Seminar Paper

On

Modernising Postal Savings Bank of Bangladesh Post Office: An Insight through the Clients' Attitudes

Submitted by

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Certificate

This is to certify that A. S. M. Fazlur Rahman, Project Director (Deputy Secretary), Ministry of Industries, bearing Roll number 131 of 126th Advanced Course on Administration and Development (ACAD) has prepared this seminar paper title on "Modernising Postal Savings Bank of Bangladesh Post Office: An Insight through Clients' Attitudes". He has done this seminar under my direct supervision for the partial fulfilment of the course. He has followed all my instructions during his work.

I wish him every success.

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List of Abbreviations

AI	: Artificial Intelligence
APM	: Assistant Post Master
BPO	: Bangladesh Post Office
DG	: Director General
DPMG	: Deputy Postmaster General
FD	: Fixed Deposit
FGD	: Focused Group Discussion
GM	: General Manager
GPO	: General Post Office
ICT	: Information Communication Technologies
IOT	: Internet of Things
IRD	: Internal Resource Division
KII	: Key Informant Interview
NBR	: National Board of Revenue
PO	: Postal Operator
PMG	: Postmaster General
PSB	; Postal Savings Bank
SDGs	: Sustainable Development Goals
SMS	: Short Message Service
UPU	: Universal Postal Unions

Modernising Postal Savings Bank of Bangladesh Post Office: An Insight through Clients' Attitudes

ABSTRACT

The Postal Savings Bank (PSB) is playing a significant role in creating small finance in Bangladesh. The Bangladesh Post Office (BPO) provides this service all over the country. The services of the PSB have not yet been modernised on the basis of modern technology; rather, the services are being rendered manually. In this modern era, clients' attitudes play important role for improving and modernizing services. In case of modernizing the PSB, clients' attitudes also have significant role. Clients' attitudes have been explored in Dhaka General Post Office (GPO). The views of the Postal Authority have also been collected in GPO and Postal Directorate in Dhaka through KII method. The study found that lack of modern services, the clients of the PSB are suffering from different problems like wastage of time, waiting in the queue, lack of online and digital services and so on. The Postal Department has prepared software for computerising the PSB, but it is still to get the approval of Internal Resource Division (IRD). Moreover, there are some challenges for modernising the PSB. The clients gave many suggestions for improving and modernising the PSB. Further the study found that adopting modern technology, introducing online services and developing client- friendly attitudes should be considered for modernising the PSB.

Keywords: Modernising, Postal Savings Bank, BPO, Insight, Client, Attitude, Technology.

INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW

The Postal Savings Bank (PSB) refers to financial institution which is run through post offices. The PSB was initially established to promote thrift among the poor. The PSB was first established in Great Britain in 1861. Gradually, other countries started to deliver this service. The United States signed its Postal Savings System into law in 1910 and she offered this service from 1911 until July 1967. The PSB had an advantage over commercial banks because deposits were guaranteed by the full faith and credit of the United States government. Some other countries like Brazil, China, France, Germany, India, Israel, Ireland, Japan, Kenya, South Korea, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Taiwan and Vietnam are still rendering this service.

In Bangladesh, the services of the PSB are provided by Bangladesh Post Office (BPO). BPO is the official name of the Postal Department. BPO has started functioning on 20 December, 1971 just after the Liberation War in 1971. It is an attached Department of the Post and Telecommunications Division under the Ministry of Post, Telecommunications and Information Technology. BPO inherited from the then British India Post. The India Post was initially established as the prime component of the British Royal Post and started functioning scattered over the sub-continent in early 1851 when India was a colony under the British Empire. In Bangladesh, the PSB is one of the oldest institutions for mobilising microfinance. From the beginning till today, the functions of the PSB are being done in a traditional way.

Although the government declared Information Communication technology (ICT) policies and took various initiatives for making Bangladesh a digital country, the Postal Department is yet to take this opportunity to modernise the PSB. The present world is frequently changing and with this change, customer demands are changing time to time. Hence, the Postal Management should take necessary steps for modernisation and digitisation of the PSB. Due to the lacking of modern service providing system, the PSB clients are suffering from different problems. For example, they have to spend enough time and wait in the queue for an extended period for taking the services.

In this context, it is pertinent to know the attitudes of the PSB clients and at the same time the views of the Postal Authority about modernizing the PSB should be studied. It is worth noting that in modern era, the customer opinions are playing a very significant role for improving and modifying services. So, the opinions of the clients can be important guidelines and directives for modernizing the PSB. Businesses (Omar Marlo and others 2013) have much to do for investigating customer participation, which is defined as customers' constructive suggestions and sharing their ideas on how to modify product and services. So, the attitudes and opinions of the clients should be explored and reviewed in order to know what type of services they need and what they think about the modernisation and improvement of the PSB.

Literature related to the present study is limited and outdated. No wide-range study has been done in this field. From historical point of view, savings bank is an old deposit system.

(Kemmerer, 1917) discussed the beginning period of the PSB. He also discussed the demographic features of the depositors. (Sissman, 1936) and (Sissman, 1938) discussed the significance of the PSB during the late 1920's and early 1930's, including the change in relationship between postal and traditional banks in the early years of the Great Depression. (Schewe, 1971) discussed a wide-range historical background of the origin of the postal savings bank system and showed the trends of investment in this scheme for the service's lifetime. (O'Hara and Easley, 1979) highlighted the impact of postal savings on the savings and loan market around the Great Depression. They argue that postal savings banks hurt savings and loan institutions by removing funds from the standard banking system. They also show that states with low levels of re deposits of postal savings funds into local banks saw higher rates of bank failure.(Davidson and Ramirez, 2016) used postal savings banks as a measure of "money under the mattress" to test the effect of deposit insurance on depositor behavior. They show that postal savings deposits were higher in places without deposit insurance and that depositors gravitated towards postal savings banks after commercial bank failures.

(Shahidur, 2000) found that savings bank is a financial institution whose primary purpose is to encourage the deposit of money. Savings bank plays an important role in mobilising small savings or microfinance. Microfinance provides an alternative source of small savings. Microfinance is the means to increase household savings by providing an alternative facility for savings mobilisation from the poor. However, he did not discuss postal savings bank. (Yoshimu, Nasoyuki et al. eds. 2008) argued that postal departments play a significant role in case of microfinance globally. 'Post offices (or "posts") can play a leading role in advancing financial inclusion.' Postal institutions have historically been the largest financial inclusion in human history. However, he did not discuss postal savings bank in Bangladesh.

(M. Nawazish, 1994) has discussed the significance of Bangladesh Post Office in creating microfinance in Bangladesh. He said that the postal banking had been a household word from its creation and till today. The initial motive behind such a scheme was to encourage small savings in the remote areas where such a facility was unthinkable at that time. The modest banking gradually turned to engage in the service of millions around the country. However, he did not discuss client's attitudes about the post office savings bank. (Rahman, 1995) has discussed different functions of BPO. According to him, functions of post office may be classified broadly into two types, namely Statutory and Agency functions. Statutory services are the core services of the post office like letter service, parcel service, money order service and so on. Agency services are not the basic services of the post office. The Post office provides these types of services on certain commission like the post office savings bank, savings certificates, postal life insurance and so on. But he did not discuss customers' perception on savings bank's service. (Prabash Chandra Saha, 2016) has said about the types of postal savings bank accounts. He said that post office provides two types of accounts (1) Ordinary Savings Bank Account and (2) Fixed Deposit Account. In case of Ordinary Account, the yearly rate of profit is 7.50% and in case of Fixed Deposit Account, the profit rate is 11.28% after 3 years. But he did not discuss customers' views on post office savings bank's services.

The literatures reviewed above, did not discuss the modernising process and clients' attitudes to the modernisation of the PSB. These are partially related to the study. Hence, there is a knowledge gap here. As no research or study has been conducted in this field, an inquiry is required to explore the attitudes of the clients as well as the views of the Postal Authority about modernising the PSB. The present study is a qualitative one. The Focused Group Discussion (FGD) and the Key Informant Interview (KII) methods have been applied for data collection. Concise time did not allow collecting sufficient data. Further, an in-depth and intensive study of the problem has not been possible.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The Government of Bangladesh has declared ICT Policy 2009, 2015 and 2018 and undertook different programs for making Bangladesh a digital country and passed Digital Security Act 2018. Now customers want digital and technology-based quick services. The banks and other financial institutions provide services through modern technology and they provide online services also. But BPO is far legged behind in this respect. It cannot offer such type of services and fulfill the demands of its clients. BPO provides savings bank services manually all over the country. Moreover, the post offices are not well-equipped and the employees engaged in delivering services are not well-trained and well informed about modern technology.

The BPO is playing an essential role in creating microfinance in Bangladesh through its savings bank scheme. The PSB could emerge as a potential institute for financial business in Bangladesh. But its services are still being delivered traditionally. In this era of internet and technology, customers want modern technology-based services. As the BPO cannot provide such type of services, customers are not attractive to it; instead, they are facing various types of problems in taking the services of the PSB. Therefore, modernisation of the PSB is a must. Scientific research can provide inputs to the postal management for undertaking necessary initiatives for the modernisation of savings bank. As an integral part of the study, management views as well as clients' attitudes towards modernisation of the PSB are to be explored and analyzed.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this study are:

1. To identify existing problems facing the clients due to the lacking of modern services of Postal Savings Bank.

2. To identify the modern services which the clients are expecting today in the Postal Savings Bank.

3. To investigate the views of the Postal Authority about modernising Postal Savings Bank.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research questions of this paper are:

1. What are the problems facing the clients due to the lacking of modern servicesw of Postal Savings Bank today?

2. What are the modern services the clients expect in the Postal Savings Bank now?

3. What are the views of Postal Authority about modernising the Postal Savings Bank?

RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

The aim of the digital and ICT policies of the government is to provide digital and internet services at door steps of the people. All of the departments are taking initiatives for modernizing their services. The BPO is also taking steps for modernising its services. It has already introduced Mobile Money Order service, e-Commerce service, Postal Cash Card, Speed Post and 'Nagad' Services. It has also partially modernised its Savings Certificates scheme. However, the BPO did not modernise the services of the PSB. The services of the PSB are still provided manually which cannot fulfill the demands of the customers. In the age of technological innovations, customers' demands are increasing day by day. They need digital and online services. But they do not get such type of services; instead, they are facing different problems due to the lack of modernsation of the PSB. Therefore, the PSB should be modernised. In this perspective,the attitudes of the clients and the views of the Postal Authority about modernising the PSB are to be explored

Reviewed literature showed that none of the researchers or authors pointed out about the modernisation of postal savings bank and investigation of the clients' opinions in this regard. A systematic research can fill up this knowledge gap. The findings of this study can be important elements for future research in this area and it can guide the government to take necessary initiatives for the improvement and modernisation of the PSB.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Historically, the Postal Savings Bank is one of the oldest financial institutions in the world. Initially it was established for creating small deposits of the poor or low-income people. Gradually it became popular over the world. In Bangladesh, Bangladesh Post Office provides savings bank services on behalf of the Ministry of Finance on the basis of certain commission. The PSB was introduced in the colonial era. It was introduced under the Government Savings Bank Act of 1873. The object of the government in establishing PSB is to provide a ready means for the deposits of savings and so to encourage thrift. The PSB is not the basic service of the BPO; rather, it is an agency service. The PSB has some unique features which other banks have not. The interest rate of the PSB accounts is more than that of any other banks. The deductions of this bank are less than that of other banks. As levy, only 10% of the accrued interests are deducted which are deposited in favor of the National

Board of Revenue (NBR). Apart from this, no any charge for maintaining of accounts or customs duty is imposed. Therefore, the PSB is not like any other commercial banks. It is an especial type of bank for creating microcredit for the people.

In organizational set up of the BPO, the Director General is the head of the Department and four Additional Directors General assist him in executing the works. There are five Postal Circles and Postal Zones in the country. Each Circle is headed by one Postmaster General (PMG) and each Zone is headed by one General Manager (GM). The field –level execution is done by the Deputy Postmaster Generals (DPMG), Postmasters and Inspectors.

The word modernising comes from the word 'modern' which means to relate something with present and recent time; not ancient and remote time. Therefore, modernising means adapting something to modern needs by installing modern equipment or adopting modern ideas or methods. (Eisenstadt, Shmuel N 1966) observes that modernisation is the process of change towards those types of social, economic and political systems that have developed in Western Europe and North America from the seventeenth century to the nineteenth and have then spread to other European countries and in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to the South American, Asian, and African continents. (Mergel, 2012) observes that modernisation originated in the 1950s and it investigated the developmental logics of modern societies. Modernisation develops through various processes like political, economic, social, cultural and technological processes. Over the last century, technology has been playing a very crucial role in the transformation of the societies into modernity. (Mokgabu E P, 2005) observes that in case of adaptation, specifically the use of the Internet technology, technology seems to be a strong artefact for fast-tracking the modernization process.

On the other hand, clients' attitudes have a significant impact on the improvement of services. (Dr. Lars Perne,r 2010) says that consumer attitude is a composite of a consumer's beliefs, feelings, and behavioral intentions toward some object within the context of marketing. So, understanding clients attitudes can immensely help to modify, modernize and change the quality of a service. (Peter Gatheca, 2015) says that many service companies have woken up to the need of improving customer services to compete in today's highly competitive service environment in-order to attract and keep their customers satisfied.

The postal departments in developed and some under developed countries are adopting modern technology for improving their services and conducting survey on consumer attitudes for marketing and developing their services. Many organisations have invested a lot of time and energy into exploring the concept of 'stepping into the customers shoes'. But in many under developed countries, these are very rare phenomena. As an under developed country, Bangladesh is not exception to this. In Bangladesh, Bangladesh Post Office is introducing modern technology in its services slowly and in case of its savings bank service, it is still to introduce modern technology. As a result, the beneficiaries or the clients are depriving from the facilities of modern technology driven services which is not actually the spirit of Digital and ICT Policy of the government.

The Service Modernisation Cycle is an approach to improve or modernise the services. The Service Modernisation Cycle has different steps and these are: (1) orientation which provides a governing approach to automate business logic as distributed systems; (2) planning and engineering which mean to plan or design the projects or activities for service modernisation and automation; (3) procurement and delivery which involve finding, acquiring or buying goods, services and works and supply or provide them for starting the services; (4) installation and startup which refer to the action of installation or introduction of something in the services; (5) operation which means the action of functioning or the functions getting done practically and finally (6) modernization which is the digital transformation success of the services.

By applying the Service Modernisation Cycle, the services of the PSB could be improved, the clients wiould be attractive to it, the transactions of the savings would be increased and finally the revenue of the government would be boosted up.

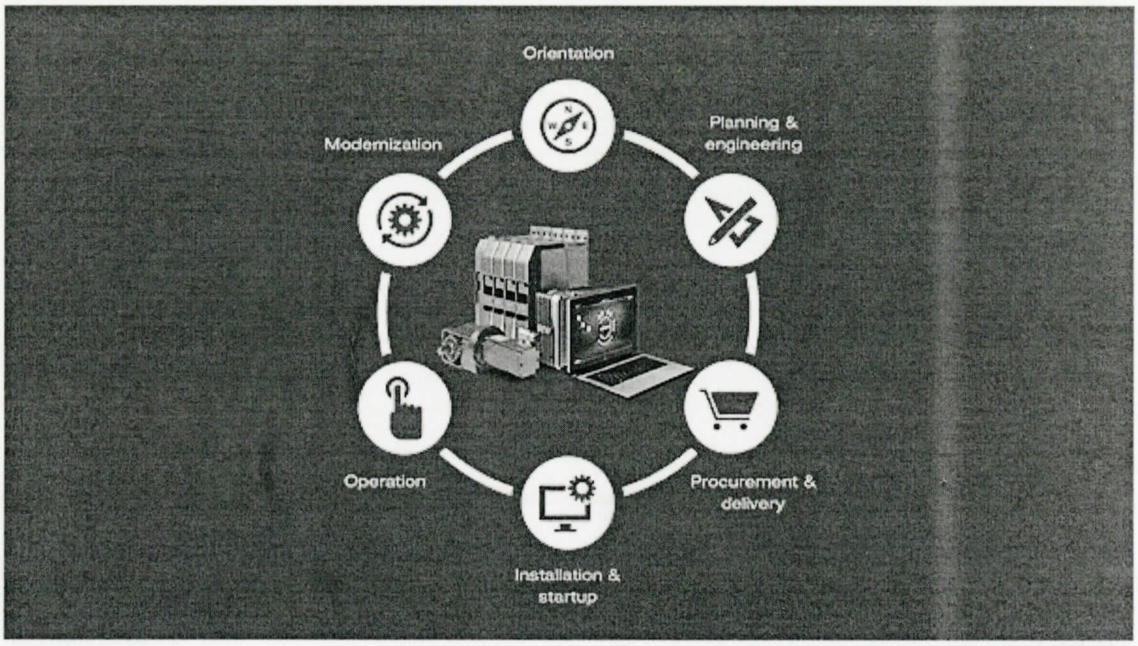

Figure 1: Service Modernisation Cycle

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

The study aimed at exploring the attitudes of the clients about the problems of non-modernisation of Postal Savings Bank and their suggestions for modernizing it. It also aimed at exploring the views of the Postal Management about it. The term 'modernisation' would here necessarily mean the absence of modernisation in the service of PSB. For data collection, purposive sampling was applied and data analysis followed the inductive or subjective method due to the nature of the study. Qualitative data were collected from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data have been collected from 12 clients in Dhaka General Post Office (GPO) through Focused Group Discussion (FGD) method. Further, the Key Informant Interview (KII) method has been applied for collecting opinions of 6 Postal officials who are seating now in the key positions for implementing the services of the PSB. In addition, the observation method has also been applied. Secondary data have been collected from related books, annual reports of Bangladesh Post Office, journals, periodicals, newspapers and internet.

The respondents for FGD were selected from the clients who were present in Dhaka GPO during data collection period. Dhaka GPO is the biggest postal operative office of Bangladesh Post Office. It was established in 1958. It is located in Dhaka, the capital of the country. Data of Dhaka GPO may be representing the conditions of all other post offices in the country. Further, the more educated and updated clients come to Dhaka GPO. Their opinions and attitudes immensely contribute to the modernisation of the PSB. With a view to get all necessary information, an unstructured questionnaire was taken in the form of discussions following a checklist. The interviews were noted down. Further, all data were collected from 18 to 20 August 2019. Data analysis followed some assumptions. Results of the study are presented in several subsections. Each of the subsections discusses the contribution of the information given by the respondents to proof of the assumption.

DATA ANALYSIS AND RSULTS

The PSB is a potential sector in Bangladesh. It mobilizes huge amount of investment for the government. The Figure-2 depicts the trend of investment for the last 5 years in both Ordinary and Fixed Deposit Accounts of the PSB (amount in crore taka).

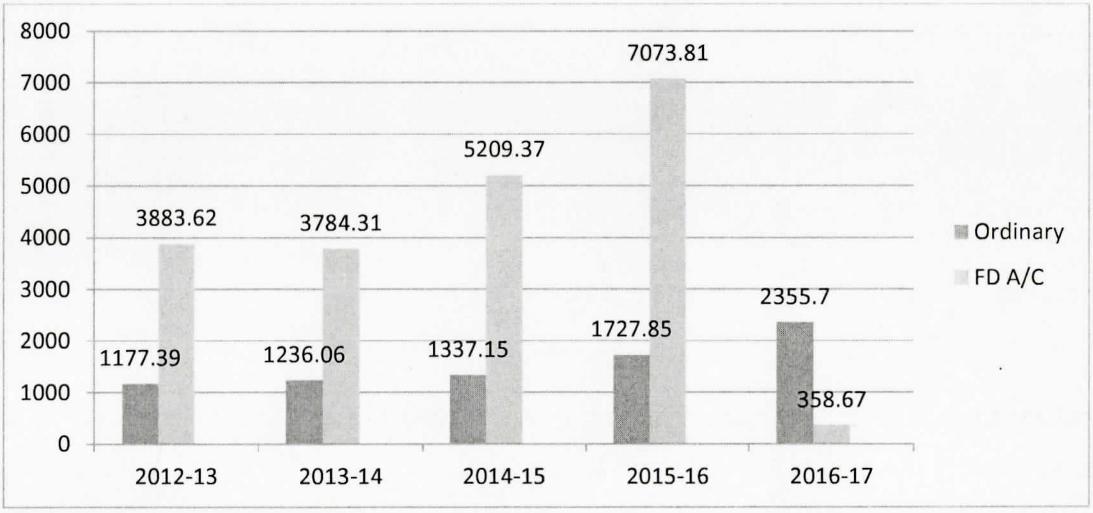

Figure 2: Investment in Ordinary & FD accounts of the PSB of the BPO for last 5years

Source: Annual Report 2016-17 of the BPO

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The Figure-2 shows that the investment in both Ordinary and fixed deposit accounts of the PSB of the BPO. The trend is up warding. However, though the trend of the FD account in 2016-17 is declining.

The PSB is a century-old financial scheme in the country. But from the beginning till now, its functions are being done manually. The present society is technology-driven modern society. People are enjoying the facilities of modernity based on technology and internet. The BPO is a service-oriented organisation. It has many customers especially, for its savings services. But the BPO did not modernise its PSB services still now. The survey conducted in Dhaka GPO aimed at exploring the problems facing the clients in taking services of the PSB, Identifying the modern services the clients are expecting today and investigating the views of Postal Authority about modernisation of the PSB.

Present Service Deliver System and the Problems Facing the Clients

The present service delivery system of the PSBis paper- based and it is not only the case of Dhaka GPO, it is the case of all of the post offices in the country. When a client of the PSB comes to the GPO, he collects first a prescribed deposit form (SB-8) from a counter and fills it up with necessary information. Then he waits in the queue and then he submits it in the respective counter along with passbook and money. The Postal Operator (PO) receives them and writes the amount of money in the passbook and sends them to respective branch for posting the amount in the ledger book and marking date stamp in the passbook. Then it is sent to the Postmaster (PM)/Assistant Postmaster (APM) for signature. After completing all of the activities, the passbook is sent back to the counter and the client collects it from counter.

In case of withdrawal of money, there are some more activities. The client comes to the GPO and collects first a prescribed withdrawal form (SB-7), which is also called warrant of payment. It is worth noting that there is no cheque book system for withdrawal of money from savings accounts. Then he fills it up and waits in the queue. Then he submits it along with passbook in the respective counter. The PO receives them and sends them to respective branches for verifying his signature preserved in the specimen book and verifying the balance posted in sthe ledger book. After getting all clearances, the form and passbook are sent to the PM/APM for signature. Then the amount of money withdrawn is noted in the passbook and ledger and sent it back to the counter .Then the client collects his passbook and money from the counter. So, the activities are very much time consuming.

During data collection, the respondents in Dhaka GPO raised many problems which they are facing today in case of taking services of the PSB. Their problems are analysed here.

Time Consuming: The present life is very fast and busy. The clients have no enough time to spend for getting a retailing service. Time is very valuable. But for the lacking of modernization of PSB, the clients have to waste their times for taking savings bank services. Most of the respondents say that they have to spend much more time to deposit or withdraw money in savings bank in Dhaka GPO.

Long Queue: The demands of the clients are very much high and they are increasing day by day; they need quick and speedy services. But GPO cannot provide such types of speedy services. The service delivery in Dhaka GPO is still being manually; there is no technology-based service delivery system. Further, the formal activities mentioned earlier, take more time. As a result, the clients have to wait for a long time. Sometimes, they have to stand in a long queue for a long time.

No Separate Counter for Female Clients: Another problem is that there is no any separate counter for female clients. So, both male and female clients have to stand in the same queue. Further, the number of counters is very less which also makes the service delivery delayed. One respondent says that *the number of counters is very few.* The counters are not well equipped and modern.

Lack of skilled Manpower: Skilled manpower is an asset for any organization. But Dhaka GPO is facing challenges of the shortage of manpower. The concerned employee of the GPO says that

The total sanctioned strength of manpower is 573 but at present, 315 employees including officers are working there. Most of the existing employees are not skilled, efficient and well-trained. Hence, they cannot provide services to the clients quickly and efficiently.

Lack of Sincerity of the staff: There is a lack of sincerity and cooperation among the employees who are assigned to deliver the services of the PSB. Since the employees are public employees and they are paid their salary from public exchequer, they don't want to care any body and expose bureaucratic attitudes toward the clients. Sometimes they are absent in their seats, gossiping and talking through mobile phones and sometimes they misbehave with the clients. During data collection time, one of the clients standing in the queue said that *sometimes some of the employees are not found in their respective chairs. As a result, people are in sufferings.*

Absence of Online Service: In this modern era, the banks and other financial organizations introduced online services through which clients get information about their services; they need not to go to the service spot for every case, rather, they get online services in their houses. But in the GPO, there is no online service system. So, the clients those who have PSB accounts in the GPO, they have to go to the GPO for every information. There is no scope to know the balance of the account, profit rate, maximum and minimum limit of deposit and withdrawal of money through online service. Hence, most of the respondents say that

there is no online service in GPO so that they cannot get online services even they cannot know about their existing account balance through Short Message Service (SMS).

Sanitation Problem: Huge number of clients comes to the GPO every day. They have to wait for long time in taking services. During this time, they need to use toilets and wash room. But there is no proper arrangement for sanitation. There are some toilets inside the GPO building but it is not easy for the clients to find out them. Further, there is no separate toilet system for the female customers.

Modern Services the Clients Expect today

During data collection, the respondents in Dhaka GPO said about many modern facilities which they are expecting today in case of taking services of the PSB. The expected facilities are analysed here.

Adaptation of Modern Technology: The respondents those who participated in FGD are found educated. Some of the respondents are Masters' degree holders. So, they have given a number of valuable suggestions for the improvement and modernization of the PSB. The societies are run by modern technology today. The Information Communication Technology (ICT), Internet of Things (IOT) and Artificial Intelligence (AI) are seriously influencing the societies. People want services through technological devices. For modernization of the PSB, technology must be adapted in service providing system. The present business world is more competitive than ever before. The customer service should be fresh and up to date on the latest convenience services and the best new products.

Without great customer service, customer acquisition and retention become difficult, nearly impossible. Most of the respondents suggest that *modern technology should be adapted in the Postal Department for providing the savings bank services quickly and smoothly.*

Digitally Preservation of Information: At present, all of the information about the clients and the accounts are preserved in the specimen and ledger books manually. This type of preservation has various risks. So, the information should be preserved in a digital manner; it should be stored in computers so that it can be more secured. Most of the respondents suggest *to preserve their personal information and account details in computers.* A digital preservation is the active safekeeping of digitally stored information. As a part of the formalized efforts of the PSB, digital preservation is more safe than that of existing practices.

Electronic Token Display System: As an alternative way to standing in the queue, the electronic token display system is to be arranged in the PSB. **Electronic** token display system is ideal for Banks and other such places where people have to wait in line for their turn. These systems allow customers to wait without having to stand in line, once their number is displayed then only will they have to get in line for their turn. So, they need not to stand in the line for a long time. Most of the respondents proposed *to introduce electronic token display system in front of the savings bank.*

Billboard for Displaying Information: A digital billboard for displaying all information of postal savings bank should be hanged in front of the PSB. A digital billboard is a large electronic display system entirely controlled by computer. Most of the respondents suggest *to set up a digital billboard for displaying information of postal savings bank like the rate of profit, maximum and minimum limit of deposit and withdraw, types of accounts, amount of deductions and so on.*

SMS Service: Short Message Service (SMS) is a very popular service now. Many banks and financial institutions use its facility to send message to clients' mobile phones by SMS messaging.

Whenever a transaction- deposit or withdraw- happens to clients' accounts, they are notified by SMS messaging. In addition, clients come to know their account balance by using this service. Therefore, most of the respondents suggest *for introducing SMS messaging service in the PSB service so that they can be easily informed about every transaction happened to their accounts and the balance as well.*

Client Friendly Attitudes: Client friendly is a term for services, products and experiences which are designed from the clients' point of view. Many organizations and firms adopted this strategy for improving their services. They think that what is good for the clients is good for the organization and make decisions from client perspective. One of the respondents suggests *for adopting client friendly attitudes for improving the PSB service in GPO.*

Increased number of Counters: The transaction of the savings bank happens through counters. But in the GPO, the number of counters in the PSB branch is limited. And it is one of the major reasons for time consuming and long queue in front of the counters. Further, the counters are not modern and well equipped. One of the respondents suggests *for increasing the number of counters so that the rush would be reduced and the service would be expedited.*

Views of the Postal Authority About Modernising the PSB

Opinions have been collected from Postal Authority about modernising the PSB. The key officers and employees of Dhaka GPO and Postal Directorate, who are seating in the key positions for running the PSB, gave their opinions. It is worth noting that GPO as well as all other post offices of the BPO cannot take any project for modernising their services. The activities for improving or modernizing postal service are undertaken by the Office of the Director General. Therefore, the officers of Dhaka GPO could not say anything about modernizing the PSB. One of the officers of Dhaka GPO said that

"We are not informed when and how the PSB of Dhaka GPO would be modernised; the activities and initiatives for modernization are taken by the Office the Director General."

It is informed from the Office of the Director General (DG) that the BPO has only computerised its savings certificate portion so far. But it could not begin to computerise and automat its savings bank services. One of the key respondents of the DG Office said that

they computerized Savings Certificates (Sanchaypatra) brabnch in 72 Head Post Offices including 4 GPOs and 20 Sub Post Offices in Dhaka City and 52 Upazila Post Offices outside of Dhaka City. But they could not yet computerize the PSB. He added that software has been *prepared for computerizing the PSB but they are still to get the approval of the Internal Resource Division (IRD).*

IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Digital Bangladesh program was launched in 2009. It aims at transforming Bangladesh into a country of digital economy by 2021 and a knowledge-based economy by 2041. The four pillars of Digital Bangladesh - Human Resource Development, Connecting Citizens, Digital Government, and Promotion of ICT Industry - are playing a central role in aiding this fantastic growth rate. The ICT policies have been declared. On the other side, the Universal Postal Union (UPU: 2017) has fixed 3 goals in the Istambul World Postal Strategy (2017-2020) for its all member countries including Bangladesh. The goal-2 states about ensuring sustainable and modern products by modernising and fully integrating the product portfolio and supporting remuneration systems, accelerating the development of e-commerce solutions, supporting the development of diverse products and services, and supporting trade facilitation through the postal network.

As the United Nations Specialized Agency in charge of the postal sector, the UPU will support its member countries in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Key activities of the UPU include the identification and analysis of the role of the postal network in implementing the SDGs, the integration of the SDG framework with UPU strategic planning, the involvement of member countries to assess postal sector relevance at country level, and the monitoring and evaluation of the impacts of the postal sector for SDG implementation. As a public department, BPO has the responsibility to comply with the aims of digital and ICT policies of the government and the SDGs and the UPU's goals of World Postal Strategy.

Therefore, the BPO has to modernise itself as well as its PSB service. In this respect, the BPO has to solve some challenges as noted below:

1) Financial challenges: In order to modernize the PSB, modern technologies are to be installed and infrastructural renovation is to be done. These activities require huge money which has to be allocated.

2) Planning challenges: To modernize the PSB smoothly and successfully, proper planning is essential. But at there is no any proper planning. The top level management takes decisions and projects without consulting the field level officers. As a result, the projects might not have the implications with the field offices. In the past, it was observed that the BPO has introduced some modern and digital services like Mobile Postal Money Order, Postal Cash Card and Post e- Center services but their present conditions are very poor.

3) Manpower challenges: Without skilled and efficient manpower, the modernizing process will be difficult. The BPO is facing challenges of the shortage of skilled manpower.

4) Implementation challenge: For modernizing the PSB, modern and sophisticated technologies are to be installed. Without technically skilled personnel, these technologies cannot be run smoothly. At present, the BPO has no adequate technically efficient personnel.

5) Maintenance Challenges: After completion of a project, nobody cares of the maintenance of machines, equipments and technologies. Hence, the equipments get spoiled and redundant.

6) Conservative Attitude: The employees and some offices of the GPO as well as other post offices of the BPO bear conservative attitudes. They do not want any change or modernization easily. They want to maintain the statuesque. So, the authority of the BPO has to change their attitudes.

However, considering all of the circumstances, the following initiatives should be taken for modernising the PSB:

- The BPO should introduce modern technology in the PSB in Dhaka GPO and all other post offices for providing modern and online services to the clients;
- The BPO should solve the challenges which might hinder the modernisation process of the PSB;
- The BPO should ensure the customer friendly environment in Dhaka GPO and in all post offices over the country;
- The BPO should take initiatives for advertising and marketing the services of the PSB.

CONCLUSION

The Postal Savings Bank is a potential scheme in Bangladesh. Bangladesh Post Office provides the services on behalf of the government. Modernising the PSB is yet to begin by the BPO. All of the activities are being done manually and traditionally over the country. Due to the lacking of modernisation, the clients of the PSB are facing various types of problems and depriving from the facilities of modernity. They want modern facilities and digital services. Several initiatives stated as recommendations might lead to improving and modernising the PSB, which would finally attract the clients and contribute to increase the investment in this sector.

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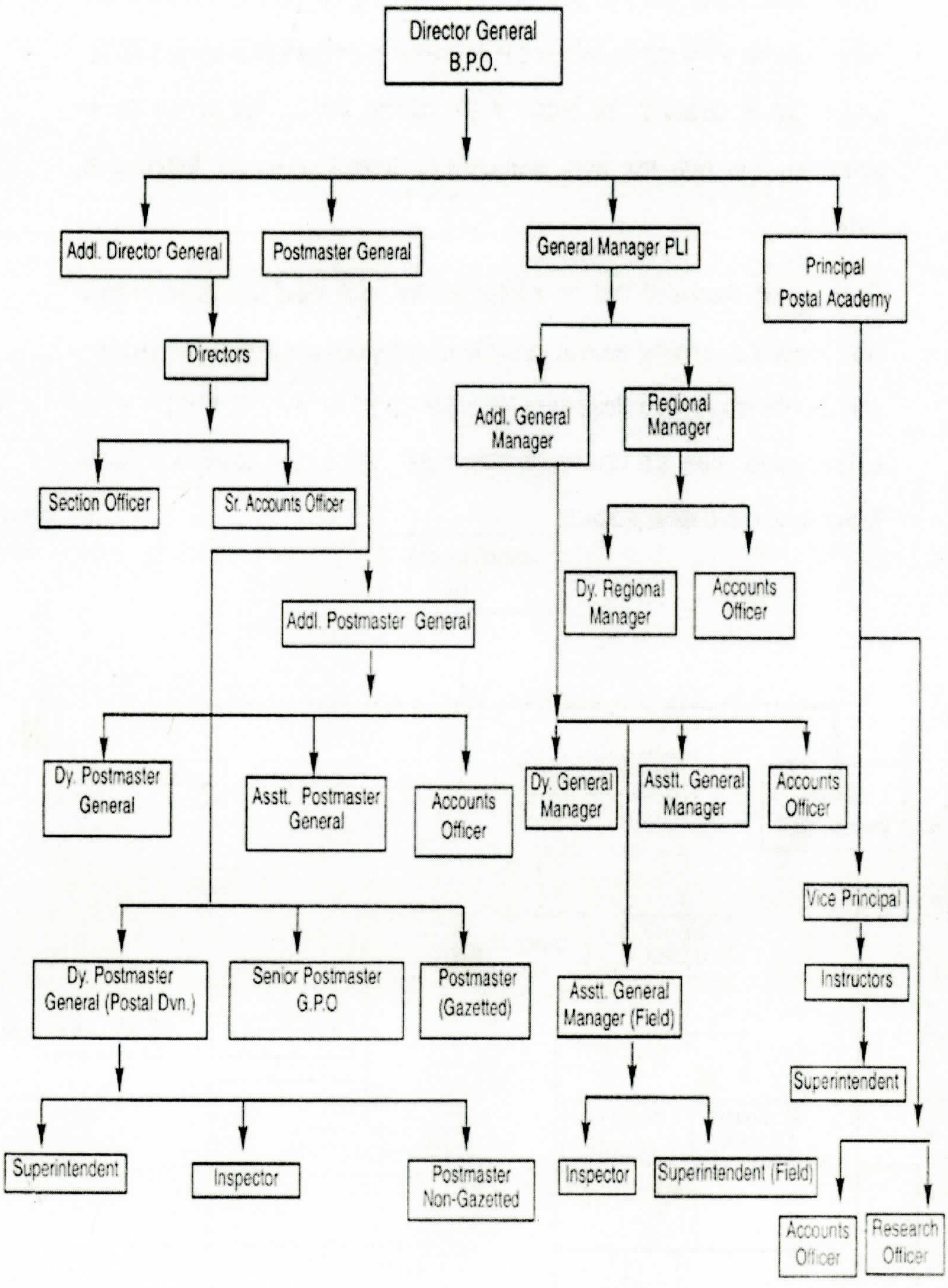
Annexure-1 Organogram of Bangladesh Post Office



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