



A STUDY ON CUSTOMERS' PRIORITIES TOWARDS SERVICE QUALITY DIMENSION IN TAMIL NADU TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT AT SALEM DISTRICT BY USING HENRY GARRETT RANKING METHOD

V.Jeyagowri* Dr.M.Latha Natarajan** Dr.M.Gurusamy***

*Ph.D Research Scholar In Management, Research And Development Centre, Bharathiar University, Coimbatore .

**Professor and Head, Department of MBA, Vivekanandha College of Engineering For Women, Thiruchengode.

***Associate Professor, Department of Management Studies, Paavai Engineering College (Autonomous), Pachal, Namakkal .

Abstract

Motor Vehicles Department is one of the most important departments which provide different services to various stakeholders of different age groups. A driving license is a special document which is required in order to enable a person to drive a motor vehicle on roads. It is one of the most coveted documents to be possessed by a person. Many times, it is the first interface of a common person with the government. Motor vehicle is today a symbol of upward mobility of a citizen and therefore every citizen desires to have a driving license at the earliest. Motor Vehicle Department is entrusted with the task of monitoring of Motor vehicles and drivers; and taking road safety initiatives in the country. The department carries out its mandate with the help of the Regional Transport Offices (RTOs) spread across the State. With the growth in the economy and rising social standards, the demand for vehicles and mobility has grown manifold. Firstly, author understood the functioning of department from secondary sources like website and publications. Foremost part of research took place through primary sources. For this, author personally visited the RTO offices in Salem District multiple times. During these visits, observation and interview techniques were used. Undisguised observation was followed at all the places of service encounters. Author interviewed all types of stakeholders involved at Salem District. Based on the observation and discussion held during interviews, article was prepared. The stratified random sampling method has used in this study. The sample size of the study is 110. The Henry Garrett Ranking method is used to analysis of data. The collected data were analysed by using Microsoft Excel 2016 for data input and analysis. The tangibility is attracted, preferred by the greater part of the customers than other dimensions of service quality in Tamil Nadu Transport Department at Salem District. Therefore, this department should give more importance to improve the Tangibility such as physical facilities, equipment and appearance of employees.

Key Words: *Tangibility, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance, Empathy.*

Introduction

Motor Vehicles Department is one of the most important departments which provide different services to various stakeholders of different age groups. A driving license is a special document which is required in order to enable a person to drive a motor vehicle on roads. It is one of the most coveted documents to be possessed by a person. Many times, it is the first interface of a common person with the government. Motor vehicle is today a symbol of upward mobility of a citizen and therefore every citizen desires to have a driving license at the earliest. Many people, in order to get a livelihood, are engaged in driving of transport vehicles, tourist's vehicles, and other such vehicles used for ferrying goods and passengers, and for them it is an essential qualification in order to get job. For a normal citizen, also, driving license is mandatory document as per the regulation. Therefore, number of people visiting RTOs is extremely large.

As per law, a driving license can only be issued by the Licensing Authority having jurisdiction over a particular territory. Normally, this authority is given to a Regional Transport Officer and through a network of Regional Transport Offices; this task is carried out by the Government. A citizen needs to fulfill the following in order to have a driving license:

- a) Be eligible to hold a driving license in terms of age and qualification;
- b) Produce necessary documents to supplement his/her claim of eligibility;
- c) Pay requisite fee; and
- d) Pass through tests mandated by law in order to prove knowledge and skills required for driving.

A citizen earlier spent considerable amount of time and money to get licence. This project acquired added significance as sizeable number of people visited RTO to get licence. The aim of the project was to make the entire process convenient, transparent and more efficient. The whole process was re-engineered keeping citizens at the centre.

Review of Literature

Ahmedabad district regional transport office (RTO) launches a helpline for the applicants on trial bases and have received good response. The helpline will be a permanent feature and it will answer queries on vehicle registrations, learner's license, upgrading of learner's license among others. "So far, about 21,000 people have called upon the number since launch June



2012. This dial-up facility is available round the clock, with at least 700 calls a day from across the country. People may not come all the way to the RTO office to just get a learner's licence or for information about documents required for procedures. Our toll-free number has an answer for all the queries," said Jyotish Bhatt, Ahmedabad RTO. The initiative comes as an attempt to ease the work of people at the RTO, particularly those coming from rural areas for a bit of information or to get a learner's licence. "At times, people would come to the office with simple queries from far-off places. But about 70% of our customers have benefited from this helpline," Bhatt said. The initiative has reduced the crowd in the office now, he added. The call center has been set up near Subhash Bridge.

In what will definitely bring cheer to customers, Ahmedabad regional transport office (RTO) has decided to renew licences as well as issue duplicate ones online from September 2012. An estimated 500 persons visit the RTO office in the city daily for various reasons. This created chaos in the vicinity and also forces people to put aside important. Moreover, the RTO office is usually swamped with agents who help customers to get their task done for a certain fee. This breeds corruption in the organisation. RTO officer, JM Bhatt, said the latest move is a step towards making the RTO man less and cashless, which will prevent unnecessary crowding and check malpractices to a large extent. "We are going to start offering duplicate licences and renew licences online beginning September," Bhatt confirmed. Earlier, RTO launched a website, www.sarathi.nic.in, to offer learner's licences, confirmed licences, registrations and other procedures associated with maintaining a personal automobile online. This step succeeded in reducing the number of people visiting the RTO office to a certain extent. Still, people needed to come in person to get their licence renewed or get a duplicate one. In another step, RTO authorities formed a team of ten officers to upload data on the server. RTO has also launched a call centre which can be accessed by people by dialling a toll-free number. It works 24x7 and provides all information related to the functioning and services RTO has to offer. A sitting area too is being developed for those who visit the RTO office to get a learner's licence.

After introducing a systematic approach for registration of vehicles, Regional Transport Office (RTO) of Ahmedabad has made online registration compulsory for a new driving licence. After this step, an automated date will be generated when you will be required at the RTO for further procedure. This system, that came into effect from July 1, will also apply to renewal and issue of duplicate driving licences as well. "We want to modernise the existing system, and at the same time, not waste time and money of the people. This new method of functioning will speed up operations at the RTO and reduce corruption by way of agents too," said RTO officer, JM Bhatt. Prior to this development, one could simply walk into the RTO and apply for a driving licence, which no longer will be the case. RTO had earlier tested this online system as a pilot project in issue of learner's driving licence, but it wasn't obligatory. This was a positive step forward as it is mostly youngsters who apply for this legal document for driving. They being well-versed with computers ensured 60% success rate for the RTO in six months of implementing this system. Buoyed by this success, RTO has now gone the online way in all of its activities. The system initially will be implemented in the two RTOs of Ahmedabad, followed by other transport offices in Gujarat. In addition, 18 windows at the RTO will curtail queues. A call centre to address consumer issues will further reduce burden on RTO employees.

RTO Ahmedabad (Subhash bridge and Vastral) and Gandhinagar have launched online appointment system for learning driving license from March 2012 onwards. As per the new system, an applicant would have to first take online appointment and then only he/she would have to turn up at the RTO office. Thanks to the new system, an applicant will face lesser waiting period at the RTO office, which could be just around 15 minutes in most of the cases. According to RTO official Shri Jyotish Bhatt, the <http://sarathi.nic.in> website will have online form in which a slot of date and hour will be mentioned. The applicant will have to fill suitable time and date and submit a form. The available period for appointment will be in range of two months. Shri Bhatt said that per hour 100 persons get learning license. Many of applicants come to the RTO office early in the morning and sit in queue. They also have to take token. But under the online appointment system, the applicant will be able to come to RTO office during 11.00 am and 2.00 pm. Those having appointment will immediately allow to enter the office and will be given license within 15 minutes. The RTO office has capacity to issue 270 license per hour. It should be mentioned that online appointment system is only for learning license at this time. However, based on this experience, in future the renewal, duplicate and other tasks can also be put under this system. The online appointment system will be implemented in all RTO offices of Gujarat in phase manner. Presently License and RC books are sent to applicant's address through speed-post, but in many cases when there's no one available at applicant's address at the time of delivery, there's an issue. The RTO office has not launched SMS system to counter this problem. Now onwards an applicant will have to write his/her mobile number in form no.1. He/she would be notified about delivery of speed post in advance through SMS.

Need for the Study

Motor Vehicle Department is entrusted with the task of monitoring of Motor vehicles and drivers; and taking road safety initiatives in the country. The department carries out its mandate with the help of the Regional Transport Offices (RTOs)



spread across the State. With the growth in the economy and rising social standards, the demand for vehicles and mobility has grown manifold. The last decade has particularly witnessed a heavy growth in both number of vehicles and drivers.

About 60 lakh people visit RTO Offices per year (figures of the year 2010-2011) for various purposes as stated above. The RTO is one of the front-line offices of the Government having a huge public interface particularly for the young people who visit Government office for the first time. These applicants were served on first come first serve basis every day from 10 am to 7 pm. To save time, the first-time applicants used to stand in queue every day from 7 am itself so that they could avail services at earliest.

To serve more than 600 to 1000 applicants standing in queue, employees (including male and female of different age groups) had to stay up to 7 and 8 pm almost every day. Still, both public and employees faced lot of harassment. Public agony was frequently reported in media. Due to extreme weather and extensive fatigue, every week, some young boys and girls used to faint while standing in queue and therefore emergency ambulance of EMRI - 108 needed to be called. Arguments and skirmishes between staff were order of the day. This situation resulted in emergence of a large number of touts. In order to service such a large number of people effectively while maintaining service standards, it is an important to know that the Customers' Priorities towards Service Quality Dimension in Tamil Nadu Transport Department at Salem District.

Services Offered in Regional Transport Office

The Regional Transport Office (RTO) is very wide and covers all aspects of process of issuing driving licence through an integrated IT platform. The RTO encompasses different processes of driving licence as mentioned below:

1. Learners licence
2. New Driving Licence
3. Renewal of Driving Licence
4. Addition to a category of Driving Licence
5. Duplicate or change of details in a Driving Licence
6. International Driving Permit

All above processes concerning issue of driving licence include receipt of application with attached documents, collection of fee, test and dispatch of licence to the applicant.

Objectives of the Study

To know the Customers' Priorities towards Service Quality Dimension in Tamil Nadu Transport Department at Salem District.

Scope of the Study

This study is very valuable for identifying the Customers' Priorities towards Service Quality Dimension in Tamil Nadu Transport Department. It may supportive to develop new policies and expand the service quality in Tamil Nadu Transport Department.

Limitation of the Study

The research was conducted only in Salem District, therefore to generalize the results for the entire transport department may not be possible.

Research Methodology

Firstly, author understood the functioning of department from secondary sources like website and publications. Foremost part of research took place through primary sources. For this, author personally visited the RTO offices in Salem District multiple times. During these visits, observation and interview techniques were used. Undisguised observation was followed at all the places of service encounters. Author interviewed all types of stakeholders involved at Salem District. Based on the observation and discussion held during interviews, article was prepared. The stratified random sampling method has used in this study. The sample size of the study is 110. The Henry Garrett Ranking method is used to analysis of data. The collected data were analysed by using Microsoft Excel 2016 for data input and analysis.



Data Analysis and Interpretation

Table No.1: Henry Garrett Ranking Method - Customers' Priorities towards Service Quality Dimension in Tamil Nadu Transport Department at Salem District

Service Quality Dimension		Rank scale					Total	Total Score	Mean Score	Rank
		I	II	III	IV	V				
		75	60	50	40	24				
Tangibility	f	28	23	19	20	20	110	5710	51.91	I
	fx	2100	1380	950	800	480				
Reliability	f	15	21	35	29	10	110	5535	50.32	II
	fx	1125	1260	1750	1160	240				
Responsiveness	f	20	26	27	12	25	110	5490	49.91	IV
	fx	1500	1560	1350	480	600				
Assurance	f	24	25	9	26	26	110	5504	50.04	III
	fx	1800	1500	540	1040	624				
Empathy	f	23	15	20	23	29	110	5441	49.46	V
	fx	1725	900	1200	920	696				
Total f		110	110	110	110	110				

Note: x = Scale value, f = number of respondents, fx = score

The above Henry Garrett Ranking table reveals that Customers' Priorities towards Service Quality Dimension in Tamil Nadu Transport Department at Salem District that most of the customers are given high priority to the 'Tangibility' which had ranked with a Garrett score of 5710 points. It is followed by the 'Reliability', 'Assurance', and 'Responsiveness' was ranked second, third, and fourth ranks with Garrett scores of 5535, 5504, and 5490 points respectively. The last rank is placed for the 'Empathy' with a Garrett score of 5441 points.

Conclusion

This is very useful to identify that the tangibility is attracted, preferred by the greater part of the customers than other dimensions of service quality in Tamil Nadu Transport Department at Salem District. Therefore, this department should give more importance to improve the Tangibility such as physical facilities, equipment and appearance of employees.

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