

E FILING OF INCOME TAX RETURNS: AWARENESS AND SATISFACTION AMONG TEACHERS OF AIDED ARTS AND SCIENCE COLLEGES, THRISSUR CORPORATION

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ABSTRACT:

Electronic filing of income tax has become a global trend in developed countries. It has become imperative even in developing countries like India. It is a recent trend which is to be popularized so that income tax department finds it more convenient to administer all the tax related issues and tackle the problems concerned with income tax. So the difficulties faced by the tax payers during e filing and their level of satisfaction are to be analyzed by the income tax department in order to improve the efficiency and acceptance of E filing. Albeit government has introduced several initiatives, people are still unwilling to do E filing on their own because of lack of confidence. They are crippled with too many doubts regarding various issues of E filing which can be removed if government launches campaigns giving awareness of E filing to the general public. This can help them to become self sufficient in E filing. This enables our economy reach pinnacle of prosperity taking our nation to greater heights.

Keywords: E filing of income Tax, Awareness towards E filing, Satisfaction of E filers.

INTRODUCTION

Information and communication technology is regarded as one of the most remarkable scientific and technological development during last couple of decades which has impacted the life of human being so deeply. Government around the world is increasingly integrating this technological development to reinvent public service and to disseminate information for better public administration under various E governance initiatives. One of the prominent E governance initiatives which have been launched by a number of governments is in the form of online return filing. The rapid development of internet technology, information transmission through internet and improved safety mechanism has made E return filing a more convenient method. The electronic filing has various advantages over traditional methods of filing returns. It is convenient, efficient and secure. Furthermore, electronic filing offers many benefits to service providers also. It substantially minimizes their workload and operational cost due to submission of tax return in a paperless environment resulting in reduced cost of processing, storing, handling of tax returns and conservation of environment. The Government of India has chalked out a national E governance action plan for the implementation of various E governance initiatives for tax payers, 24 hours a day so that a tax payer can fulfill his tax obligation without wasting time and without visiting income tax offices. In spite of all the efforts on part of the tax department, the tax payer's perception plays a vital role in popularizing E filing. Since the public can't directly communicate with tax personnel, or hard copies of tax forms are not available to them as the services is provided online, the E return filing system may provide only little psychological satisfaction. Other problems may lie in reluctance of learning new system, Time involvement, confidentiality and privacy issues etc... These factors may also create challenges in acceptance of electronic return filing.

OBJECTIVES

- To measure the awareness and satisfaction level of E filers
- To investigate the problems faced by the respondents during E filing

HYPOTHESIS

- H_{01} : The respondents' opinion regarding awareness and satisfaction level of E filing is equal to average.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Indian economy is in a developing stage and there is still more to come in every stage of its development. Taxation plays a critical and pivotal role in the process of advancement and growth of any country. The income tax department of the ministry

of finance, Government of India is committed to provide world class services to the tax payers in the country. In this E -age when information and communication technology (ICT) is successfully intervening in so many fields, the income tax department of India has launched the electronic filing of income tax returns. Even though the Government of India has made it compulsory for majority of the individual tax payers, most of them are not competent to do it on their own. It is a prominent issue to be tackled in popularizing this system. Keeping this objective in mind, the present study measures the awareness and satisfaction level among the E filers. . Along with this the study attempts to identify the problems faced by them during E filing so that the authorities can modify the system accordingly.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study is descriptive in nature as it describes the opinions of a particular group with respect to E-filling of income tax. Considering the location advantage and time constraint, the study has been confined to the Thrissur Corporation. The teachers of Aided Arts and Science colleges of Thrissur Corporation who have attempted to do E filing constitute the population. Out of this, 80 teachers are selected through Purposive sampling technique. Data is collected from those who are available, have enough time and interest in filling the questionnaire.

The study has been carried out with the help of primary and secondary data. Primary data are collected with the help of questionnaire. Secondary data are collected from journals, magazines etc. For analyzing the collected data statistical tools like descriptive analysis and one sample t-Test are used in the present study.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

- Personal bias of the respondents may affect the study.
- The survey was conducted only in Thrissur Corporation. Hence the result arrived from this study may not be applicable to other areas

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

- * **Dr. M Ragupathi and Mr. G Prabu(2015)¹** in their study titled “An Empirical Study on Awareness of E –Filing” measured the effect of various demographical factors on satisfaction level. The study reveals that there is no significant difference among age group of the respondents with respect to their overall experience about E-filling. But there is a significant difference between genders with regard to satisfaction.
- * **M. Krishna Moorthy and Azni Suhailly Binti Samuri (2014)²** have studied the E-filing behavior among academics in Perk state Malaysia. This study focuses on the Perk state academics’ intention and behaviour to adopt E-filing tax system. The findings shows that perceived usefulness, perceived security, and perceived credibility influence the Perk state academics e-filing adoption intention. However, perceived service and information quality has not influenced their E-filing adoption intention.
- * **Dr.Meenal and Ms.Ginni Garg (2012)³** in their study titled “E-filing of taxes: A Research Paper” analyses various theoretical aspect of views on users perception, technology acceptance, and usage of e-filing issues. It finds that primary importance should be given to security of private data of customers, so that more and more people will E-file their income tax returns.
- * **Geetha and Sekar (2012)⁴** in their paper titled “Awareness and satisfaction level of E-Filing individual tax payers” mainly focuses’ on assessing awareness and satisfaction level of tax payers about e-filing of income tax returns. The survey was conducted only in Coimbatore city. This study reveals that the existing users are satisfied with the e-filing facilities but most of the individual tax payers are not aware of the e-filing and e-payment procedures. So sufficient steps are required to create more awareness in the minds of tax payers regarding e-filing of income tax.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

¹ Dr. Ragupathi, M. and Prabu, G. (2015) “An Empirical Study on Awareness of E –Filing” *International journal of advanced scientific research and development* Vol. 02, Issue 03, Jul – Sep’ 2015, pp 57-64

² Krishna Moorthy, M. and Azni Suhailly Binti Samuri (2014) *Scientific Research Technology and Investment*, vol. 5, pp79-94

³ Dr. Meenal and Garg, Ginni. (2012) E-filing of taxes - A research paper, *International Journal of Enterprise Computing and Business Systems* ISSN (Online): 2230-8849 Vol. 2, Issue 1 January 2012.

⁴ Geetha ,R. and Sekar, M, (2012) E-Filing of Income Tax: Awareness and Satisfaction level of individual Tax payers in Coimbatore city, India, *Research Journal of Management Sciences* ISSN 2319–1171 Vol. 1(4), pp 6-11

Table showing demographic profile of respondents

Demographic factors	Categories	Number of respondents	Percentage
Age	Below 30 years	9	11.25
	30-45 years	43	53.75
	Above 45 years	28	35
Gender	Female	58	72.5
	Male	22	27.5
Stream	Science	28	35
	Arts	52	65

(Source: Primary Data)

Interpretation

Almost half of the respondents belong to the age group of 30-45 years. Majority of the respondents are females and major portion of surveyed sample are from arts stream.

• Opinion regarding awareness level

Table showing statements relating to awareness level

H_{01a}: The respondents' opinion regarding awareness level of E filing is equal to average

Statements	Mean	Standard deviation	T value	P value
A1- I am aware of the official website of income tax department and services offered by the site	2.7750	.42022	16.496	<.001**
A2- I am familiar with the various ITR forms (Income Tax Return Forms)	2.2125	.56689	3.353	.001**
A3- I can select and use the correct ITR form where ever applicable	2.2125	.63033	3.015	.003**
A4- I am able to do all the computations regarding total income, deductions, tax liability etc...	1.9875	.78746	-.142	.887
A5- I know other private websites which provide E filing services.	2.0625	.86190	.649	.518

(Source: Computed Data) ** indicate significance at 1% level (test value=2)

Interpretation

Since the P values of all the statements except A4 and A5 are less than 0.01, the null hypothesis is rejected at 1 % level of significance. Hence it can be concluded that the respondents' opinion in these statements are not equal to average. Based on the mean scores it is evident that the opinions are above average level. It shows that the respondents are aware of the official website and various ITR forms. And they have sufficient knowledge in selecting the correct ITR form.

• Opinion regarding satisfaction level

Table showing satisfaction on statements relating to E filing procedure and easiness

H_{01b}: The respondents' opinion regarding E filing procedure and easiness is equal to average

Statements	Mean	Standard deviation	T value	P value
The registration process is simple	4.3000	.53722	21.644	<.001**
It is easy to fill the details in ITR forms	4.3125	.56465	20.791	<.001**
It offers various services which makes E filing easier such as calculation of tax liability at a single click	4.2625	.79147	14.267	<.001**

(Source: Computed Data) ** indicate significance at 1% level (test value=3)

Interpretation

Since the P values of all the statements are less than 0.01, the null hypothesis is rejected at 1 % level of significance. Hence it can be concluded that the respondents' opinion in these statements are not equal to average. Based on the mean scores it is

evident that the opinions are above average level. Thus the respondents have agreed that the e filing procedure is simple and easy.

Table showing satisfaction on statements relating to security aspect

H_{01c}: The respondents' opinion regarding security aspect of E filing is equal to average

Statements	Mean	Standard deviation	T value	P value
The website has the mechanism to ensure the safe transmission of user's information.	4.3875	.68425	18.137	<.001**
The website has sufficient technical capacity to ensure that the data entered cannot be modified by hackers.	4.2125	.72380	14.983	<.001**
The website shows concern for privacy of its users.	4.1125	.63632	15.638	<.001**

(Source: Computed Data) ** indicate significance at 1% level (test value=3)

Interpretation

From the above table it is clear that P values of all the 3 statements are less than 0.01. Thus the null hypothesis is rejected at 1 % level of significance. It means that the opinion about the security aspect of E filing is not equal to average. By analyzing the mean scores it can be inferred that the respondents' opinions are above average level.

Table showing satisfaction on statements relating to website accessibility and user friendliness

H_{01d}: The respondents' opinion regarding website accessibility and user friendliness is equal to average

Statements	Mean	Standard deviation	T value	P value
It is easy to navigate within the site	4.1000	.49299	19.957	<.001**
The website is visually appealing	3.7125	.65976	9.659	<.001**
The website is ready to answer all the queries of the user	3.6500	.67693	8.589	<.001**

(Source: Computed Data) ** indicate significance at 1% level (test value=3)

Interpretation

Above table shows opinion regarding website accessibility and user friendliness.

From these figures it is evident that the P values are less than 0.01 and hence the null hypothesis is rejected at 1% level of significance. So the respondents' opinions in these statements are not equal to average. Since the mean values of all these statements are above average level, it can be concluded that the respondents are satisfied with regard to website accessibility and user friendliness.

• Problems faced by the respondents during E filing

PROBLEMS FACED	WEIGHTED TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE	RANK
Lack of experience and knowledge to do E filing	254	16.93	2
Network problem during peak hours	297	19.8	1
Exact procedure is not specified by the income tax department	186	12.4	5
Website is not accessible always	249	16.6	3

Unsuccessful attempt to E Filing or delay in execution	214	14.26	4
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(Source: Computed Data)

Interpretation

The problems faced by respondents are analyzed by ascertaining ranks to each variable using weighted average technique. It can be inferred from this that network problem is the most relevant issue faced by the respondents. Lack of experience is another problem which restricts easy filing of income tax returns. Non accessibility is the 3rd major problem followed by delay in execution and lack of exact procedure respectively.

Findings

- ♣ 53.75 percent of the respondents belong to the age group of 30-45 years.
- ♣ 72.5 percent of the surveyed sample is females.
- ♣ Major portion of the respondents (65%) are from arts stream.
- ♣ All the respondents have sufficient knowledge regarding official site and various ITR forms. But majority are not fully confident in tax computations.
- ♣ Major portion of the respondents have opined that the E filing procedure is simple and easy.
- ♣ Majority of the respondents have agreed that the online tax filing is safe and secure.
- ♣ The respondents' opinion with regard to website accessibility and user friendliness is above average level.
- ♣ Weighted average analysis is used to evaluate problems faced by the respondents during E filing. The network problem is considered to be the main issue in online filing of income tax returns. Lack of experience and non accessibility are ranked at second and third position by using weighted average technique. These issues may restrict them from doing E filing.

Conclusion

On the basis of the survey conducted among college teachers, it can be concluded that most of the respondents have basic knowledge and awareness regarding E filing. Even though they have average level of knowledge with regard to various factors, they are not fully confident in tax calculation and tax management.

The opinion regarding satisfaction level reveals that majority of the respondents are satisfied with the current system of E filing. But it is also to be noted that they have faced many issues while doing the same. Although the current system is easy, the poor network is posing a threat to E filing adoption. Lack of experience is also a major issue which can be solved by giving proper training.

Suggestions

- 1) For making the E filing a successful initiative, the common man should be able to do it on their own. For that purpose proper training should be given to all individuals both present and potential tax payers at free of cost.
- 2) Mere knowledge is not sufficient to popularize this system. So the tax department should develop a more interactive and user friendly website and system of E filing.
- 3) For the successful implementation of E governance or E filing, fast and uninterrupted network coverage is also essential. So the government should ensure this facility for all the users.

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