

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:4191

ANSWERED ON:19.02.2014

SHORTAGE OF MANPOWER IN PASSPORT OFFICES

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Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether a number of Regional Passport Offices (RPOs) in the country are facing huge shortage of manpower;
- (b) if so, the details thereof including the number of vacancies reported from various RPOs, State-wise;
- (c) whether the work in many RPOs is being offloaded to private parties/agencies and if so, the reasons therefor;
- (d) the steps taken to fill the existing vacancies at the RPOs; and
- (e) whether the Government proposes to conduct cadre review of all RPOs in the country and if so, the details thereof?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI PRENEET KAUR)

(a) & (b) A number of Regional Passport Offices in the country continue to face shortage of manpower due to the gap between the sanctioned and working cadre strength of the Central Passport Organization (CPO). To implement the Passport Seva Project, the Government had increased the sanctioned strength of the CPO cadre from 2349 to 2697 in 2008 to cater to increased demand for passport services. However, the working strength has not reached to its optimal level due to several factors such as pending indent with the Staff Selection Commission (SSC) for the post of Assistant and Lower Division Clerks; large number of retirements/voluntarily retirements; and lack of eligible officials for promotion to higher posts. As against the sanctioned strength of 2697, as on date, the Organization has 2000 regular employees apart from 400 Data Entry Operators who have been recruited against the vacant posts at non-Gazetted Group 'B' and 'C' level.

(c) Despite extensive computerization, opening of new Passport Offices and reforms in the Central Passport Organization (CPO) during 2000-2006, a need was felt for change in the then existing system due to rapidly growing volume of passport seekers. To address this need, a Mission-Mode Project titled "Passport Seva Project" was identified under the National e-Governance Plan (NeGP) of the Government of India. The basic design involves outsourcing of non-sensitive front-end activities to a service provider and retaining sovereign and sensitive functions with the Government. 77 Passport Seva Kendras (PSKs) have been set up by the Service Provider.

(d) The Government has taken following steps to fill up the existing vacancies at the Passport Offices:

(i) The regular placement of indent for recruitment of Lower Division Clerks and Assistants with Staff Selection Commission (SSC) and pro-active follow up with them.

(ii) To fill up the existing vacancies at the Passport Offices through fast track promotion, wherever necessary with the relaxation of eligibility norms/down gradation of some posts and with the approval of Department of Personnel & Training and Union Public Service Commission

(iii) As per the provisions of the Recruitment Rules, the Ministry has taken officers on deputation.

(iv) As a temporary measure, the Ministry has obtained approval for engagement of 450 Data Entry Operators in lieu of vacant non-Gazetted post at Group 'B' and 'C' level.

(v) The Ministry has implemented Productivity Linked Incentive Scheme (PLIS) on 21st March, 2013, having retrospective effect, to financially incentivize individual performance measured against pre-set parameters. This has brought in increased efficiency and productivity per employee.

(e) To implement the Passport Seva Project, the Government approved expansion of the Central Passport Organization cadre in 2008 which involved augmentation of posts from 2349 to 2697. Thereafter, Ministry undertook a review exercise in 2010 to restructure the cadre which led to creation of 320 new Gazetted posts of Passport Granting Officers after abolition of 213 posts of Assistant and rationalization of some other posts. In view of the 2010 exercise, there is no further proposal for cadre review at present.