

Passport Seva goes rural through Common Services Centres

The Ministry of External Affairs, along with CSC e-Governance Services India Limited {which is promoted by the Department of Electronics and Information Technology (DeitY)}, is all set to launch Passport related services through the vast network of over one lakh Common Services Centres (CSCs) across rural hinterland. The initiative would largely bridge the digital divide in the country.

2. The CSC Scheme was approved by the Government of India in September 2006 for setting up of 100,000+ (One Lakh+) Internet enabled centres in rural areas under the National e-Governance Plan (NeGP). The CSCs are the delivery points for Government, Private and Social Sector services in the areas of agriculture, health, education, banking, insurance, pension, utility bill payments, entertainment, etc. to rural citizens of India at their doorstep. The passport related services are being added as part of their bouquet of services.

3. Under the Passport Seva, the Ministry has made it mandatory to complete the entire form filing process on-line, including payment of applicable fee and scheduling of appointment for seeking Passport related services. The CSCs would facilitate filling and uploading of Passport application form, payment of applicable fee (through debit/credit card or through SBI internet banking/challan mode) and scheduling of appointment for the visit to the Passport Seva Kendra (PSK) at nominal charge not exceeding Rs. 100/-. As per the appointment schedule, an applicant will have to visit the PSK for completion of application submission process (including collection of digital photographs/biometrics, verification of supporting documents and approval). The services through CSCs would be available throughout the week, including during the weekend.

4. The services would be shortly launched in pilot mode at 15 select CSC locations in Uttar Pradesh and Jharkhand in the second week of March 2014. The full roll out across the country is expected to conclude by end of March 2014.

5. For more details related to passport services, Passport website (www.passportindia.gov.in) or the National Call Centre (toll free number 1800-258-1800) may be accessed.

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