services etc... But the study is mainly focused on the services like postcard,
  inland letter, and Registered post, Certificate of posting, Book post, Money
  order and speed post due to paucity of time and cost constraints.
- The next limitation of the study relates to qualitative nature of the responses
  which are measurable by scoring or ranking or assigning weights. This
  measurement is limited to the nature of responses, the method of measurement
  and the analysis of the data.
7.15 COMPARISON OF THE WORLD'S POSTAL SYSTEM

It is inferred by comparing the world's postal system that, USA occupies the largest area (96,29,091 Sq.km.) followed by China (95,96,961 sq.km) Australia (77,41,220 sq.km) and India (32,87,263 sq.km). As far as the permanent population is concerned, China occupies the first position (131.584 Crores), India ranks second (110,337 Crores) and the USA, the third (29.821 Crores). As far as the number of post offices is concerned, India occupies the I place (1, 55,015 post offices), followed by China (65,917) and the USA (37,142 post offices). It indicates that, India is having the largest postal network in the world. As far as the area served by a post office is considered, it is 21.21 sq.km. in India, 145.59sq.km. in China and 259.25 km in the USA. In this aspect also, India has a comparatively better postal network.

It is interesting to note from the study that, five post offices have been identified under project arrow phase-I. The identified post offices are Jawhar sub post office - Mumbai, Baramati sub post office- Pune, Bhandara Head post office- Nagpur, Nanded Head post office- Aurangabad, Calansute sub post office- Goa.

It is clear from the study that, 48 Post offices have been identified under project Arrow phase-II. The identified post offices are in Mumbai (10) followed by Nagpur (10), Aurangabad (10), Goa (10) and Pune (8).

It is understood from the study that 78 Post offices under Maharashtra and Goa circle have been identified under project Arrow phase- III. However, till date 34 (Thirty Four) post offices have been inaugurated. The details are 13 in Mumbai region followed by 8 in Goa, 7 in Aurangabad, 4 in Pune and 2 in Nagpur.

It is learnt from the study that, the postal circle of Tamil Nadu and Pondicherry is divided into 4 regions namely Chennai city region, Western region, Central region and Southern region. Each Region is further divided into postal Divisions and also comprises of Railway Mail Service (RMS) Divisions. There are 42 postal Divisions and 6 RMS Divisions in the circle. The Circle has 12185 Post offices and 141 RMS offices/Sections. These are placed under the control of postal divisions and RMS Divisions, respectively.
It is interesting to note that, the Chennai City Region of Tamil Nadu postal circle is situated in the Northern tip of Tamil Nadu and has its headquarters at Chennai. It was formed on 11th February 2002. The Region is carved out of the erstwhile northern Region and metro Region. The Region covers an area of 25,548 Square Kilometers and serves a population of approximately 2.04 Crores. The Region has a network of 2341 post offices.

It is inferred from the study that The Western Region of Tamil Nadu Postal circle has its headquarters at Coimbatore. It was formed on 2nd April, 1979. The Region was previously known as Coimbatore Postal Region and the name was changed as western Region, Tamil Nadu circle with effect from 15th March, 1990. The Region covers an area of 38,982 square kilometers and serves a population of approximately 1.4 crores. The Region has a network of 3069 post offices.

The study represented that the Central Region of Tamil Nadu postal circle is situated in the heart of TamilNadu and has its headquarters at Trichy. It was formed on 2nd April 1979. The Region was previously known as Tiruchirapalli Region and the name was changed as Central Region, TamilNadu Circle with effect from 15th January 1992. The Region covers an area of 33,449 square kilometers and serves a population of approximately 1.24 crores. The Region has a network of 3561 post offices.

It is noted from the study that, The southern Region of Tamil Nadu Postal Circle has its headquarters at Madurai. It was formed on 25th April 1983. The southern Region was carved out from the erstwhile Tiruchirappalli and Coimbatore Postal Regions. The Region covers an area of 32,542 square kilometers and serves a population of approximately 2.15 Crores. The Region has a network of 3214 Post offices.

The study signifies that, Salem West Postal Division includes 253 post offices, of which 228 are delivery offices and 25 non-delivery offices. All these offices function under the control of Higher Selection Grade I head office located at Suramangalam. The head of this office is the Superintendent of Post Offices. Suramangalam belongs to an urban area. Most of the post offices (186) are situated in rural areas in the Salem West Division.
It is learnt from the study that Surmangalam sub division includes 85 post offices of which 73 are delivery offices and 12 are non delivery offices followed by Mettur Dam sub division which has 84 post offices of which 79 are delivery offices and 5 are non delivery offices and Rasipuram sub division has 84 post offices of which 77 are delivery offices and 7 are non delivery offices.

It is evident from the study that, Rasipuram sub division has more branch offices (70) in rural areas than other sub divisions. It is also understood from the study that, there are 17 computerized post offices in the study area, out of which 16 post offices are located in urban areas and the remaining one is situated in rural area. It is also learnt from the study that, Suramangalam & Mettur Dam sub divisions are under the phase – III of project Arrow and Rasipuram sub division is under the phase-II of project Arrow.

7.16 OPINION OF POST MASTERS IN MARKETING POSTAL SERVICES

- While analyzing the demographic profile of the postmasters, 80.5 percent of the postmasters were male. 90.5 percent of the postmasters completed UG degree. 75.5 percent of the respondents drew salary above ₹.15000. 69 percent of the postmasters are doing their service in rural areas. 50 percent of them had above 15 years of experience. 79.5 percent of postmasters were working for 8 hours in a day.

- 82 percent of the postmasters preferred two-wheelers to reach their post offices. 73 percent of the postmasters were promoted by the conduct of departmental examinations. 96.5 percent of the postmasters reported about their speedy service in the forenoon.

- 28 percent of the postmasters served 50-100 customers in a day. 91 percent of the postmasters gave first rank for 'Friendly Approach'. 46 percent of the postmasters opined that the users of post cards were agriculturists. 66.5 percent of the postmasters indicated the competition post card as the fast moving one.
29 percent of postmasters reported that there were 100-150 customers used inland letters in a day. 44 percent of the Post masters reported that the postmen delivered above 250 letters in a day. 82.5 percent of the postmasters expressed that under stamped letters were levied penalty below ₹.10 in their respective post offices concerned.

79.5 percent of the postmasters confirmed the availability of franking machines. 52.8 percent of the postmasters stated that there were below 5000 letters franked in their post offices.

65 percent of the postmasters opined that majority of the materials was sent through book post. 64 percent of postmasters opined that the customers preferred book post due to the uniform rates.

94.5 percent of the postmasters specified the customers’ preference on the registered post with acknowledgement due. 88.5 percent of the postmasters opined that, the rates charged for the registered post was moderate.

56.6 percent of the postmasters reported that safety was the main reason for the preference of postal services by the customers. 65.5 percent of the postmasters opined that ‘evidence for delivery’ was the prime reason to prefer the certificate of posting.

61 percent of the postmasters said the delivery of money orders was not in time. Non-availability of receiver (68.03 percent), closing of doors (31.15 percent) and remote area (0.82 percent) were the reasons for not delivering the money orders in time. 70.5 percent of the post masters said that, money orders were mostly used by the students. 93 percent of the postmasters received many complaints regarding the delay in delivering money orders.

Majority of the postmasters took serious action towards the complaints such as warning the postmen (44.6 percent), informing to SPOs (48.9 percent) and changing the work place (6.5 percent). 87.5 percent of the postmasters opined that the commission charges for money orders were very cheap and it was normal for postal orders as specified by 98 percent of them.
94.5 percent of the postmasters felt that 10.00am to 7.00pm was the preferred working time for the speed post. 82 percent of the postmasters expressed that, less than 500 customers on any day used speed post services. Quick delivery (44.5 percent) and extra booking hours (39 percent) were the major reasons for availing of the speed post services by the customers.

73.5 percent of the postmasters sent circulars to institutions for advertising speed posts. 82 percent of them gave first rank for 'Increasing working hours’ in the promotion of speed post services.

All the postmasters pointed out that wrong addresses and closing of doors were the main reasons for not delivering the post cards and inland cards. Informing through phone call was followed in the case of undelivered book posts and speed post services and returning to the sender was the quite common measure adopted by almost all the postmasters towards the undelivered articles.

53 percent of the postmasters seized the prohibited items while sending mails. Majority of the respondents expressed their dissatisfaction on the money order service (61.5 percent) and 50 percent of the respondents were highly satisfied with the post card services.

Hypothesis

H₀: There is no association between Number of Customers served per day and the Location of Post Office, Working Hours and the Advantage of Urban Location

- There is significant association between number of customers served per day and the location of post office and working hours. Hence, the hypothesis was rejected in these cases. The hypothesis is accepted with regard to the advantage of the urban location.
\( H_0: \) The number of customers served does not differ based on location of the post office.

- There is significant difference between the location of the urban post offices in the average number of customers using the ordinary post card, competition post card and acknowledgement card. **Hence, the hypothesis is rejected in this case.** There is no significant difference between the rural and urban post offices in the average number of customers using business reply cards and printed post cards. **Hence, the hypothesis is accepted.**

\( H_0: \) There is no Significant Association between the location of the post office and the selected variables

- The chi square test reveals that there is significant association between the location of the post office and the minimum number of letters delivered by the post man. **Hence, the hypothesis is rejected.**

- There is no significant association between the location of the post office and the selected variables like rate of penalties charged for unstamped letters, franking machine availability, charges for the registered posts, class of persons using MO services, money order delivered in time and complaints regarding MO. **Hence, the hypothesis is accepted.**

\( H_0: \) Opinion score on commission charges does not vary significantly among groups of respondents of various demographic factors.

- It is proved that there is significant difference among the respondents of groups of demographic characteristics except monthly salary. **The hypothesis is rejected for demographic factors namely gender, education, location of post office and years of experience and it is accepted in the case of monthly salary.**
H₀: Opinion score on satisfaction on the postal services does not vary significantly among groups of respondents of various demographic factors.

- It is proved that there is significant difference in the satisfaction score among different groups of education, location of the post office and years of experience. **Hence, the hypothesis is rejected.** There is no significant difference in the satisfaction score among different groups of gender and monthly salary. **Hence, the hypothesis is accepted.**

7.17 **OPINION OF POSTMEN / POSTAL WOMEN IN MARKETING OF POSTAL SERVICES**

While analyzing the demographic profile of the postmen, 83.5 percent of them were male.

- 41 percent of the postmen were in the age group of 36-45 years. 38 percent of them had higher secondary school education while 39 percent of them had completed UG Degree. 65.5 percent of the postmen and women were permanent employees. 40 percent earned a monthly income between ₹5,000-10,000. Most of the postmen (30 percent) had below 5 years of experience.

- 43 percent of the postmen occupied the cadre of GDS-MD. Majority of the GDS-MD cadre (97.6 percent) were selected on the basis of compassionate ground. 43 percent of the GDS-MD cadres of postal employees were selected through personal interviews.

- In the urban area, 97.5 percent of the postmen/postal women were selected through examination. 97.1 percent of the BCR postmen / postal women cadre were appointed by experience.

- 78 percent of the postmen / postal women availed training for a period of above 20 days. At the same time, 75.5 percent of the respondents did not attend any training in the BCR cadre. 47.5 percent of the employees availed customer relationship training and 36 percent of them availed computer based training.
In the GDS-MD cadre 57.5 percent of the employees worked between 6 - 7 hours per day. In the urban postmen cadre, 43.5 percent of the employees worked between 7-8 hours per day. In the BCR cadre, 49.5 percent of the employees worked between 6-7 hours per day.

54.5 percent of the postmen covered a distance between 3-5 kms in a day whereas 26 percent of them covered a distance between 1-3 kms. 52 percent of employees used two wheelers for delivery of mails. 40 percent of the postmen served more than 200 customers in a day.

45.5 percent of the respondents followed friendly approach towards the customers. 29.5 percent of the postmen / postal women made phone calls to the customers for undelivered envelope.

77.5 percent of the postmen / postal women were highly satisfied with regard to salary followed by 49 percent (pension) and 58.5 percent (leave pay) where as 60 percent of the postmen / postal women were satisfied with Gratuity followed by 70.5 percent (bonus) and 69 percent (other allowances). Finally 45.5 percent of the postal women were neutral with regard to medical allowances.

Majority of the employees expressed their satisfaction in the case of working hours (55 percent) and sorting boxes (67.5 percent). 49 percent of them were neutral with the infrastructure facilities and 42 percent of them were dissatisfied with regard to area covered.

32 percent of the postal employees expressed that suggestion box was mainly used to redress the grievances of customers. 25 percent of them reported that letter to SPOs and customer’s meet (23.5 percent) were the other modes of redressal.

49.5 percent of the postmen revealed that advertisement was needed to attract more customers and they gave first rank for it. 44.5 percent of them gave first rank for the news paper advertisements and 37 percent of them preferred TV advertisements (second rank).

86 percent of them availed tour facility and also among the tour beneficiaries, 50.6 percent of them had gone on tour once in 3 years. 36.5 percent of the postmen emphasized the need for innovations in postal services.
Hypothesis

H₀: There is no significant Association between number of customers served per day and the demographic profile of the postmen.

- There is significant association between number of customers served per day and the age, education and income. **Hence, the hypothesis is rejected in these cases.** There is no significant association found between basis of appointment, service and grades held by the postmen and therefore the hypothesis is accepted.

H₀: There is no significant association between opinion about postal services and the demographic profile of the postmen.

- Significant association is found between the opinion on the postal services and the basis of appointment and service. **Hence, the hypothesis is rejected in these cases.** There is no significant association between the opinion on the postal services and the selected demographic factors such as gender, age, education, income and grades held by the postmen and therefore the hypothesis is accepted.

H₀: Opinion score on satisfaction on salary does not vary significantly based on the demographic factors of the postmen.

- Significant difference is found in the satisfaction score on salary based on literacy and hours worked per day. **Hence, the hypothesis is rejected** whereas there is no significant difference in the satisfaction scores on salary among the groups of other selected demographic factors namely gender, age, income, basis of appointment, grades held and area covered. **Hence, the hypothesis is accepted.**

H₀: Opinion score on job satisfaction does not vary significantly based on the demographic factors of the postmen.

- There is significant difference in the job satisfaction scores of the postmen based on income, literacy and the basis of appointment. **Hence, the hypothesis is rejected.** Significant difference is not found in the job satisfaction score based on other demographic variables namely gender, age, grades held, hours worked per day and the area covered. **Hence, the hypothesis is accepted.**
CUSTOMERS' ATTITUDE TOWARDS POSTAL SERVICES

While analyzing demographic profile of the customers, 62 percent of the customers who availed postal services were male. 72 percent of the customers belong to the age group of 25-35 years who were the active beneficiaries of the postal services. 52.8 percent of the educated customers had more access to the postal services.

42.8 percent of the business men mainly preferred postal services for promoting the business. 42.3 percent of the respondents highly preferred the post card service, followed by book post (49.8 percent), Registered post (56.8 percent), money orders (47 percent) and speed post (69.3 percent). Among the services, most of the customers (69.3 percent) highly preferred the Speed Post services.

51.7 percent of the customers belonged to urban areas and 48.3 percent of them were living in rural areas. 62.7 percent of the customers preferred to visit during the forenoon. Among these respondents (251), 66.1 percent of them wished to visit between 10.am-12.00 noon.

72.8 percent of the respondents needed the late evening services. 35.4 percent of the respondents preferred the time from 6pm to 7pm for the visit to the post office in late evening. 49 percent of the customers had given high level of preference to the ordinary post card followed by Acknowledgement post card (47 percent). 49.8 percent of them had expressed moderate level of preference for the competition post cards followed by business reply cards (39.5 percent), printed post cards (39.5 percent) and other post cards (41.5 percent).

68.8 percent of the respondents opined that speed post charges were very high in post offices, followed by registered post (49.3 percent). The commission charges for money order were high as felt by 47.3 percent of the customers. 44.5 percent of the respondents expressed that safety was the prime reason for preferring money orders than bank cheques. 38.5 percent of the customers availed the postal services in the time duration between 15 minutes and 30 minutes.
71 percent of the customers indicated the absence of basic infrastructure facilities in their respective post offices. 23.7 percent of the respondents needed fast services. 19.3 percent of them insisted on the need for the use of computers. 72.3 percent of the respondents highly preferred the location of Post Offices at the center of the town. 38.8 percent of the respondents were highly satisfied with the services during Diwali seasons. The customers were satisfied with the services of Post Offices during the festival seasons such as Pongal (41.3 percent), New Year (37.5 percent), Christmas (41.8 percent) and Ramzan (39 percent).

45.8 of the customers were satisfied with the fixation of postal charges on the basis of weight, followed by value (46 percent) and distance (43 percent). 46 percent of the customers expressed their high level of satisfaction for the proper response by the Post Offices against the postal delays.

69.8 percent of the customers had the interruptions at the time of lodging complaints in the Post Offices. 41.2 percent of the respondents and 45.2 percent of them had high level and moderate level of satisfaction respectively with regard to the cordial relationship maintained by the employees of the post office.

49.5 percent of the customers seek the redressal through the suggestion box followed by Complaints Register used by 30.2 percent of the customers as a redressal mechanism. 75.5 percent of the respondents had availed the grievances redressed within 10 days followed by letters lost (53.3 percent), Delay in getting money order (61 percent) enquiries (53 percent) and poor services (47.8 percent).

65.8 percent of the customers insisted the need for advertisement for the postal services. Creating awareness, attracting more business and increased satisfaction necessitated the need for advertisements which recorded 21.5 percent, 29.7 percent and 30.3 percent respectively.
Television was the prime choice of customers which constituted 32.3 percent followed by Newspaper (28 percent) and FM Radio (15.2 percent). Safety (62 percent) and promptness (46.8 percent) were considered to be the reasons for preferring speed post. 57.3 percent of the customers satisfied with the working hours. 25.3 percent of them had higher level of satisfaction with the working hours.

53 percent of them viewed that the collection and sorting can be done at the selected post offices. 26.3 percent of the customers strongly agreed to reduce the holidays and to follow regular delivery even during the holidays.

57.3 percent of the customers agreed on the need for the introduction of novel schemes in post offices. 37 percent of the customers strongly agreed on the need to provide modernized facilities in post offices. 23.8 percent of them expected further new innovations and more Government assistance (26 percent).

30.3 percent of the respondents strongly agreed on the need for late night services. 44 percent of the customers agreed that late night services, short distance (47 percent), door-to-door pickup (46.5 percent), lesser advertisement (43.8 percent) and credit facility (40.5 percent) were the other services which attracted them. 29.8 percent of them disagreed that the postal services were costly.

Hypothesis

H₀: There is no significant association between visit to post office and the demographic Profile of the customers

- Significant association is not found between visit to Post Office and the age, income, occupation and location. So, the Null hypothesis is accepted in these cases. The hypothesis is rejected with regard to gender and the literacy level of the respondents.
$H_0$: There is no association between late evening services and Demographic Profile of the Customers.

- Significant association is found between the preference towards late evening services and gender. Therefore, the hypothesis is rejected. The hypothesis is accepted in the case of age, income, literacy, occupation and location.

$H_0$: Opinion score on rates charged does not vary significantly based on the demographic profile of the customers.

- There is a significant difference in the overall score on rates charged based on income and occupation of the respondents. Therefore, the hypothesis is rejected in these cases. However significant difference is not found in the overall scores on rates charged based on gender, age, literacy and location of the respondents. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted in the case of gender, age, literacy and location of the respondents.

$H_0$: Opinion score on festival services does not vary significantly based on the Demographic Profile of the Customers.

- Significant difference is found in the overall scores on festival services based on occupation and therefore the hypothesis is rejected. Significant difference is not found in the overall score on festival services based on other demographic factors namely gender, age, income, literacy and location of the respondents. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted.

$H_0$: Opinion score on postal charges does not vary significantly based on the Demographic Profile of the Customers.

- Highly significant difference is found in the overall scores on postal charges among occupation groups and among the location of customers. Therefore the hypothesis is rejected. Significant difference is not found in the overall scores on the postal charges among the demographic factors namely gender, age, income and literacy level of the respondents. Therefore, the null hypothesis ($H_0$) is accepted.
H₀: Opinion score on complaints does not vary significantly based on the
demographic profile of the customers.

- There is no significant difference in the overall scores on the complaints
  among the groups of demographic factors namely gender, age, income,
literacy, occupation and location. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H₀) is
  accepted.

H₀: Opinion score on postal services does not vary significantly based on the
demographic profile of the customers.

- There is significant difference in the overall scores on postal services
  among different groups of demographic factors namely literacy,
  occupation and location of the respondents. Therefore the hypothesis is
  rejected. Significant difference is not found in the overall scores on the
  postal services based on other demographic factors namely gender, age,
  and income of the respondents. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H₀) is
  accepted.

H₀: There is no association between the need for advertisement to the postal
services and the Demographic Profile of the Customers

- Significant association was found between the need for advertisement to
  the postal services and the literacy and location of the respondents and
  therefore, the hypothesis is rejected with regard to these variables.

- The rest of the demographic factors viz. gender, age, income and
  occupation did not have the association with the need for advertisement to
  the postal services. Therefore, the Null hypothesis (H₀) is accepted.
7.19 SUGGESTIONS

The following are some of the suggestions based on the results:

➢ Any institution will not be able to function effectively if required minimum man-power is not available. At present, in the postal department, dearth of man power is great. This condition should be corrected by appointing suitable qualified persons.

➢ The rural postal employees who are referred to as GDS-MD are paid very poor salary. Moreover, they are all working on temporary basis. It is common knowledge that temporary appointment will create a sort of inhibition in the minds of the employees who are always possessed of a sense of dissatisfaction. A government should always think of a welfare state and therefore appoint personnel on permanent basis. This will enable the people to work with full involvement.

➢ Sorting of mails, at present, is done manually. In countries like US, this process is made very easy and fast by the use of automatic machines. This practice can be followed in our country also which will contribute to speedy delivery of mails.

➢ A post-man now daily covers an area of 21.21 square K.M. Which is indeed a large area and it does not ensure fast and proper delivery. The area to be covered by a postman should be reduced.

➢ A common man in India is not aware of the various services made available by the postal department. His knowledge in this respect is very limited. In order to create awareness about various beneficial services offered by the post-offices, exhibitions may be conducted and wide propaganda can be made.

➢ At percent, mostly, post offices have uniform working hours, say from 9 AM to 5 PM. Outside these hours, the common man is not able to utilize the postal services. If post offices situated in a town have different working hours in such a way that Postal services are available from 6AM to 10 PM, all section of the people viz., office goers, agriculturists, business men, house-wives etc could easily fulfill their postal needs.
The organizational set up of the Department of Posts has to be restructured. The restructuring is designed to tackle the transitional problems of change giving due importance to the co-ordinating and monitoring role of the higher management. Steps have to be taken to substitute the traditional pyramidal system with a desk system to support the management.

Department of posts at present is having deficits in its financial accounts owing to high level of operational cost. The high levels of expenditure outweigh the revenue earned from various sources. It is suggested that, to achieve self-sufficiency through alternative/new means of raising revenue and pruning of cost through induction of technology and skill upgradation of the workforce.

Advertisement about the postal products is very limited. At present, courier services provide more number of advertisements in mass Media and websites. Advertisement is a silent way of sales promotion. It is suggested that, advertisement about postal products should be given in Media and websites. It helps to increase the revenue of Department of post.

The customer should be considered the most valuable element in the business plan for individual postal products. Ensuring timely and quality service to the customers is the pre-requisite for retaining the present market share of the India Post. For this, certain service standards have to be fixed and monitoring of delivery has to be ensured. Networked hand-held digital devices could be developed to be carried by Postmen/Postal staff to enable not only delivery of articles and intimation of their status in real time, but also for booking of articles. A policy of allotting exclusive pin codes to bulk mailers could also be followed which will increase the customer base in addition to cutting cost for Department of post.

In rural areas, Post Card Services, Inland Letter Services, Book Post, Registered Post, Money order services are very familiar. But Speed Post services are not familiar. In the study area, speed post services are only available at urban centers. It is suggested that, speed post services would also be given in the rural areas. It will help to increase the revenues for Department of post.
The customers particularly the large corporate ones prefer innovative products and customized services. For this, India post should develop market research centers, innovation centers, etc. for carrying out academic research and for creation of a knowledge bank, for developing a market intelligence system to increase brand visibility become media savvy including preparation of a media plan, to attract customers to the Post Offices through promotional offers and incentives.

Prices also need to be fixed on market considerations. This would require estimates of demand functions together with demand elasticity’s. Regular market surveys to have a good idea of market structure and market share of competitors for the different products and services may be required. Differential pricing may also be resorted to especially with lower tariffs for local metros and big urban areas, as is being offered by the competitors. This is also because factors like postal density and other variables such as grouping index (vertical concentration of houses) reduce the cost of delivery substantially. Access pricing as an option for offering the last mile segment to its competitors can also be considered, as this can bring in substantial additional revenue to the Postal Department.

Survival of an organization in a competitive environment requires a level playing field. This kind of level playing field is lacking in case of India Post. It is having a Universal Service Obligation (USO) burden which is not being shared by other private service providers. There may be a case for setting up a USO Fund, as has been done in the telecommunication sector. In the interest of long term sustainability of any solution, there could be a need for an independent agency which would decide on the cost of USO and the amount of USO fund for financing the USO. All these are issues of vital concern which may have to be addressed through legislative enactments.
7.20 SCOPE FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

- There is a wide scope for research in other regions of the postal circles in Tamil Nadu as well as other states.
- Financial services alone may be considered for the purpose of separate and independent research.
- Employee's welfare and quality of life is yet another area of research in the postal department.
- Research may be undertaken to identify new and innovative, premium and value added services which may attract the customers through which the revenue of the postal department may be improved.

7.21 CONCLUSION

The study found that, for India Post, there is no alternative than to leverage its infrastructure, trust and related services into a much larger role in e-commerce and e-government. To be successful in Competition with other (private) competitors, it must be ready to offer high-quality IT-related services. More awareness must be created among the people about the schemes introduced and the reach of the schemes must be checked. This will also represent a significant growth opportunity for India Post beyond its current business base. Technology will continue to remain a key driver of its business practices across the country. Its postal value proposition will be stronger with appropriate institutional structures and partnerships with technology companies.