

## **ABSTRACT**

With increased global competition and easy access to the latest technology, it has become harder to differentiate products/services; hence companies are increasingly pursuing a customer-centric competitive strategy rather than a product / service centric one. The objective behind any new adopted strategy is to enable the company to quickly identify, contact, attract and acquire new customers which allow the company to focus on its marketing resources on the most promising target markets with the highest potential value. This study was undertaken with the aim of developing a guideline on Value Stream Mapping (VSM) for Clearing & Forwarding Industry. It also ascertains to focus on the areas where the systems of services need improvement. The Indian Clearing and Forwarding (C&F) Services Industry falls under the category of service sector and it plays an important role in providing assistance to Government to earn foreign exchange and revenue. In order to achieve the revenue, agencies and Government departments related to this sector must maintain a cordial relationship with the customers/ end users for the benefit of the country. Presently, though many C&F companies are keen to adopt the VSM philosophy, yet in absence of a clear picture of customers' requirement, it could not be implemented. In Indian C&F services industry, the service providers should develop "powerful in-house analytic skills" before developing service channels to seek buyers. The study was undertaken on C&F Agents in Kolkata and few Importers- and Exporters who are conducting business in the Eastern part of India. Responses were elicited regarding the services being delivered and accordingly, their perceptions of service quality was measured and used to examine how the quality of various sub-services affected the speedy clearance of materials and Export-Import of this part of the country. This study is useful for C&F Agents, Customs Broker and Customs Clearance Authority of India, in assessing the deficiencies in the quality of services that they deliver. They can also explore the factors that influence customers' perception of service quality and manage the same to ensure business growth and success. The study provides useful directions to the related segment of Business and Researchers in investigating issues related to service quality, thereby extending the knowledge base in this spectrum. Any benefit which may be derived from this exposure would be of ample reward for the onerous task undertaken by me.