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**STANDING COMMITTEE ON COMMUNICATIONS
AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
(2023-24)**

SEVENTEENTH LOK SABHA

MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (DEPARTMENT OF POSTS)

DEPARTMENT OF POSTS – INITIATIVES AND CHALLENGES

FIFTY SEVENTH REPORT

LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT

NEW DELHI

February 2024/ Magha, 1945 (Saka)

FIFTY SEVENTH REPORT

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INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
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(DEPARTMENT OF POSTS)**

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Presented to Lok Sabha on 8-2-2024

Laid in Rajya Sabha on 8-2-2024

LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT

NEW DELHI

February 2024/ Magha, 1945 (Saka)

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Dr. Shashi Tharoor - Chairperson

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21. **Vacant[$]**

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Shri Prataprao Jadhav - Chairperson

Lok Sabha

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3. Shri Karti P. Chidambaram
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Secretariat

1. Shri Satpal Gulati — Additonal Secretary
2. Smt. A. Jyothirmayi — Director
3. Smt. Rinku Awasthi — Executive Officer

INTRODUCTION

I, the Chairperson, Standing Committee on Communications and Information Technology (2023-24), having been authorized by the Committee present the Fifty – seventh Report on "Department Of Posts – Initiatives and Challenges" relating to the Ministry of Communications (Department of Posts).

2.   The Standing Committee on Information Technology (2020-21) (later renamed as the Standing Committee on Communications and Information Technology), selected this subject for detailed examination and Report to the Parliament. The representatives of the Ministry of Communications (Department of Posts) briefed the Committee on the Subject on 16th December, 2020. The examination of the subject, however, could not be completed during the year 2020-21. The Committee (2021-22) re-selected the subject for Report during the year 2021-22. The Report, though finalized, could not be adopted during the year 2021-22 due to expiry of the term of the Committee. The Committee, therefore, selected the subject once again during the year 2022-23 for its final adoption and presentation to the House and one more evidence was held on   06th January, 2023. Thereafter, the Subject was re-selected for examination during the term 2023-24.

3.   The Committee at their Sitting held on 6 February, 2024 considered and adopted the Report. The Committee wish to express their thanks to the representatives of the Department of Posts (Ministry of Communications) who tendered their evidence before the Committee and furnished valuable information.

4.   The Committee also place on record their appreciation for the invaluable assistance rendered by the officials of Lok Sabha Secretariat attached to the Committee.

5.   For facility of reference and convenience the Observations/Recommendations of the Committee have been printed in bold in Part-II of the Report.

New Delhi;   **PRATAPRAO JADHAV,**
……6…February.., 2024   **Chairperson,**
… 17…….Magha,1945 (Saka)   **Standing Committee on**
Communications and Information Technology.

REPORT

PART-I

I. **Introductory**

1. The Department of Posts, with its network of 1,64,972 post offices, is the largest postal network in the world. In the year 1727, the first Post Office was set up in Kolkata. Subsequently, General Post Offices (GPOs) were set up in the then three Presidencies towns of Kolkata in 1774, Chennai in 1786 and Mumbai in 1793. The Indian Post Office Act of 1837 was enacted to bring about uniformity in postal operations. This act was followed by the more comprehensive Indian Post Office Act of 1854 which laid the foundation of modern-day postal system in the country. In the same year, Railway Mail Service was introduced and the Sea Mail Service started from India to Great Britain and China. The Indian Post Office (IPO) Act of 1898 further strengthened the postal system in the country. For more than 160 years, Department of Posts has been the backbone of the Country's communication and has played a crucial role in socio-economic development. It touches the lives of Indian Citizen by delivering mails, accepting deposits under Small Saving Schemes, providing insurance cover under Postal Life Insurance & Rural Postal Life Insurance, providing retail services like bill collection, sales of forms etc. and disbursal of the benefits under various social security schemes. Some of the milestones achieved by Department of Posts in its journey so far are computerization of post offices, introduction of major software applications for large-scale automation, launch of India Post Payments Bank (IPPB) and roll out of DARPAN (Digital Advancement of Rural Post Office for a New India).

2. As per the Allocation of Business Rules, 1961, the Department of Posts has been entrusted with the task of posts, including administration of Post office Savings Bank (POSB), Post Office (PO) certificates, Postal Life Insurance (PLI) fund, and printing of postage / commemorative stamps & stationery. The Department also administers the IPO Act and Rules made thereunder, besides handling international cooperation connected with postal communications. In the last 5 years, the Department have launched India Post Payments Bank (IPPB) and also moved towards offering more and more citizen centric services like Aadhaar Enroment & Updation, Post Office Passport Sewa Kendras, Common Service Centres, Aadhaar Enabled Payment Services etc.

II. Relevance of the Department of Posts in the changing scenario

3. The Committee asked the steps taken to achieve the vision of the Department that 'India Post's products and services will be the customer's first choice'. The Department replied that the Department of Posts holds about 26 Cr Post Office Savings Bank accounts with an outstanding balance of Rs. 12.68 lakh Cr and 11.39 Cr cash certificates with an outstanding balance of Rs. 3.66 lakh Cr. In case of Sukanya Samriddhi Yojana, with 3.12 Cr accounts, the Department have a market share of over 84%. India Post Payments bank (IPPB) is the largest Payments bank in the country in terms of deposit balance. In case of Speed Post, it holds a market share of about 40% in the entire domestic express courier category. A number of steps have been taken/ are underway by the department to achieve this vision which inter-alia include the following:

(i) Financial inclusion (POSB, IPPB & Postal Insurance)
- NEFT-RTGS (National Electronic Fund Transfer-Real Time Gross Settlement) rolled out in the year 2022 for POSB thereby integrating with the mainstream banking sector.
- Further strengthen the POSB IT system especially mobile and internet banking. IT 2.0 project amounting to Rs. 5784 crore has been approved by the Cabinet for a period of 8 years.
- Offer more and more POSB and PLI/RPLI services at the doorsteps through Postmen and GDS
- With help of technology, a big thrust on Postal Life Insurance (PLI) and Rural Postal Life Insurance (RPLI) is being planned
- Roll out newer financial products through IPPB.
- Mahila Samman Savings Certificate introduced. 22.80 lakh MSSC Accounts at present.

(ii) Post Office at door-steps
- With the aid of technology, offer more and more services of DoP and IPPB at the door-steps. Door step delivery of services is a major strength of the Department
- Common Service Centres rolled out in 1,43,066 Post Offices. Aadhaar updation services is being provided through these PO-CSCs (presently 13,352 PO-Aadhaar Centres operational)
- Post Office-Passport Sewa Kendras to be expanded. 434 POPSKs are operational.

- New partnerships with Election Commission of India for delivery of Electors Photo Identity Card (EPIC)
- G2C services to be key focus area for continued revenue increase and service enhancement

(iii) E-Commerce and parcel

- Enhance parcel handling capacity from the current 12 Crore p.a to 24 Crore p.a.
- Set up 32 additional Nodal Delivery Centres, extending to tier 2 and 3 cities
- 12 National and 84 more State level Postal Road Transport Network (RTN) to be set up.
- 879 Dak Ghar Niryat Kendras (DNK) have been set up to provide international e-Commerce export booking facility to small traders/artisans/MSMEs.
- Provide plug and play applications to e-Commerce/parcel partners under IT 2.0, to further ease doing business with DoP

4. The Committee asked the various initiatives being taken by the Department to stay relevant in the current scenario, when use of physical mail is becoming less relevant as compared to electronic means. The Department replied that they have taken a number of initiatives to transform itself to retain mail business, provide digital, financial and ecommerce service as per the market requirements and under the broad vision of the Government on service delivery to citizens across the country: -

• **Amalgamation of technology in traditional mail business:**

The shift towards electronic means of communications is more pronounced in case of unregistered physical mail. Volume of physical mail under premium products i.e., Speed Post, Business Post etc., has seen a growth over the last 5 years from 42.72 crore (2015-16) to 44.31 (2019-20) crore pieces. Registered Post volume has almost been staggered between 19-20 crore, whereas, Unregistered physical mail has declined from around 561 crore to around 447 crore pieces per annum during the same period. With the introduction of several technological tools on a "Core System Platform" in the last five years, the main focus of the Department have been to improve the quality of service, so as to retain the customer base and get new businesses. In order to ensure reliability in

mail delivery across, implementation of online working of all mail offices and post offices under the Core System Integration Project, SMS notifications of booking & delivery information to the customers, real time delivery updation through Postman Mobile App (PMA), tracking facility, COD facility, setting up of Nodal Delivery Centres equipped with four wheelers for door delivery of parcels etc. have been taken up. Besides, the Department have entered into agreements with various banks in the country for delivery of cheque books, debit & credit cards, with Unique Identification Development Authority of India for delivery of Aadhaar cards, with different High Courts for delivery of notices/summons, with Regional Transport Authorities in different states for delivery of driving licenses/vehicle Registration Certificates (RC), and agreements with various traffic regulatory authorities for delivery of traffic challans, etc. An agreement, for delivery of certified copies of the Supreme court judgements has also been entered into recently.

- **Capturing E-commerce market:** With the objective to focus on Parcels & E-commerce business Parcel Network Optimization Project (PNOP) was initiated under which 190 Parcel hubs have been set up for streamlining the processing and expeditious delivery of parcels and improve capacity to handle ecommerce business. During COVID-19, to meet the urgent national requirement at a critical time, a dedicated nationwide Road Transport Network (RTN) for shipment of essential items especially ventilators, medicines, Covid Kits etc. was planned and operationalized. 219 Nodal Delivery Centers (NDCs) are operating in the country. Smart Post Booking Kiosks as well as delivery boxes have been started.

- **Commitment towards Financial Inclusion:** The Department already took initiative to deliver quality service in competition with private banks. For the purpose Core Banking System (CBS), computerised and integrated post office savings banking, has been implemented in all post offices. Department have extended all its savings schemes to all Branch post offices. Further, in order to facilitate old aged pensioners, Department have migrated to online submission of Jeevan Pramaan Certificate by introducing biometric enabled digital service.

- **DARPAN project in 1.4 lakh rural Branch Post Offices:**
  o Under the Digital Advancement of Rural Post Office for A New India (DARPAN) Project, Department of Posts has provided mobile devices to Branch Post Offices in the rural areas of the country, for carrying out online Postal and financial transactions. Around 1.4 lakh BOs have been rolled out to DARPAN in 23 Postal Circles across the country.

- o Approximately 1.75 crores digital transactions including account based MGNREGA wage disbursements and other DBT payments are taking place every month on DARPAN devices across the country in remote rural areas hitherto not covered by online banking and digitalization.

- o Till December 2023, more than 118 crore transactions involving an amount of more than Rs. 1.80 lakh crore have taken place through DARPAN devices all over the country.

- **Facilitating DBT schemes through Post Office Savings Bank:**
  - o The Department have on-boarded the National Automated Clearing House (NACH) Platform of National Payment Corporation of India (NPCI) in December 2016 and Aadhaar Payments Bridge System (APBS) in December 2017 for seamless disbursement of Social Sector Pension payments including Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Generation Scheme (MGNREGA), Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY) and other schemes sponsored by various Ministries through Post Office Savings Bank accounts.

  - o More than 12 Crore transactions have been processed successfully on National Automated Clearing House (NACH) platform since December 2016, involving an amount of around Rs. 10000 crores. DoP has also made more than 56 Lakhs transactions through Aadhaar Bridge Payment System (ABPS) involving an amount of Rs. 1043 crores.

  - o The DoP has earned revenue of Rs.50 crores from the NPCI (National Payment Corporation of India) for the DBT disbursement through NACH/APBS(National Automated Clearing House/ Aadhaar Payment Bridge System)

- **Expansion of rural Postal Network:** In pursuance of the decision of the Cabinet Committee on Security, Department have opened 1789 post offices in Panchayat Headquarters in 32 worst affected Left Wing Extremism (LWE) districts. Under the 5 km banking coverage plan, 5379 post offices have also been opened. Further, to strengthen its vast Rural Postal Network, Department have opened 810 Post Offices by relocation / redeployment, 983 Franchise Outlet in urban areas and New infrastructure was supplied to 52721 rural Branch Post Offices.

- **Delivery of citizen centric services through Post Offices, on a tie up with CSC-SPV:**
  - Aadhaar enrolment facility in the Post Offices, Post Offices Passport Seva Kendras, services offered through Common Service Centres (CSCs) and India Post Passenger Reservation System (IP-PRS) are some citizen centric services provided through Post Offices which has not only enhanced the social relevance of the Department but also opened new revenue streams to the Department.

  - Around 8.95 crore Aadhaar enrolments and Updations have been performed by 13352 Aadhaar Enrolments and Updation Centres till 31.12.2023, generating a revenue of Rs. 373.71 Cr.

  - 129.89 Lakhs applications have been processed in 434 Post Office Passport Seva Kendras till 31.12.2023 with revenue accrual of more than Rs. 428.64 crores. Approximately Rs. 103 lakhs revenue has been earned from India Post Passenger Reservation System (IP-PRS) service in the year 2023-24 till 31.12.2023.

  - A convergence of Post Offices and Common Service Centres for effective delivery of various citizen centric services is a part of the five-year Vision Document of the Department of Posts. Accordingly, a target for setting up CSC counters in 6100 departmental Post Offices by 2024 was approved under Sectoral Group of Secretaries targets for the Department of Posts.

  - Selected e-Governance services [Government to Citizen (G2C) and Business to Citizens (B2C)] Services are being provided through the Digital Sewa portal of CSC. Memorandum of Association was Signed between Department of Posts and CSC-SPV (Common Services Centers-Special Purpose Vehicle) on 15.12.2020.

  - Pilot started in May 2020 in 22 post offices and so far Common Services Centers (CSC) services are made available through 1,43,066 post offices across the country after Technology integration between DoP Enterprise resource planning (ERP) and CSC Digital Seva Portal. Since its inception, as on 31.12.2023, around 30.04 lakh transactions worth Rs. 256.56 Crore have taken place.

5. The Committee wanted to know how does the Department propose to overcome legacy issues in converting a 169-year-old Government department to deliver quality of services and products in competition with the private sector to which the Department replied that they have taken a number of initiatives over the past five years to deliver quality services to the customers. The major thrust of these initiatives has largely been to shift the manual processes into electronic processes, real time flow of information and strengthening of the monitoring mechanism to ensure consistency and improvement in the mail processing and delivery. Some of these initiatives are as under:

(i) **Mail Network Optimization Project (MNOP)** : The Department undertook the Mail Network Optimization Project (MNOP) during 2010-2013 to improve the quality of mail processing, transmission and delivery, by optimizing the existing mail network of the DoP for Speed Post, Registered Post and Unregistered mail into a Hub and Spoke model with a view to streamline core mail operations. The project has led to greater standardization, upgradation of infrastructure at the processing hubs and improvement in the operational processes relating to mail processing, transmission and delivery. As a part of the project, an effective performance management mechanism for mail operations through monitoring of various Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) on transit time, scanning of articles and Post office delivery efficiency, etc. has been put in place.

(ii) **Online Working of Railway Mail Service (RMS) offices:** Core System Integration (CSI) solutions which provides for online functioning, has been implemented in all the Railway Mail Service (RMS) offices. The implementation of CSI solutions has enabled real time exchange of data generated in RMS offices with the central server, thereby expediting the entire chain of mail transmission and processing. The initiative has led to improve delivery of postal articles to the customers.

(iii) **Real Time Delivery Updation :** In order to meet the demands of customers to update the delivery status of postal articles on a real-time basis, the Department have undertaken delivery of Speed Post, Registered Letters/Parcels, Money Order and Cash on Delivery (COD) articles through a mobile based delivery application known as Postman Mobile Application (PMA), which has been designed and developed in-house by the Centre for Excellence in Postal Technology (CEPT), Mysuru. More than 70,000 mobile phones have been supplied to the postmen in the urban areas and more than

1 Lakh in the rural areas for real time delivery updation.

(iv) **Introduction of Barcoded bag labels for Unregistered Mail:** In order to put in place a mechanism to track the transmission of unregistered mail, which hitherto was handled manually, the Department have introduced barcoded bag labels for unregistered bags and its scanning, so as to improve the quality of service for unregistered mail. The initiative has made the tracking of unregistered mail possible, thereby resulting in the improved processing and delivery of unregistered mail.

(v) Under **Parcel Network Optimization Project**, 190 Parcel hubs, have been set up for streamlining the processing and expeditious delivery of parcels and improve capacity to handle ecommerce business. Road Transport Network with owned and hired vehicles is also being built across the country for reliability covering 400 cities.

(vi) **Core Insurance Solution (CIS)**: Department of Posts has undertaken a number of initiatives in regard to **Postal Life Insurance (PLI)/Rural Postal Life Insurance (RPLI)**.CIS has been implemented in almost all Post Offices all over the country with the facility of online payment of premium through customer portal (debit/credit card, net banking, BHIM/UPI, wallet and Rupay card), generation of SMS alerts and servicing of PLI policies anywhere in any post office in the country. This centralised system has greatly eased payment of premium collection, claim settlement and other after-sales services to PLI/RPLI insurants. Further, Department have launched DARPAN-PLI App which helps in collection of premium for PLI and RPLI and servicing of policies at any Branch Post Office anywhere in India with online updation of the policies. Now, any PLI/RPLI insurant living in any part of the country can avail PLI/RPLI services from his/her nearest Branch Post Office.

(vii) **Core Banking System (CBS):** The Department already took initiative to deliver quality of service in competition with private banks. For the purpose CBS, computerised and integrated post office savings bank operation, has been implemented in all post offices. DoP is also providing ATM, e-banking, Mobile Banking facility which enables customer to avail services 24x7 hours. Department has implemented various e-modes which enables customer to do online transactions through various modes.

(viii) **International Mail:** Some initiatives taken by the Department to strengthen International mail system:

- o RFID (Radio frequency identification) based system is being used to measure delivery time of inward International Letter post items received in India to assess, monitor and improve the delivery performance.
- o The capacity of international mail processing offices increased by setting up of new Foreign Post Offices and upgradation of existing Facilities to promote international e-commerce exports.
- o Competitive product in packet segment has been introduced for 15 Asia-Pacific countries and will be extended to more countries.

6. The Committee wanted to know the initiatives being taken to increase the use of technology to improve speed of service delivery besides ensuring reliability of operations even in the remote/inaccessible areas of the country. The Department replied that Computerization of all post offices and administrative offices has been done across the country and 26,447 Offices have been networked on a single Wide Area Network and connected to a Data Centre. This has helped improve the speed of service delivery besides ensuring reliability of operations even in the remote/inaccessible areas of the country. This has provided more convenience to the customers in all spheres of activities of the Department, including mails, banking, insurance, etc. These initiatives have facilitated tracking and tracing of mails, Core Banking (banking at any post office counter, internet/ mobile banking, ATMs), Payment of Postal Life Insurance Premium at any Post office, etc. Rural areas have also been provided the facility of these services by providing hand-held devices to 1.4 lakh Branch Post Offices.

III.   Roadmap for Revenue Generation

7. The Committee wanted to know the Department of Posts' roadmap to increase revenue generation so as to pull it out of the revenue deficit attributed to high cost involved in its operational expenses like payment of salaries and allowances to its massive workforce. The Department submitted that they have introduced various citizen centric services such as Aadhaar facility in the Post Offices, Post Offices Passport Seva Kendras (POPSK) which has not only enhanced the social relevance of the Department but also led to increase in revenue. Opening of more savings bank accounts including Senior Citizen Savings Schemes/Sukanya Samridhi Yojana Accounts for senior citizen and the girl child will be undertaken for increased remuneration from Ministry of Finance. The following additional initiatives have been taken by the

Department to augment revenue and support other Government Departments and PSUs:-

o Department is continuously trying to diversify its business area and products to increase the revenue generation. The Department is adopting modern technological methods and upgrading its physical infrastructure for improvement in Mail Delivery System. With the implementation of core system integration and dedicated road transport network, it is trying to improve the efficiency in the delivery as well as real time monitoring of mail system. It will help in achieving 10% market share in the parcel and mail segments by 2024. A major part of the deficit of the Department i.e. 91% goes into salary and pension and other allowances. Department have also forayed into two citizen centric services like CSC (Common Service Centre). Post offices are being developed as the centre of financial inclusion by means of IPPB and POSB banking facilities. By carrying out all these activities, the Department is trying to reduce its deficit.

o Computerization, infrastructure and site up gradation of mail and parcel processing is being carried out by the Parcel Directorate.

o End to end tracking facility is provided for accountable articles viz. Speed Post, Registered Post, Parcels, etc.

o Dedicated point to point road transport for fast and secure transmission of Speed Post, parcels, and e-commerce articles has been introduced between cities having substantial business volume.

o Departmental vehicles have been equipped with GPS for monitoring mail transmission on real time basis.

o Real time updation of delivery information for accountable articles by use of Post Man mobile app has also been implemented.

Instructions are issued from time to time to restrict the expenditure within the allotted budget. Department have implemented Core Systems Integration (CSI) to reduce the manpower and to contain the operational expenditure.

8. The Committee enquired about the measures taken to increase the revenue receipts to which the Department replied that the Department is earning revenue from various postal services/items like Speed Post; Business Post; Express Parcel; Business Parcel; Bill Mail Service; e-Post; Postage through

Franking Machines and Pre-postage; Sale of Stamps; Commemorative Stamps; My Stamps; Philatelic Ancillaries; Money Order & Indian Postal Order; Retail Post; Logistic Post; E-Bill Collection; Railway ticket booking; MGNREGA; Net Receipts / Payments to Other Postal Administration (Other Countries); Savings Bank & Cash Certificate Remuneration etc.

Department is planning to take following measures to remove the obstacle and contain the revenue deficit: -

- A considerable economic slowdown in economic activities which badly impacted the postal services, the financial activities reduced considerably. The services of the Department were used minimally and as such the revenue was less in the first half of the year. The Department is trying its level best to improve the revenue generation in the second half of the year.

- The Department is streamlining all its activities to improve the efficiency and periodically reviews its services and products keeping in view the changing market scenario, customer needs, industry benchmarks etc. and takes steps/action to modify service features to improve the postal services and boost the revenue growth of the Department. Technology integration and infrastructure up-gradation is also being done in a systematic manner to increase the efficiency and reduce the cost of operation. The Department have focused approach to cater to the needs of the emerging markets viz. e-Commerce to increase its revenue.

IV.   Role of the Post Office during the Pandemic

9. The Committee wanted to know whether India Post have made/proposed to make special efforts to offer services to migrant workers and thereby tap a niche market as in times of the ongoing pandemic, the migrant workers find it difficult to establish and retain a reliable communication link with their distant homes and also to transfer money and goods to their families. The Department replied that during the unprecedented situation caused by spread of Covid-19 pandemic and the consequential nationwide lockdown, rail, road and air connectivity initially came to a halt. Department of Posts has traditionally relied on railways and airlines to transport mails and parcels across the country. With restricted trains services and air services, mail and parcel movement across the country also came to a stand-still. To retain a reliable communication link of migrate workers with their home & also to transfer goods to their families & to meet the urgent national requirement at a critical time, a dedicated nationwide Road Transport Network (RTN) for

shipment of essential items especially ventilators, medicines, Covid Kits etc. was planned and operationalized by the Department for the first time in its history of 169 years. 76 National Routes at present.

Further, India Post Payments Bank (IPPB) has created Disaster Resilient Financial infrastructure. More than 1.61 Lakh Post offices across the country have been enabled as Banking Touch points and more than 2 Lakh Postmen and Gramin Dak Sewaks (GDS) have been trained as Doorstep Banking service provider. These access points and Doorstep agents have been provided with Micro ATMs and Biometric Devices through which they can perform Inter-Operable Banking service transactions for any Bank. This has effectively brought all banks at the doorstep of every citizen thus reducing the distance to the Bank to zero. The platform thus created has been tested for its interoperability and resilience in critical and disaster situations such as the recent CoVID-19 induced Lockdown.

Aadhaar Enabled Payment System of IPPB can affect cash payment of DBT and social security beneficiaries at their doorstep in various states. Special focus has been given to providing Doorstep Banking services through AePS in the sealed/containment areas, Migrant labour camps and Hotspots so that the population affected due to restrictions imposed do not suffer adversely. During the recent lockdown this Financial Infrastructure was able to take multiple times additional load and performed flawlessly. More than Rs 8000 Crore were disbursed to customers of various Banks during April-Dec 2020 period, focusing on the Elderly, Disabled, Hotspots and Containment Zones including the Direct Benefits Transfers under Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana which also include migrant workers.

For effecting AePS transactions for other Bank customers, IPPB gets revenue on per transaction basis which has proven to be a substantial source of revenue for the bank. IPPB shares the revenue earned with the respective DoP end users for performing these transactions.

10. During evidence, the representatives of the Department stated that –

"There are two, three things which we have done very recently. As you are aware, the pensioners have to submit a life certificate every year. In the last few years, the Government has started the system of digital life certificate. We also have started it this year and almost three lakh digital certificates have been issued by our postmen at the

doorsteps of the pensioners. In addition, we have issued more than two lakh digital certificates in the Head Post Offices where our own pensioners do not have to pay. If somebody comes to the post office, it is free; but if somebody wants it to be done at their doorstep, then they have to pay Rs.70. "

11. During evidence, the representatives of the Department stated that –

"As I have already told you, we delivered more than Rs.5,000 crore at the doorstep of the public to all those who could not come to the bank because of the distance and restrictions on their coming out of homes. During those times, our people started free distribution of food and rations to about 10 lakh people. For some time, we ran mobile post offices which went around delivering these services. Now that almost all post offices have opened, that service has been stopped. During the pandemic, we did all those things. That is all I can say for what all we did, Sir, and we are still trying to do."

12. The Committee wanted to know the month-wise details w.e.f. March, 2020 to November, 2020 with regard to the doorstep services provided by the Post Payments Bank in North Eastern Region (NER), Left Wing Extremism (LWE) areas and aspirational districts of the country during the COVID-19 pandemic. The details of Doorstep Services for AePS, Cash Withdrawal and Financial Transactions in North East Districts (Mar-Nov 2020) were provided as under-

North East Circle Data						
2020 Months	Aggregate Tran Nos	Aggregate Tran Values	Aggregate AePS Transactions Count	Aggregate AePS Transactions Values	Total cash Deposit Transaction	Cash W/D Amt
Mar	4,39,958	1,28,11,35,561	20,674	5,96,67,951	32,226	4,81,38,026
Apr	5,21,708	1,13,50,26,844	69,450	11,33,76,127	31,224	6,45,54,966
May	6,47,309	1,59,84,36,835	1,44,913	22,22,82,524	42,424	10,09,25,042
Jun	5,96,580	1,63,07,31,704	1,08,501	19,11,54,688	53,430	11,89,70,314

Jul	5,93,942	1,82,29,78,625	96,789	18,30,12,640	51,867	11,37,61,931
Aug	5,96,749	1,85,25,85,655	1,18,596	21,65,50,569	51,377	11,19,62,793
Sep	5,99,973	1,98,23,33,360	87,799	18,06,32,760	46,905	10,36,01,196
Oct	5,40,158	1,89,14,21,893	67,718	14,94,59,069	46,628	10,76,82,946
Nov	4,88,913	1,79,83,34,456	54,923	13,07,54,163	40,891	10,00,73,574
Grand Total	**59,02,400**	**18,14,44,87,431**	**8,63,893**	**1,67,02,95,557**	**4,64,221**	**1,06,69,71,347**

- **Details of Doorstep Services for AePS, Cash Withdrawal and Financial Transactions in LWE Districts (Mar-Nov 2020):**

LWE Districts Data					
2020 Months	**Aggregate Tran Nos**	**Aggregate Tran Values**	**Aggregate AePS Transactions Count**	**Aggregate AePS Transactions Values**	**Total cash Deposit Transaction**	**Cash W/D Amt**
Mar	10,63,538	2,94,94,21,161	92,439	46,26,07,314	1,15,881	19,76,77,339
Apr	17,19,243	3,09,46,00,718	3,43,492	65,13,16,379	1,51,486	29,42,87,567
May	29,09,353	5,15,47,63,869	9,30,721	1,44,76,81,211	2,26,079	48,46,10,071
Jun	23,45,155	4,91,74,92,758	5,80,565	1,26,03,13,817	2,16,438	48,82,02,925
Jul	18,38,923	4,52,53,89,830	4,06,832	97,59,30,245	1,75,227	39,61,93,575
Aug	16,53,917	4,50,00,31,887	4,62,281	1,11,81,72,125	1,53,082	35,82,15,073
Sep	18,06,425	4,69,33,33,964	4,21,310	1,01,96,18,462	1,48,550	34,01,65,076
Oct	14,79,310	4,35,74,00,228	3,24,786	87,54,56,640	1,31,595	32,76,58,606
Nov	12,90,972	3,96,18,18,556	2,40,263	74,87,95,367	1,18,963	32,65,48,271
Grand Total	**1,84,02,543**	**45,28,58,87,886**	**42,55,351**	**9,97,46,21,208**	**16,38,642**	**3,83,26,87,011**

- **Details of Doorstep Services for AePS, Cash Withdrawal and Financial Transactions in Aspirational Districts (Mar-Nov 2020):**

			Aspirational Districts Data			
2020 Months	Aggregate Tran Nos	Aggregate Tran Values	Aggregate AePS Transactions Count	Aggregate AePS Transactions Values	Total cash Deposit Transaction	Cash W/D Amt
Mar	14,12,226	4,10,91,91,451	1,56,476	72,69,01,341	1,50,278	26,37,12,753
Apr	23,93,445	4,80,54,40,702	5,73,791	1,10,62,68,792	2,05,026	41,89,74,756
May	36,59,693	6,97,36,84,931	11,79,627	2,00,93,18,952	2,76,928	60,27,60,855
Jun	32,19,860	7,23,00,53,233	8,59,130	1,94,76,00,743	2,72,382	61,65,87,750
Jul	26,78,827	6,95,92,45,599	6,39,474	1,58,17,96,360	2,65,815	57,32,60,006
Aug	23,26,543	6,35,58,56,867	6,43,426	1,49,21,69,355	2,21,737	50,74,90,121
Sep	24,37,418	6,60,90,82,132	5,54,186	1,36,46,52,295	2,20,378	49,08,15,989
Oct	20,52,969	6,29,02,81,968	4,31,152	1,18,99,89,257	2,09,186	52,29,56,998
Nov	17,68,857	5,86,98,45,437	3,45,551	1,03,65,63,426	1,74,155	49,89,24,398
Grand Total	2,52,05,342	65,85,72,93,050	60,78,372	14,73,64,31,152	22,92,297	5,40,71,25,021

13. A Service Request app was created under Post Info App and 1,09,640 requests for various types of services were handled. This included requests for mail delivery, pick up and mail booking, financial services, IPPB and others.

14. PSB Alliance is an umbrella setup of all Public Sector Banks, jointly offering important customer oriented services envisaged by Govt. of India under EASE (Enhanced Access and Service Excellence) of Banking reforms. The Committee wanted to know whether the Post office Savings Bank proposes to be a part of the same and furnish door step banking services to its customers including non-financial banking services like pickup and delivery of negotiable instruments. The Dept. replied that Department of Posts is providing POSB schemes on behalf of Ministry of Finance. Department is also providing POSB schemes through online mode by NEFT, RTGS. Department is providing POSB services in rural areas through neighbourhood Branch Post Offices using micro-ATM based DARPAN devices and also doorstep banking through IPPB with the help of more than 2,00,000 Postmen and Gramin Dak Sewaks, who are also equipped with a smartphone and a biometric device. Now a customer can open a bank account, transfer funds, deposit and withdraw cash, recharge or pay bills at his/her Doorstep through banking services provided by IPPB. Account opening, AePS (Aadhaar enable payment system), DLC (Digital Life Certificate), CELC (Child

enrolment lite client), DBT disbursement are some of the door step services provided by IPPB. Around Rs. 5000 Crore were disbursed to customers of various Banks during the lockdown period, focusing on the Elderly, Disabled, Hotspots and Containment Zones including the Direct Benefits Transfers under Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana through the interoperable banks platform of IPPB. Till date more than Rs. 30,000 crores have been disbursed to customers of various banks. Further, Non-financial banking services like creation of Digital Life Certificate (Jeevan Pramaan) through bio-metric authentication is being provided under IPPB through postman. In case the Alliance approaches the Department for availing the network facility of DoP, the same will be examined.

V.   Accessibility of the Post Office in Remote Areas

15. The Committee wanted to know how far the postal Department have been able to fulfil the Government objective of having an interoperable banking access point within 5 KM of any household and creating alternate accessibility for customers of Any Bank. The Department answered that as per the data available from National Informatics Centre (NIC), IPPB coverage is there in around 5.7 lakh villages within the existing available records for more than 6.01 lakhs villages. In addition, a call centre is being operated by IPPB where anyone can call for opening of accounts and if required the postman or some other officer will visit the people to assist them in opening the bank accounts and delivery of banking services at door step thus effectively bringing distance to the Bank to ZERO. Aadhaar enabled payment service is also available with IPPB which helps customers of other banks also to avail the banking service through IPPB. Even if no bank or post office is available within a radius of 5Km, the door step banking facility by IPPB may be availed by the people.

16. To a query by the Committee on the area (in sq. Km) covered by each post office in the country, State-wise, the Department replied in the following tabular format-

S. No.	State/UT	No. of Post Offices	Area Covered per Post Office (in Sq Km)	Population served per post office (in lakhs)

1.	Andhra Pradesh	10571	15.16	0.080
2.	Assam	4007	19.58	0.078
3.	Bihar	9095	10.35	0.114
4.	Chhattisgarh	3908	34.59	0.065
5.	Delhi	531	2.79	0.316
6.	Gujarat (Union Territories of Daman & Diu and Dadra & Nagar Haveli)	8864	22.18	0.068
7.	Haryana	2694	16.41	0.094
8.	Himachal Pradesh	2795	19.92	0.025
9.	Jammu & Kashmir	1700	130.73	0.074
10.	Jharkhand	3822	20.86	0.086
11.	Karnataka	9634	19.91	0.063
12.	Kerala (Union Territory of Lakshadweep)	5063	7.68	0.066
13.	Madhya Pradesh	8277	37.24	0.088
14.	Maharashtra (including Goa)	13000	23.95	0.088
15.	North East (Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland & Tripura)	2919	60.51	0.048
16.	Odisha	8253	18.87	0.051
17.	Punjab(Union Territory of Chandigarh)	3869	13.04	0.074
18.	Rajasthan	10307	33.20	0.067
19.	Tamil Nadu(Union Territory of Pondicherry)	12140	10.75	0.060
20.	Telangana	5801	19.32	0.060
21.	Uttar Pradesh	17670	13.77	0.113
22.	Uttarakhand	2722	19.65	0.037
23.	West Bengal (Sikkim and the Union Territory of Andaman and Nicobar Islands)	9079	11.46	0.101
	TOTAL	156721	581.92	1.916

VI. Building physical infrastructure for parcel delivery paying special attention to NER and aspirational districts

17. To a query about the measures taken by the DoP to improve their supply chain in order to improve the e-commerce business of DoP , the Department informed that during the pandemic induced lock down when other means of transportation were mostly unavailable, Department of Posts had planned and executed its own dedicated Road Transport Network which worked as a crucial & dedicated supply chain available for shipment of essential goods, medicines, COVID kits, ventilators etc. during the lockdown:-

- These national routes involved a daily run of over 25000 Km per day
- More than 93 Tonnes of essential items were shipped in around 20000 bags per day during lockdown up to end of May, 2020.
- Around 36,000 tonnes of essential items, medicines and medical equipment were distributed during pandemic through Road Transport Network including special arrangements of supply chain vehicles made during the period.
- To monitor the movement of vehicles and timely shipment of essential items being carried, an online monitoring Dashboard was created by the Department.
- It enabled pharmaceutical companies (including ePharma companies) to operate and serve the nation during lock down.
- Served as critical supply chain available with nation and utilized extensively by Pharma companies and Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), during the lockdown and thereafter.

To further strengthen this dedicated road transport connectivity up to tier 2, tier 3 cities, the Department has set up a nationwide Road Transport Network having 76 National Routes involving daily run of over 56, 000 km.

18. The Committee wanted to know the steps have been taken to develop both physical infrastructure as well as human resource development in order to capture a larger market share in delivery and logistics to which the Department responded that they have undertaken **"Mail and Parcel Network Optimization Projects and Development of Infrastructure for Warehousing**

and Logistics" Scheme to develop the physical infrastructure for mail processing concerning Speed Post, Registered Post and Unregistered Mail. As a result of the upgradation in physical infrastructure of Speed Post processing hub, the Department have been able to handle the enhanced volume of 53.73 Crore Speed Post articles in comparison to 41.43 Crore articles during 2015-16. The activities relating to physical upgradation are also being undertaken at Registered mail processing hubs and Unregistered mail processing hubs. Besides, Department have introduced Plastic seals, Plastic labels and bags to improve the security of mail. The details of the upgradation activities undertaken in various types of processing hubs from 2017-18 to 2019-20 are given below:-

2017-18		2018-19		2019-20	
	Infrastructure upgrade (No. of Offices)		Infrastructure upgrade (No. of Offices)		Infrastructure upgrade (No. of Offices)
Book Now Pay Later (BNPL) Centre/ Business Processing Centre (BPCs)	15	BNPL Centre/ Business Processing Centre (BPCs)	15	BNPL Centre/ Business Processing Centre (BPCs)	15
National Sorting Hub/Parcel Hub/ Registered L1/Unregistered L1	7	National Sorting Hub (Category A)	1	National Sorting Hub (Category A & B), Intra Circle Hub	50
Intra Circle Hub/Parcel Hub/Registered L2/ Unregistered L2	20	National Sorting Hub (Category B)	22		
		Intra Circle Hub	30		
		Registered L1 Office (Category A)	5	Registered L1 & L2 Office	45

		Registered L1 Office (Category B)	16		
		Registered L2 Office	30		
		Unregistered L1 Office	16	Unregistered L1 & L2 Office	35
		Unregistered L2 Office	40		
Plastic seals	1.2 Cr.	Plastic Seals	70 lakh	Plastic Seals	15.75 lakh
Plastic labels	1.2 Cr.	Plastic labels	70 lakh	Plastic labels	15.75 lakh
		Security bags	25000	Security bags	6300

Besides, more than 70,000 mobile phones have been supplied to the postmen in the urban areas and more than 1.4 Lakh in the rural areas for real time delivery updation. To improve quality of manpower, regional Mail Network Optimization Project (MNOP) workshops have been held by the Department over the years to review the mail performance of the participating Circles, understand the issues faced by the field units, trained the officers on the available key performance indicator (KPI)/monitoring mechanism & how to use it effectively, educate the staff as to how these KPIs are calculated by the system, inputs from the field regarding further improvement in processes, etc. Similarly, workshops have also been held by the Circles involving the mid-level & lower level functionaries involved in mail operations. Following are some steps taken to develop physical infrastructure:-

- o **Parcel Hubs**: A new and separate network consisting of 190 Parcel Hubs, for handling of parcels
- o **Nodal Delivery Centers**: 219 Nodal Delivery Centres (NDCs) are operational for mechanized delivery of parcels. These are spread in 145 cities across the country to improve performance of doorstep delivery on the day of receipt of parcels in the destination post office. The initiative has strengthened delivery network for parcels in tier II & tier III cities by mechanizing the door delivery of Parcels using two wheelers and four wheelers.
- o **Transhipment Centre:** The hub and spoke mechanism for the proposed road transport network hinges crucially on well-connected exchange Points of Transhipment centres. 18 such transhipment centres have been planned as Parcel bag exchange points across the country. These Transhipment Centres

are being developed near highways so that MMS trucks are not stuck in city traffic thereby ensuring faster turnaround time. Six Transhipment Centres are operational at present.

- Following are some steps taken to develop Human Resource Development: -

  o With the objective to develop ownership, bring focus on Parcels & E-commerce business and to ensure speedy implementation of Parcel Network Optimization Project (PNOP), workshops for Zonal Review at the level of Circle Heads (CPMGs) and Regional Heads (PMGs) were held.
  o Standard Operating Procedure for Mail Offices, Parcel Hubs & Post Offices with main objective of reliability of delivery of parcels has been issued.
  o A Design Manual was prepared for Parcel Hubs and Nodal Delivery Centres (NDC) to assist all units in design and implementation of standard layout.
  o A Parcel Operations Manual has been prepared for Parcel Hubs and NDCs to understand operational details of each step of process from booking to delivery and to ensure Parcel Operations become predictable, reliable and efficient. The manual forms the basis for all operational training of staff in the Department.
  o In the situation of restricted mobility arising out of COVID-19, virtual interaction was done with all the Parcel Hubs in the country by the Parcel Directorate to assist the circles in implementation and increase on-floor productivity in the hubs.
  o A standard training package on operationalization of Standard Operating Procedure for staff working in field units was prepared by Parcel Directorate and shared with all the Head of Circle with an objective to enhance capacity building of the Department.

19. The Committee asked whether the DoP has made any special efforts to establish facilities in the NE States, LWE areas and aspirational districts in order to aid the delivery of parcels in geographically disadvantaged locations. The Department informed that a new and separate dedicated network consisting of 190 Parcel Hubs for handling of parcels has been operationalized for speedy processing of parcels. Out of these 190 hubs, 10 parcel hubs have been identified for the states falling under North Eastern Region and LWE areas.

Parcel Hubs in NE states	Parcel Hubs in LWE areas	Parcel Hubs in Aspirational Districts
Guwahati	Visakhapatnam	Visakhapatnam
Jorhat	Guntur	Muzaffarpur
Silchar	Srikakulam	Gaya
Tezpur	Muzaffarpur	Ranchi
North Lakhimpur	Gaya	Balangir
Tinsukia	Ranchi	Cuddapah
Agartala	Dhanbad	Gulbarga
Dimapur	Palakkad	Raichur
Shillong	Chandrapur	Jalgaon
Imphal	Balangir	Nanded

09 locations have been identified in NE states, 10 each in LWE areas and Aspirational Districts for setting up of Nodal Delivery Centres (NDCs) through mechanized delivery of parcels. These are being established to improve the performance of doorstep delivery on the day of receipt of parcels in the destination post office using two wheelers and four wheelers.

NDCs in NE states	NDCs in LWE areas	NDCs in Aspirational Districts
Guwahati	Visakhapatnam	Visakhapatnam
Nagaon	Gaya	Begusarai
Dibrugarh	Munger	Gaya
Silchar	Muzaffarpur	Muzaffarpur
Shillong	Nalanda	Nawada
Agartala	Nawada	Purnia
Kohima	Bokaro	Bokaro
Imphal	Dhanbad	Ranchi
Aizawl	Ranchi	Kalburgi
	Palakkad	Haridwar

20. The Committee further asked whether any special arrangements have been made to aid transmission of parcels in aspirational districts including medicines and essential commodities during COVID-19. The Department told that to meet the urgent national requirement at a critical time, a dedicated nationwide Road Transport network (RTN) for shipment of essential items

especially ventilators, medicines, Covid Kits etc. was planned to connect tier-2 and tier-3 cities and reach out to the rural areas including aspirational districts, state & district level road transport routes were also operationalized. These routes were connected to the National routes in a hub and spoke mechanism. Most of the aspirational districts were covered under state & district level routes. During COVID-19, Special arrangements were made by Head of Circles to ensure mail / parcel transmission & delivery in all districts including all aspirational district.

21. To a query on measures taken by DoP to make provision for handling of articles received at 'Technically Not Feasible' locations and whether any road map has been prepared for identifying short, medium and long term strategies and also to suggest the network optimization to increase the output and ensure optimum utilization of available wherewithal, the Department informed that "Technically Not Feasible (TNF)" locations are those locations i.e. mail offices where online Core Systems Integration (CSI) solutions cannot be rolled out due to non-availability of connectivity. These TNF locations are performing operations on offline applications and data is sent to the Central Server from time to time by these mail offices. The scanning of articles performed by these offices are also duly reflected in the track & trace. Department have also undertaken infrastructure upgradation activities at these offices to increase the output at these offices and to ensure optimum utilization of available resources. No issues have been observed by the Department at the TNF locations in handling the increased mail volume.

VII.   Encroachment of Post Office Lands

22. The Committee asked the Department about the details of plots available with the Department which are under encroachment, State –wise for the last three years. The Department informed that the number of plots available with the Department (Circle-wise) which are under encroachment for the last three years are as follows:

Sr. No.	Circle	Number of encroached plots
1	Andhra Pradesh	15
2	Assam	07
3	Bihar	27
4	Chhattisgarh	01

5	Delhi	0
6	Gujarat	07
7	Haryana	02
8	Himachal Pradesh	0
9	Jammu & Kashmir	02
10	Jharkhand	12
11	Karnataka	38
12	Kerala	09
13	Madhya Pradesh	05
14	Maharashtra	13
15	North East	06
16	Odisha	04
17	Punjab	0
18	Rajasthan	16
19	Tamil Nadu	02
20	Telangana	12
21	Uttar Pradesh	10
22	Uttarakhand	01
23	West Bengal	15
	TOTAL	**204**

23. The Committee wanted to know the measures being taken by the Department to remove encroachment and the plan to utilise the vacant lands available. The Department informed that they are making all-out efforts to remove encroachment with the help of public representatives, local administrations and judicial remedies available. In order to check the threat of encroachment, (a) Estate Officers have been appointed/nominated in each Circle under the Public Premises (Eviction of Unauthorized Occupants) Act, 1971 and notified in the Gazette of India to exercise the powers of Estate Officers to deal with cases related to unauthorized occupation of departmental lands and buildings and (b) boundary walls are being constructed on the vacant lands. To utilize the vacant lands, Department is constructing Head Post Office buildings where they are

presently being operated from rented buildings and small Post Offices with locally available materials for working strength up to 5 persons.

24. The details of the rented buildings and rent paid by the Department of Posts is as follows:

Year	No of buildings rented	Rent Paid (Rs. in Crore)
2017-18	19963	167
2018-19	19793	161
2019-20	19774	169
2020 (till December 2020)	19641	90

25. In response to a query on the Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan to make the post offices accessible to the differently abled, the Department replied that they construct ramps and rails, under "Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan", for making post offices accessible to the differently abled. The details of the number of buildings retrofitted are as follows:-

Year	No. of PO buildings retrofitted
2017-18	0
2018-19	310
2019-20	33
2020 (till December)	34

VIII. **Amelioration of Service Conditions of Gramin Dak Sevaks including financial upgradation**

26. The Gramin Dak Sevaks work for a minimum of four hours and maximum five hours a day .This work is part time in nature and for this work, they are being paid Time Related Continuity Allowance. The major duties of the Branch Post Master (BPM) and Assistant Branch Postmaster (ABPM)/Dak Sevaks are smooth and timely functioning of Post Office, overall management of postal facilities, maintenance of records, marketing of Postal services, procurement of business, conveyance and delivery of mail at doorstep, deposits/payments/other transactions under India Post Payments Bank. At present 2,39,702 GDSs are working in the Department .

27. The Committee wanted to know the efforts being made by the Department to resolve the long pending issues of Gramin Dak Sevaks (GDS) and assuage their discontent. The Committee was informed that the Government has been reviewing the working conditions and long pending issues and also increasing their allowances commensurate with their workload from time to time. Whenever a Central Pay Commission is constituted, the Department of Posts has constituted a separate Committee to look into their TRCA structure and service conditions governing Gramin Dak Sevaks. Accordingly, after constitution of 7th CPC for regular Central Government Employees, a One Man Committee was set up to examine the TRCA structure, long pending issues and other service conditions of Gramin Dak Sevaks under the Chairmanship of Shri Kamlesh Chandra, Retired Member, Postal Services Board, vide Gazette Notification dated 19.11.2015. The Committee submitted its report on 24.11.2016.

28. The Department further informed that following approved recommendations of Kamlesh Chandra Committee report have been implemented:-
   o TRCA and Allowances.
   o Enhancement of GDS Gratuity.
   o Service Discharge Benefits
   o 180 days Maternity Leave to female GDS.
   o Composite Allowance.
   o Cash Conveyance Allowance.
   o Combined Duty Allowance.
   o Risk and Hardship Allowance.
   o Issuance of Identity Cards.
   o Voluntary Discharge Scheme
   o Children Education Facilitation Allowance.
   o Limited Transfer Facility.
   o Emergency leave.

- Following residual recommendations are under examination by the Government**:-**

   o Accumulation & Encashment of paid leave maximum to 180 days.
   o Financial upgradation to Gramin Dak Sevaks on completion of 12 years, 24 years and 36 years of engagement.
   o Medical Treatment Assistance/Group Health Insurance/ Employees' State Insurance Corporation (ESIC) Scheme for GDSs.
   o Combined Duty Allowance to BPM of single handed BOs .

- Following recommendations have not been agreed to by the Government: -

  o Enhancement of paid leave from 20 to 30 days.
  o Enhancement of monthly subscriptions and insurance cover of Employees Group Insurance Scheme (EGIS).
  o Composite allowance to ABPM in X,Y and Z class cities.
  o Enhancement of working hours to 8 hours.
  o Discharge on last day of the month on which GDS attains the age of 65 years.
  o All single-handed Branch Post Offices to be double handed.

29. Following approved recommendations of Kamlesh Chandra Committee report have been implemented -:
    (i)   TRCA and Allowances.
    (ii)   Enhancement of GDS Gratuity.
    (iii)   Service Discharge Benefits
    (iv)   180 days Maternity Leave to female GDS.
    (v)   Composite Allowance.
    (vi)   Cash Conveyance Allowance.
    (vii)   Combined Duty Allowance.
    (viii) Risk and Hardship Allowance.
    (ix)   Issuance of Identity Cards.
    (x)   Voluntary Discharge Scheme
    (xi)   Children Education Facilitation Allowance.
    (xii)   Limited Transfer Facility.
    (xiii) Emergency leave.
    (xiv)   Disciplinary aspects i.e. GDS (Conduct and Engagement) Rules, 2020.

30. Following recommendations have not been agreed to by the Government-:

    i.   Enhancement of paid leave from 20 to 30 days.
    ii.   Accumulation & Encashment of paid leave subject to maximum of 180 days.
    iii. Composite allowance to ABPM in X,Y and Z class cities.
    iv.   Enhancement of working hours to 8 hours.
    v.   Discharge on last day of the month in which GDS attains the age of 65 years.
    vi.   All single-handed Branch Post Offices to be double handed.

31. Following residual recommendations are under examination by the

Government-:

    i.   Medical Treatment Assistance/Group Health Insurance/ESIC Scheme for GDSs .

    ii.   Revision of Method of calculation of Income/Cost and issue of revised revenue Norms of Branch Post Offices.

    iii.   Financial upgradation to Gramin Dak Sevaks on completion of 12 years, 24 years and 36 years of engagement .

    iv.   Ex-gratia payment during put off period be revised to 35 %from 25 %of the wages and DA drawn immediately before put off period .

    v.   The contribution of department in Circle welfare fund)CWF (to be increased from Rs.100-/per annum to Rs.300 -/per annum.

    vi.   The scope of CWF be extended to cover immediate family members such as spouse, daughters, sons and dependent daughters-in-law .

    vii.   10 % hike in the prescribed limits of financial grants and assistance in the Circle Welfare fund.

    viii.   Addition of Rs.10,000 -/for purpose of Tablet/Mobile from the Circle Welfare Fund in the head "Financial Assistance" from Fund by way of loans with lower rate of interest)5.(%

    ix.   The coverage of GDS Group Insurance Scheme be increased from Rs.50,000 -/to Rs .5,00,000 .-/

32. The Committee wanted to know the wage structure of GDS and what is the monthly pay of a newly recruited GDS.   The Department informed that the revised TRCA slab/ levels applicable to two approved categories of GDS is as given below .These came into effect from 01.07.2018.

Revised minimum TRCA of two types of categories of GDSS as per working hours /levels			
Sl No	Category	Minimum TRCA for 4 Hours / Level 1	Minimum TRCA for 5 Hours /Level 2
1	BPM	12,000	14,500
2	ABPM/Dak Sevaks	10,000	12,000

The minimum Time Related Continuity allowance (TRCA) of GDSs is fixed as per working hours/levels i.e .4 Hours/Level-1 or 5 Hours/Level-2.

33. The Committee wanted to know the benefits/perks/allowances extended to GDS including overtime payment, medical insurance and maternity leave. The Department informed that the Gramin Dak Sevaks work for a minimum of four hours and maximum five hours a day. Kamlesh Chandra Committee has recommended the following allowances .It is highlighted that Children Education Facilitation Allowance and Maternity Leave for Female GDS have been introduced for the first time .The allowances extended to GDSs are as under:

Item	Allowance
Children Education Facilitation Allowance subject to maximum of two children	Rs.6000 -/per annum .
Maternity leave for female GDS with less than two surviving children	180 days.
Risk and Hardship Allowance	Risk and Hardship allowance @ of Rs.500 per month to the GDS working in areas which are identified for this allowance .)as identified by Government of India, as per 7th CPC recommendations(
Office maintenance allowance)For BPMs only(	BPMS providing GDS Post Office accommodation which meets the prescribed standards –Rs.500/ per month . BPMs having BOs at non-standard/rent free accommodation –Rs.250/ per month.
Fixed Stationary Charge	Rs.25 /ABPM and Dak Sevaks .FSC subsumed in composite allowance for BPMs.
Boat Allowance	Rs.115 /per month.
Cash Conveyance Allowance	There will be no fixed cash conveyance allowances .Instead, payment will be at following rates): a (Payment of Rs.30 -/per occasion plus actual conveyance charges for cash conveyance of an amount less than Rs.1 Lakh subject to maximum of charges

	incurred for transport by public bus and; b (50 -/per occasion plus actual conveyance charges for an amount more than Rs.1 Lakh subject to maximum of charges incurred for transport by public bus.
Cycle Maintenance Allowance	Rs.180 /per month
Combined Allowance Duty	BPM for delivery OR Mail conveyance work –Rs.45 -/per day subject to maximum of Rs.1170 -/per month. BPM for delivery PLUS mail conveyance – Rs.90 -/per day subject to maximum of Rs.2340 -/per month. ABPM for BPM work -Rs.75 -/per day subject to maximum of Rs.1950 -/per month. ABPM/Dak Sevak or additional work of another ABPM/Dak Sevak -Rs.45 -/per day subject to a maximum of Rs.1170-/ These rates will be for combination of duties of two or more posts borne on the Establishment of the office.

The proposal to cover GDS under group Health Insurance is under examination.

34. The Committee wanted to know whether the GDS are included under EPF and MP Act, 1952 and whether the postal Dept. makes compliance in respect of GDS in order to provide Provident Fund and Old age pension benefits to GDS. The Department informed that they have no regulation to cover the Gramin Dak Sevaks (GDS) under Employees' Provident Fund (EPF) and Employees' State Insurance (ESI) as GDSs are not contractual labour. GDS are engaged by the Department through GDS Online engagement process by following eligibility criteria for GDS post not through any contractor. The Hon'ble Supreme Court in

the judgment pronounced on 22.04.1977in case titled UOI Vs P.K. Rajamma etc. held that though the Gramin Dak Sevaks are holders of Civil posts, but they are outside the regular civil service. GDSs are governed by a separate set of rules i.e. GDS (Conduct & Engagement) Rules, 2020 framed by Department of Posts. GDS are getting benefits of New Pension Scheme (Lite) called as Service Discharge Benefit Scheme(SDBS) on the platform of NPS Lite introduced for GDS entering into service w.e.f. 01.04.2011 with monthly matching contribution of Rs. 300/- each by GDS and Department.

35. The Department further informed that the schemes for promotion of GDS are as under-:

(i) Gramin Dak Sevaks are considered for absorption as Multi Tasking Staff {MTS} in 50 of vacancies on seniority cum fitness basis and 25 %by Competitive Examination.

(ii) Gramin Dak Sevaks upto the age of 50 years are considered for recruitment for 50 %of vacancies of Postman cadre and 25% of vacancies of Mail Guard cadre by way of Competitive Examination.

(iii) Unfilled vacancies of Postal Assistants/Sorting Assistants /Postman / Mail Guard out of the promotion quota are offered to Gramin Dak Sevaks subject to fulfillment of educational qualification, age, etc .and qualifying successfully in the aptitude test.

The issue of financial up-gradation to the GDS is under examination.

36. The Committee wanted to know if the Department plan to expand the scope of the Circle Welfare Fund to cover dependent daughters in law, dependent separated daughter, dependent grandchildren. The Department informed that the Circle Welfare Fund extends financial assistance to regular departmental employees under the welfare schemes. Though there are no exclusive schemes for extending financial assistance to dependent daughters in law, dependent separated daughter, dependent grandchildren, financial assistance in the following cases may include them within the ambit of family / family members / next of kin.

i. A sum of Rs. 10,000/- is given for Funeral expenses to the families of deceased employees to meet the immediate expenses irrespective of whether

death occurs during duty /outside duty hours and also to the brothers or sisters or near relatives who perform the last rites.

ii   A sum of Rs. 75,000/- is given to the family members of the deceased postal employees in case of death due to terrorist activity/dacoity while on duty.

iii.   A sum of Rs. 15,000/- is given to the family members of the deceased postal employees in case of death while on duty due to accidents Rs.15,000/-

iv.   A sum of Rs. 15,000/- is given to the family members of the deceased postal employees in case of death due to terrorist, robbers activity etc. while not on duty

v.   A sum of Rs. 400/- per month (upto 6 months) for nutritive diet of regular employees suffering from TB and their family members.

vi.   A sum of Rs. 10000/- in cases of prolonged and serious illness/major surgeries for Departmental Employees and their dependents.

vii.   Financial Assistance for employees and their dependents for Excursion Trips (4-5 days/700km) 60% cost of railway fare.

viii.   A sum of Rs.4,500/- is given to employees and family for losses due to   natural calamities, fire and floods.

ix.   Scholarships-
  a. Financial Incentive from Rs. 3000/- to Rs. 6000/- is given for excellence in   academic   achievement   for   Xth   &   XIIth   (Science/ Commerce/Humanities) Class.

  b. Scholarships for Technical and non-Technical.

    (i) IIT, IIM, AIIMS) Rs. 1000/- p.m.
    (ii) Medical/Tech.Edu/PG Degree Rs. 800/- p.m./ Diploma Rs.300/- p.m.
    (iii) Non-Tech Degree Girl student undergoing Graduation in any field with a minimum of 60% aggregate marks in class 12th @Rs. 250/-p.m.
    (iv) ITI certificate course– Rs.1400/- p.a.

  c. Scholarship for UPSC Examinations- Rs. 2000/-

IX.   Settlement of Dormant Accounts in Post Office Savings Bank and settlement of deceased claims

37. The Committee asked the Department to define dead accounts to which the Department responded that there is no such terminology as 'Dead Accounts'

under POSB Schemes. There is a category of account / certificate which is known as "Unclaimed Accounts", wherein, if the matured account / certificate is not closed within 10 years from the date of maturity, the account is treated as Unclaimed Account and the proceeds of such account are transferred to Senior Citizen Welfare Fund (SCWF). However, the account / certificate holder at any point of time can approach post office to claim the maturity proceeds within 25 years from the date of transfer of account to SCWF. Thereafter, the amount is permanently transferred to SCWF. 3.01 crore unclaimed accounts / certificates are identified under Senior Citizens Welfare Fund (SCWF) as on 30.09.2022. A total balance of Rs. 19,828 Crore is lying unclaimed as on 30.09.2022.

38. The Department further explained that an all-out effort are being made to settle maximum unclaimed accounts by giving wide publicity and by launching special drives at Circle, Region, Division, Post Office level including notices and publicity in newspapers. With the combined efforts of all Circles, more than 33 lakh accounts have been settled under SCWF all over the country . Door to door campaign and special drives are also being launched at Post Office / Divisional/Regional/Circle level through the Gramin Dak Sevaks/Postmen. Further, continuous correspondences are also being made with all the Head of the Circles from the Directorate for settlement of maximum accounts as per the existing rules.

39. The Committee learnt that that the process followed by the DoP for settling the claims of deceased account holders is cumbersome resulting in unnecessary hassles to the families of the deceased. The Committee was informed that the process of settlement of deceased claim cases has already been reviewed and streamlined for smooth operation as well as early settlement. The present process being followed for settlement of deceased claim cases has been implemented since August, 2020. This has further been streamlined by delegating the powers of sanction of deceased claim cases to lower level sanctioning authorities in November, 2020. As such, the claims which were earlier sent to PMG / CPMG for sanction are now being settled at Divisional level only. All claims are now being settled either in the post office (all nomination cases) and post office (up to certain limits) and Divisional Office in case of no nomination cases. Provision of 'nomination' has been made mandatory at the time of opening of new accounts that will help in settlement of deceased claim cases within one working day.

40. The Department further informed that deceased claim cases having nomination are settled in 1 working day and deceased claim cases where no nomination exist are settled in 7 working days.

41. The Committee wanted to know how much amount has been transferred by the Department to the Senior Citizens Welfare Fund since its inception in 2016. The Department informed the details as follows-

Sl.no.	Period	Amount
01	As on 31.08.2017	Rs. 6902.78 Crore
02.	From 01.09.2017 to 30.06.2018	Rs. 1354.66 Crore
03.	As on 30.09.2019 since inception	Rs. 11435.35 Crore

The utilization of fund is in purview of Ministry of Finance.

Sl. No.	Year	No of unclaimed accounts settled	Total value (in crores of Rs.)
1.	2018-19	NA	
2.	2019-20	27149	77.63
3.	2020-21	41574	39.85

42. The Department provided the data regarding Know Your Customer facility w.r.t POSB and IPPB as follows-

Sl.	Head	No. of accounts having KYC	No. of accounts not having KYC	No. of accounts having nomination	No. of accounts not having nomination
1.	POSB Savings Accounts	19,67,80,151	15,27,66,382	12,86,24,622	22,09,21,911
2.	POSB Savings Certificates	4,05,87,977	8,99,42,008	7,83,83,283	5,21,46,702
3.	IPPB Accounts	44824749	Nil	15040288	29784461

43. The Committee enquired about how does the Dept. settle the deceased claim cases where no nomination exists and the Turn Around Time for it. The Department informed that in case no nomination exists in POSB Accounts/Certificates, the deceased claim cases are settled on the basis of obtaining prescribed legal evidence documents. If no legal evidence document is available and the eligible amount to be paid exceeds Rs. 5 lakh, claim is settled on obtaining Succession Certificate issued by the court and if the amount is up to Rs. 5 lakh, claim is settled on obtaining the letter of indemnity, affidavit and letter of disclaimer. Turn-around time is 7 days if the claim falls under the financial powers of the post office. If the sanctioning authority is other than the post office, the claim will be forwarded to the authority concerned who will sanction the claim within 7 days from the date of receipt of the claim application.

X.   Strategic Role and building image of the Department of Posts

44. The Committee wanted to know what kind of changes are expected to be incorporated in the working of the Department of Posts in order to remain relevant in the face of competition. The Department replied that Department of Posts (DoP) had traditionally been a carrier of mails and documents and the entire transmission, processing and delivery network was built for documents and small packets. As market has now shifted to merchandise parcels, entire transmission, processing and delivery infra is being created afresh for handling parcels. The Department have created a separate Parcel vertical and invested in Parcel Centres, Nodal Delivery Centres (NDCs) and Postal Road Transport Network (RTN).

Today financial services, insurance services, point of sale and delivery have become technology intensive. Accordingly, Department have successfully implemented computerization & networking of its more than 1.60 lakh Post Offices in order to provide doorstep services to its customers. In order to introduce flexibility & agility in its financial services, India Post Payments Bank (IPPB) has been launched on 01st September, 2018. Services of IPPB are delivered to the customers at their doorsteps through Postmen and Gramin Dak Sevaks of Department of Posts. IPPB in a very short span of time has opened more than 8.16 crore accounts & delivered more than Rs. 30,000 crore cash at the doorsteps of customers having account in any bank through Aadhaar Enabled Payment System (AePS).

- Total 8.16 Crore accounts opened by IPPB, out of which, over 44% Accounts are of women; 98% Women's accounts have been opened at doorsteps.
- 77 % of all IPPB account holders are from rural areas.
- In case of Sukanya Samriddhi Yojana, which was launched in January 2015, 3.12 Crore accounts opened in Post Offices represent more than 84% of the total Sukanya accounts.

The administration of Postal Life Insurance Schemes and Rural Postal Life Insurance Schemes has been streamlined with a number of reformative steps and introduction of IT, leading to highest ever premium collection in 2020-21.

The Department have also emerged as a major player in G2C services. 434 Post Office-Passport Sewa Kendras and over 13,000 Aadhaar updation & enrolment Centres have registered over 10 crore transactions as on 31.12.2023.

Post Office-Common Service Centres are also being opened to offer 100+ G2C and B2C services. In times of Covid, DoP has emerged as a major frontline warrior. During the 1st and 2nd Covid waves, the Department:

- Delivered at the doorsteps of customers Rs 12279 crore through 4.83 crore AePS transactions.
- Delivered over 50 lakh e-Money Orders with a value of about Rs 600 Crore.
- Delivered over 7 crore Speed Post articles.

Strategies being incorporated:

Financial inclusion (POSB & Postal Insurance):

- NEFT-RTGS rolled out.
- Further strengthen the POSB IT system especially in the area of mobile and internet banking.
- Offer more and more POSB and PLI/RPLI services at the doorsteps through Postmen and GDS

Post Office at door-steps:

- With the aid of technology, offer more and more services of DoP and IPPB at the door-steps. Door step delivery of services is a major strength of the

Department

- Common Service Centres rolled out in 1,43,066 Post Offices. Aadhaar updation services shall also be provided through these PO-CSCs. More than 13000 PO-CSCs with Aadhaar updation services are operational.
- Partnerships with Election Commission of India for Election Photo Identity Card (EPIC) delivery.
- G2C services to be key focus area for continued revenue increase and service enhancement

e-Commerce and Parcel:

- Enhance parcel handling capacity from the current 12 Crore p.a to 24 Crore p.a by 2023-24
- Set up 32 additional Nodal Delivery Centres, extending to tier 2 and 3 cities
- 12 National and 84 more State level Postal Road Transport Network (RTN) to be set up. Advantage of a dedicated Postal RTN is a more secure and faster parcel transmission.
- 879 Dak Ghar Niryat Kendras (DNK) have been set up, to provide international e-Commerce export booking facility to small traders/artisans/MSMEs.
- Provide plug and play applications to e-Commerce/parcel partners under IT 2.0, to further ease doing business with DoP

45. The Committee wanted to know the image-building exercises undertaken to improve the perception of the post office in the eyes of the consumers including social media. The Department replied that to improve the perception of the Post Office in the eyes of the consumers, Department of Posts has been making various efforts through various media channels.

Pan India TV Campaigns (Doordarshan & Digital Cinema Theaters), Pan India Radio jingle campaigns are being run to disseminate information about postal products and services. Activities such a Stamp design competition (engages students), letter writing competitions (students and general public) are organised at various levels across the country by Department of Posts throughout the year which helps in connecting people with the department.

Through social media Department of Posts has undertaken various image building exercises to improve the perception of the post office in the eyes of consumers, such as, awareness about India Post's products and services under umbrella campaign #AapkaDostIndiaPost & #DigitalDostIndiaPost (which helped in projecting India Post as a friend of consumers), depicting success stories, providing clarity for dos and don'ts, prohibited articles, etc., assisting

the customers during Covid pandemic and spreading awareness for the same through Covid related campaigns #CovidMeinAapkaDost and #Unite2FightCorona on social media channels.

Department of Posts brings out digital publicity material on specific products and services for the information of the Customers. It has also brought out eBooks like "India Post Meets Covid-19 Challenge" and disseminated widely on the ways in which Department extended services to the public during the pandemic, especially duirng lock down period.

XI. Modernisation of E-Post Office through self booking kiosks and smart delivery boxes

46. To a query about the functioning of the Self Booking Kiosks and Smart Delivery Boxes , the Department answered that-

(i) **Self-Booking Kiosk:**

- The user is required to visit the location where Self Booking Kiosk is installed,
- The user can key-in the details of 'From Address' and 'To Address' in the Smart Post Kiosk or alternatively can pre-fill the details using a web or mobile App of India Post and feed it in the Kiosk through a Token ID.
- User thereafter selects the option of article type and can generate the relevant barcode.
- The user will paste the barcode on the article and will scan the same by using the scanner installed in the Kiosk.
- User will then drop the article inside a slot in the Kiosk.
- The Kiosk calculates the postal charges and displays the same for payment.
- The user will have to complete the payment process through UPI (QR option).
- On successful payment of the amount, a transaction receipt is generated. A message is also sent to user on the mobile number and through e-mail.
- Postal officials will thereafter clear the articles from the Kiosk at pre-fixed time and hand over the articles to Postal Assistant of the attached Post office for further processing and dispatch.

(ii) **Smart Delivery Box**

- Postman will deposit the article in the slots of Smart Delivery Box after capturing the article number & addressee mobile number on the App,
- A text message will be sent to the addressee that an article addressed to him/her has been deposited in the Smart Delivery Box and the article can be collected 24x7,
- Addressee can access the Box through the Self Delivery Box' App, to be downloaded from Google Play Store.
- While collecting the article, the addressee will open the App and enter the mobile number,
- After successful authentication through an OTP, access shall be granted.
- Customer will open the slot in Smart Delivery Box through the App ,
- Addressee will collect the article from Smart Delivery Box,

47. The working of ePost, digital parcel boxes and post restante Services were further explained by the Postal Department as below:

(i) **ePost**

To bridge the gap, ePost services were launched by Department of Posts in 2004. The service facilitates communication between people who do not have computers and internet connectivity at either point, through electronic transmission and manual delivery of mail/message to the addressee anywhere in India. ePost message can be sent by a customer through post office and by customer himself from his own computer, using internet connectivity at his premises. For sending messages through a post office, the customer has to go to ePost enabled post office and hand over typed or hand-written message (in any language) or pictures etc. which is scanned in the post office. Alternatively, the message can be typed by the operator in the ePost system. Booking Post office will send the message to the destination post office through the system, where it will be downloaded, printed and manually delivered to the addressee through the postman. Prepaid and registered users can send the ePost messages from their premises without visiting the e-Post centres.

(ii) **Digital Parcel Boxes**

Digital Parcel Boxes or Smart Delivery Box is the new innovations in the Postal sector worldwide wherein the customers can receive their postal articles without visiting the post offices. These Smart Delivery Boxes are generally installed by the postal administrations in the shopping malls, market places, Post offices, other public places, etc. to enable the customers to receive their

articles from these boxes 24 X 7 at their own convenience. Besides, these Kiosks will also provide for the easy accessibility of the delivery services to the customers. Department of Posts has already carried out successful pilot for the Smart Delivery Box. Department have proposed to install such Smart Delivery Boxes at selected locations in the country in the next 5 years, subject to approval of the shceme.

XII. Cyber Security in the Department Of Posts

48. The Committee wanted to know whether the Department have its own servers to manage its data and whether it has made provision for disaster recovery in case of a disaster. The Department replied that they have own servers deployed by various IT Vendors at a Data Centre Facility which allows Department to manage its data. Disaster Recovery Centre is operational at Mysuru.

49. The Department further informed that the Department have nominated CGM CEPT (Chief General Manager- Centre for Excellence in Postal Technology) as Chief Information Security Officer (CISO). Various policies have been framed in order to ensure the data security and to guard against un-authorized access/threats.

(i) **Data Classification Policy** - All data assets must be inventoried, assigned an asset owner, classified, and documented to ensure that each receive the appropriate level of protection. Different types of data require varying levels of protection depending on its sensitivity and criticality.

(ii) **Data Encryption Policy** - This Policy defines the Security requirements for data encryption up on laptops, physical (portable and removable) media and Secure File Transfer within India Post Domain. This policy template and the procedures herein encompasses to ensure the confidentiality and integrity of India Post's data / information through the implementation of cryptographic controls.

(iii) **Patch and Vulnerability Management Policy** - All the evolving threats add a different set of challenges, which require continuous vigil, monitoring and analysis. The discovery of a new vulnerability, disclosure of a new exploit or emergence of a new malware threat and the capability to incorporate protection from them on a real time basis fall under Threat and Vulnerability Management.

(iv) **Application Security Policy** - Summarizes the application security policy by providing a security framework for applications developed or purchased by India Post.

(v) **Database Security Policy** - All databases are secured to ensure the confidentiality of customer information, the integrity of the business processes, and the availability of the systems.

(vi) **Password Policy** - Establishes a standard for creation of strong passwords, the protection of those passwords, and the frequency of change of the passwords.

(vii) **Cyber Security Policy** - Outlines the guidelines and provisions for preserving the security of data and technology infrastructure of Department of Post. This policy delineates security requirements, roles, and responsibilities necessary to protect enterprise data and information systems from unauthorized access, inappropriate disclosure, or compromise. Furthermore, this policy is defined in the context of complying with the policy framework requirements considering best practices adopted by IT industry.

50. Periodic Vulnerability assessment is carried out, analysed and risks addressed for mitigation. The Department participates in the CERT-In drills to understand the security posture. Further, the organizational CCMP is available. By implementing all the above mentioned policies through the SIs of the Department and by constant review/monitoring by CISO, Department is working on security of the data from external threats/attacks.

51. The Committee wanted to know about the Nanyata App and Postman Mobile App to which the Department replied that both Nanyatha App and Postman Mobile App (PMA) have been developed 'in house' by the Centre of Excellence in Postal Technology (CEPT), Mysore for the use of departmental officials. It is not for the use of members of public. As on date, 43,241 letter boxes are cleared everyday by letter box peons using Nanyatha App. 1.39 Lakh postman/GDS staff are using PMA for delivery of accountable articles. The Apps have been able to achieve their objective of monitoring the clearance of letter boxes and to update the delivery status of articles on real-time basis. CEPT, Mysore is responsible for debugging and troubleshooting in respect of Nanyatha and PMA App.

52. The Department further informed that the postal staff are being trained in Cyber Security at various levels. All officers of the Department during their Probation are attached to CEPT for imparting training on various technology related activities. During this attachment, training on IT/Cyber Security is

imparted. For rest of the staff, basic training is imparted at Postal Training Centres on IT Security with the objective of ensuring end point security. CEPT has conducted Master Development program twice where Circle SPOCs (single point of contact) have been trained in various disciplines, who in turn train the local Post office staff. DoP engaged Core System Integrator (CSI) for implementation and monitoring of all Security tools at the Data Centre and Post Offices. CSI deployed trained and certified professionals to implement and monitor the security policies of the Department. About 20 resources of CEPT/DoP Hqrs, have undergone training on CISO (Chief Information Security Officer) deep dive training conducted by NeGD (National e-Governance Division). They are imparted with advanced training by C-DAC Hyderabad and Delhi. Additionally more than 100 employees of DoP are imparted Online training in Cyber Security, through the initiative taken by MeitY to train Government Personnel of Central Government Ministries/Departments.

XIII.   Pending Projects in Estate Management

53. The Committee had asked the Department to furnish a note on land availability with DoP in the country and its utilisation policy and whether DoP has planned any PPP model by which land can be utilised by private players to construct buildings and DoP can utilise some space and rentals. Department informed that it has 1729 vacant plots of land throughout the country as on 31.03.2021. State-wise details are at **Annexure-I.** These vacant lands are for constructing postal buildings on the basis of cost benefit analysis and availability of funds. The Department have decided to construct its own buildings for operating Head Post Offices wherever they are functioning from rented buildings, if vacant land owned by the department is available. Construction of small Post Offices is a measure taken by the Department for speedy construction of buildings so that land is appropriately utilised and the customers get pleasant experience. In the case of small Post Offices, the cost of construction is low and completion is attained in the shortest possible time. Also, locally available materials and manpower/contractors are used so that the project is completed without any hindrance.   It does not have SPM quarter or inspections quarters. Its Schedule of Accommodation (SoA) ranges between 50-80 m^2 only to serve single handed, double handed and triple handed post offices. Department primarily targets rural areas to develop such kind of infrastructure. At present there is no such plan in the Department of Posts to utilize the vacant lands under Public Private Partnership (PPP) model.

54. The details of the pending projects of Post Office buildings for the past 10 years are at **Annexure-II**.

The yearly outflow on rent of postal buildings is approximately Rs.105.07 Crore. 10179 buildings have been rented by the Department for more than 20 years. The list is at **Annexure-III**.

XIV. Role played by the Post Office in Sustainable Development Goals and Reduction in Emissions

55. The Committee asked about the efforts undertaken by the Department to achieve the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) as a member of the Universal Postal Union (UPU). The Department replied that the 17 SDGs are: (1) No Poverty, (2) Zero Hunger, (3) Good Health and Well-being, (4) Quality Education, (5) Gender Equality, (6) Clean Water and Sanitation, (7) Affordable and Clean Energy, (8) Decent Work and Economic Growth, (9) Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure, (10) Reducing Inequality, (11) Sustainable Cities and Communities, (12) Responsible Consumption and Production, (13) Climate Action, (14) Life Below Water, (15) Life On Land, (16) Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions, (17) Partnerships for the Goals. Universal Postal Union (UPU) being a specialized agency of United Nations also contributes in fulfilling the relevant Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Though the SDGs have much wider scope of activities not directly linked with postal sector but post offices also contribute in attainment of these goals through some of their activities. Department of Posts, as a member of UPU, has been undertaking a number of activities helping to achieve the relevant SDGs which include the following;

(1) No Poverty, (2) Zero Hunger, (10) Reducing Inequality: There is greater role of post offices in Financial Inclusion and Financial Literacy among the citizens through Post Offices Savings Bank Schemes, Direct Benefit Transfer, Pension Payments, Aadhaar enabled Payment System (AePS) at the doorstep through India Post Payments Bank and Postal Life Insurance. Department have also been creating employment for people through post office agents and franchise.

(5) Gender Equality, (4) Quality Education: All Women Post offices have been opened and facilities created for women employees to promote gender sensitivity and equality. Postal Department have also been promoting Sukanya

Samriddhi Yojana (SSY) through post offices to open accounts for the girl child and secure their future and quality education.

(7) Affordable and Clean Energy, (13) Climate Action: Activities have been undertaken for rain water harvesting in post office premises and instalment of solar panel on rooftop of post offices to generate clean energy.

(8) Decent Work and Economic Growth, (9) Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure: In order to promote exports through postal channel the number of Foreign Post Office gateways (Offices of Exchange) have been increased from five to eight and at 19 locations Customs clearance facilities in Foreign Post Offices have been made operational to facilitate small exporters and Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises (MSMEs).

56. The Committee enquired about the daily carbon footprint of the postal Department and the efforts being made to cut the emissions and reduce the use of paper, initiatives to offset the carbon and achieve reduced consumption of natural resources and use of renewable energy. The DoP informed that Quantification of CO_2 emissions of the Department have not been done. However, with introduction of IT systems in the Department, usage of paper & printing has got substantially reduced in the last 5 years. Also, with introduction of CNG vehicles and a modern fleet of vehicles, total emissions have been reduced. Roof top solar panels on postal buildings further contribute towards reduction in carbon footprint. The Department installs roof top solar power packs on departmental buildings, wherever feasible. So far, 321 solar power packs have been installed.

57. Regarding e-vehicles, at present, Department does not have any e-vehicle/battery operated vehicles in its fleet. Department have, however, proposed to induct Electric/CNG vehicles in its fleet in the next 5 years from 2021-22 to 2025-26, to reduce fuel consumption.

58. 705 postal buildings have rainwater harvesting structures, out of which 694 are in working condition. 321 buildings have solar energy systems, out of which 267 are in working condition.

59. The Committee wanted to know the roadmap to develop postal infrastructure which has the lowest possible environmental impact alongwith recycling and waste reduction as part of its Social Responsibility. Small post office concept of the Department is based on maximizing use of local building materials for construction, in order to reduce the environmental impact. Additionally,

reduced consumption of paper & printers also leads to reduced waste generation.

XV. **Role of the Department of Posts In Dissemination of information and Gender Equality**

60. The Committee questioned the Department about the role of India Post in promoting e- Govt. initiatives and the dissemination of information of welfare schemes. The Department informed that India Post has played an important role in promoting government initiatives and dissemination of information of welfare schemes by displaying information about them through displays and banners on more than 1.6 lakh Post Offices across the country. In the last one and half years India Post participated in several welfare campaigns such as Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Campaign, Department of Consumer Affairs' consumer legal rights awareness campaign, information and promotion of Ministry of MSME's ST/SC Entrepreneur's Hub, Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana, Jan Andolan 1.0 & 2.0 Campaign, Free vaccination for all, etc. Banners and posters were displayed in our Post Offices across the country to provide awareness and information about these government schemes to public visiting the Post Offices. LED display Boards are set up on top of the building and in the public hall of the Post Offices. As and when creatives with instructions are received from MIB, they are disseminated digitally through Web Banner on the website of Department of Posts (indiapost.gov.in), through social media handles (Twitter, Koo, Instagram, Facebook) and through LED display. Recently MIB has shared creatives on Jan Andolan 2.0 and on the message of free vaccination for all and this was disseminated widely.

61. The Department further replied that DOP closely promotes Girl Child welfare and development programs. DOP has taken up campaigns promoting Women and Child Development. For ex. the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Campaign is widely disseminated. The Sukanya Samriddhi Yojana is a flagship scheme for securing the future of Girl Children. Under this scheme a Sukanya Samriddhi account (SSA) is opened for the girl children in Post Offices. Department of Posts has opened 3.12 Crore accounts through more than 1.6 lakh Post Offices across the country. In fact, 84% of SSA accounts are opened in Post Offices. It has been instructed to all Postal Circles to raise awareness on SSA and include maximum number of girl children under the fold of SSA. To achieve it, various initiatives, programs, events are conducted by Postal Circles in partnerships with Women and Child Development Departments and School Education Departments of several State Governments. Pan India radio jingles are also being run to raise awareness on SSA and its benefits. Apart from this, social media creatives are

also regularly shared regarding SSA.

XVI.   Review of functioning of Post Office Common Service Centres

62. The Committee asked the Department about the number of Post Offices which are providing CSC Services along with the number of operators and the number of Post Offices doing transactions (actually working). The Department replied as under:

"As on 01.01.2023, Common Service Centre (CSC) services in the country are being provided in 1,21,133 Post Offices, which includes 22,382 departmental Post Offices and 98,751 branch Post Offices in rural areas. State-wise number of Post Offices providing CSC services is as under:

S.No.	State/Union Territory	No. of Post Offices providing CSC services	No. of PO Staff providing CSC services	No. of GDS providing CSC services
1	Andaman and Nicobar Islands	12	12	0
2	Andhra Pradesh	9370	1373	7997
3	Arunachal Pradesh	151	44	107
4	Assam	1978	483	1495
5	Bihar	3306	640	2666
6	Chandigarh	29	29	0
7	Chhattisgarh	2773	312	2461
8	Dadra and Nagar Haveli & Daman and Diu	46	9	37
9	Delhi	59	33	26
10	Goa	201	87	114
11	Gujarat	7517	1133	6384
12	Haryana	1588	467	1121
13	Himachal Pradesh	2189	398	1791
14	Jammu and Kashmir	408	216	192
15	Jharkhand	1825	439	1386
16	Karnataka	8061	1610	6451
17	Kerala	4705	1376	3329
18	Ladakh	4	3	1
19	Madhya Pradesh	8023	960	7063
20	Maharashtra	11763	2055	9708
21	Manipur	130	50	80
22	Meghalaya	111	58	53
23	Mizoram	252	35	217

24	Nagaland	133	39	94
25	Odisha	8057	1113	6944
26	Puducherry	39	16	23
27	Punjab	1246	675	571
28	Rajasthan	9189	1254	7935
29	Sikkim	162	15	147
30	Tamil Nadu	9151	2443	6708
31	Telangana	3565	729	2836
32	Tripura	358	70	288
33	Uttar Pradesh	15519	2385	13134
34	Uttarakhand	1648	352	1296
35	West Bengal	7565	1469	6096
	Grand Total	**1,21,133**	**22,382**	**98,751**

63. Regarding the number of Postal Workers who have been trained and the details of funds allocated to CSC for conducting the training program of Postal Workers along with the details of incentives and infrastructure facilities provided to the Postal Workers for running Common Service Centres, the Department provided the following reply-

"1,38,906 postal employees (35,162 Departmental employees and 1,03,744 Gramin Dak Sevaks) have been trained to provide CSC Services through Post Offices. State-wise details of Postal employees trained to provide CSC Services through Post Offices as under:

S.No.	State/Union Territory	Total staff providing CSC services in POs
1	Andaman and Nicobar Islands	18
2	Andhra Pradesh	10259
3	Arunachal Pradesh	152
4	Assam	2163
5	Bihar	3773
6	Chandigarh	66
7	Chattisgarh	3116
8	Dadra and Nagar Haveli & Daman and Diu	48
9	Delhi	103
10	Goa	241
11	Gujarat	8627
12	Haryana	1805
13	Himachal Pradesh	2501

14	Jammu and Kashmir	524
15	Jharkhand	1972
16	Karnataka	9741
17	Kerala	5901
18	Ladakh	4
19	Madhya Pradesh	8878
20	Maharashtra	13905
21	Manipur	156
22	Meghalaya	121
23	Mizoram	255
24	Nagaland	142
25	Odisha	9334
26	Puducherry	52
27	Punjab	1637
28	Rajasthan	9971
29	Sikkim	164
30	Tamil Nadu	11169
31	Telangana	3961
32	Tripura	403
33	Uttar Pradesh	17458
34	Uttarakhand	1825
35	West Bengal	8461
	Grand Total	**1,38,906**

Funds are not allotted to CSC - SPV by Department of Posts for conducting the training program for Postal Employees. Incentive payable to Post Office staff and GDS is linked with revenue generated on the transactions made by them on CSC platform. Service charges vary with the nature of service as well as service provider. Incentive structure payable to postal employees is as under:

Sl. No	Service charge earned from providing CSC Services per month (in Rs.)	When postal employee uses his own infrastructure (% of the monthly service charge earned for providing CSC services)	When postal employee uses infrastructure of the Department (% of the monthly service charge earned for providing CSC services)
1	Less than Rs.5000/-	10%	5%
2	Above Rs.5000 but	20%	10%

	less than Rs.10000/-		
3	Above Rs.10000 but less than Rs.20000/-	30%	15%
4	Above Rs.20000/-	40%	20%

In Departmental Post Offices, existing infrastructure of the Post Office is used for providing CSC services whereas in the rural Branch Post Offices, employees have option either to use Departmental infrastructure or bring their own infrastructure for providing CSC services. In case, employee provides infrastructure, he is paid double incentive as applicable in other case i.e. when infrastructure is provided by the Department."

64. On the overall financial performance of CSCs operated by the Post Offices and the details of Revenue Targets and Revenue earned by CSCs operated by Post Offices, State-wise, the Department , in their written reply, submitted as follows-

"In Post Offices, CSC Services are provided by the postal staff in addition to their own duties and by utilizing existing infrastructure. No additional expenditure is done by the Department of Posts in providing CSC services at Post Office counters. Revenue earned for transactions done on CSC platform related to Common Service Centre services is shared between CSC-SPV and Department of Posts in the ratio of 20:80. Revenue earned by Department of Posts, state-wise, since inception is as under:

S.No.	Name of Postal Circle (States/UT covered)	FY 2020-21	FY 2021-22	FY 2022-23 (Till Dec 2022)	Total
1	Andhra Pradesh	24307.62	115685.23	253544.82	393537.67
2	Assam	53069.35	167527.72	81779.62	302376.69
3	Bihar	16547.92	109382.54	89378.5	215308.96
4	Chhattisgarh	4320.44	74391.28	92271.11	170982.83
5	Delhi	7252.34	9499.73	3684.66	20436.73
6	Gujarat (including Dadra and Nagar Haveli & Daman and Diu)	39879.23	111959.82	129900.46	281739.51
7	Haryana	5157.74	32034.88	20600.14	57792.76
8	Himachal Pradesh	22286.72	78891.38	73833.27	175011.37

9	Jammu and Kashmir (including Ladakh)	346.19	30103.77	32434.78	62884.74
10	Jharkhand	3471.96	19584.37	24808.31	47864.64
11	Karnataka	109349.78	508697.80	701339.34	1319386.92
12	Kerala	84482.5	496344.38	462289.55	1043116.43
13	Madhya Pradesh	6658.34	34244.43	323117.36	364020.13
14	Maharashtra	168811.57	648045.96	717017.22	1533874.75
15	North East (including Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura)	455.61	24248.75	108084.79	132789.15
16	Odisha	13648.78	187134.85	584930.25	785713.88
17	Punjab	25016.59	44667.24	20163.02	89846.85
18	Rajasthan	21730.93	33158.71	71416.96	126306.6
19	Tamil Nadu (including Puducherry)	91804.41	329438.26	420263.36	841506.03
20	Telangana	4920.39	37490.14	36285.19	78695.72
21	Uttar Pradesh	19265.9	564636.96	1417918.8	2001821.66
22	Uttarakhand	2535.49	50190.30	60708.05	113433.84
23	West Bengal (including Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Sikkim)	20031.59	180262.96	198019.02	398313.57
	Total	**7,45,351.39**	**38,87,621.46**	**59,23,788.58**	**1,05,56,761.43**

65. When asked to provide the details of services provided by the Postal Workers in the Common Service Centres along with the details of the average commission charged on each service and the steps taken by the Department to ensure that user affordability is maintained, the Department replied as under-

" CSC Services provided through Post Offices are as under:

List of Services provided through Post Office-CSC		
	1	PAN card
	2	Passport
	3	Swachh Bharat Abhiyan
	4	PM Awas Yojana
	5	Soil Health Card

Digital Seva Portal	6	Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojna
	7	PDS
	8	FSSAI License Application
	9	FSSAI Registration Certificate
	10	Birth/ Death Certificate
	11	Ayushman Bharat Yojna
	12	PM Shram Yogi Maan-dhan Pension Yojana
	13	Jeevan Pramaan
	14	IRCTC ticket Booking
	15	e-shram
Election	16	Voter Registration
	17	deletion of Name
	18	Modifications or Corrections
	19	Voter PVC Card Print
	20	Modification to Voter details
Labour Service	21	Labour Services
	22	Labour Certificate
	23	Labour Registration
Pension	24	National Pension Scheme (NPS)
	25	Swavalamban Contribution
Employment Service	26	Navy Recruitment
	27	Job Seekers Registration
	28	Application Form Submission
State Government Services		
e-District /SSDG (State)	29	Haryana eDistrict Services
	30	MP State Services
	31	West Bengal eDistrict Services
	32	Maharashtra State Services
	33	Karnataka eDistrict Services
	34	Jharkhand eDistrict Service
	35	Uttarakhand eDistrict Service
	36	Chhattisgarh eDistrict Services
	37	Puducherry eDistrict Services
	38	Himachal Pradesh Panch Paraman
	39	Daman & Diu
	40	Dadra & Nagar Haveli
	41	AP RTA Services
	42	eVahan Jammu & Kashmir
	43	Himachal Swasthya Bima Yojana (HIMCARE)
	44	Tamil Nadu PDS Card Printing
Other G2C Services	45	Sarthi
	46	E-Challan
	47	eStamp
	48	E-Vahan - Transport Services
	49	BBPS Mobile Postpaid

Bharat Bill Payment System	50	BBPS DTH
	51	BBPS Landline Postpaid
	52	BBPS Electricity
	53	BBPS Broadband Postpaid
	54	BBPS Water
	55	BBPS Gas
B2C		
Tour & Travels	56	Flight Ticket
	57	Bus Ticket
	58	e- Recharge (Mobile &DTH)
	59	SBIePay Maharashtra Transport
	60	SBIePay Maharashtra eGRAS
	61	SBIePay Maharashtra Nursing
	62	Rashtrapathi Bhavan Museum Ticket
FASTag	63	FASTAG Issuance
	64	FASTAG Purchase
	65	FASTAG Top up
	66	FASTAG Service
Educational Services	67	NIELIT Facilitation Centre
	68	Tally Software Registration
	69	ITI Registration
	70	Course Registration
	71	Online Admission
	72	CAD Registration
	73	Scholarships
Financial Services		
Banking Services	74	Acceptance of Loan applications
	75	EMI collections
Insurance	76	Life Insurance (Renewal)
	77	General Insurance (Renewal)
Utility Services		
Income Tax Return	78	GST Return
	79	TDS Return
	80	DSC
	81	LLP Registration

Service charges vary with the nature of service as well as service provider. Service charges to be levied, if any, for providing CSC services through Post Offices are configured from the backend by the CSC – SPV in the CSC seva portal www.*digitalseva.csc.gov.in*as per their agreement/ arrangement with such service providers. Customers are charged as per the final amount worked by the system automatically and reflected in the invoice/ bill. No overcharging is done for CSC services in the Post Offices which is ensured through regular monitoring and surprise checks."

66. Responding to a question on the Profit-Sharing Model between MoC and DoP in terms of the operation of CSCs operated by the DoP, the Department informed as below-

" Commission earned from providing CSC Services in Post Offices on CSC – SPV seva portal is shared between Department of Posts and CSC-SPV in the ratio 80:20."

67. Updating about the details of the monitoring mechanism of the Department of Posts that is prevalent to monitor the CSCs operated by the Post Offices, the Department submitted as follows-

" A MIS has been developed by CSC-SPV and Department of Posts detailing the number of transactions done at Post Office counters in connection with the delivery of CSC Services through Post Offices. Dedicated teams have been setup at Circle/ Region and Division Office level for ensuring proper monitoring and regular review of CSC Transactions done in the Post Offices."

68. The Committee desired to know about the work scope of the Agreement, role and responsibilities of CSCs, business model, revenue model, ensuring accountability as per Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) mandate and performance monitoring mechanism along with the actual benefits received after adopting the Post Office CSC model.
"DoP is providing mail, parcel, money transfer, banking, insurance and retail services through its network including Departmental Post Offices, Branch Post Offices, Panchayat Sanchar Seva Kendras and other Franchise Outlets.
DoP's objective is to extend the availability of identified postal services and citizen centric services in collaboration with CSC-SPV (Common Service Centre-Special Purpose Vehicle) through the postal network, for mutually agreed services and locations."

69. The Committee enquired about the Government-to-Citizen, Business-to-Citizen and Government-to-Business services provided by post office Common Service Centres and whether all these services are equally accessible in different States/UTs. The Committee also asked the Department to elaborate the major challenges/constraints faced by PO-CSCs such as lack of infrastructure and internet connectivity etc. and to what extent post office CSC-SPV has been successful in achieving its intended objectives. The Department were also asked to clarify how they plan to create a financially sustainable model and revise the fee structures and apprise about the grievance redressal mechanism for village level entrepreneurs including end

users, manpower related issues in CSC-SPV and qualitative assessment measures etc. The Department furnished the information as follows-

" List of Government-to-Citizen, Business-to-Citizen CSC services provided by Post Offices is as under:

List of Services provided through Post Office-CSC		
Digital Seva Portal	1	PAN card
	2	Passport
	3	Swachh Bharat Abhiyan
	4	PM Awas Yojana
	5	Soil Health Card
	6	Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojna
	7	PDS
	8	FSSAI License Application
	9	FSSAI Registration Certificate
	10	Birth/ Death Certificate
	11	Ayushman Bharat Yojna
	12	PM Shram Yogi Maan-dhan Pension Yojana
	13	Jeevan Pramaan
	14	IRCTC ticket Booking
	15	e-shram
Election	16	Voter Registration
	17	deletion of Name
	18	Modifications or Corrections
	19	Voter PVC Card Print
	20	Modification to Voter details
Labour Service	21	Labour Services
	22	Labour Certificate
	23	Labour Registration
Pension	24	National Pension Scheme (NPS)
	25	Swavalamban Contribution
Employment Service	26	Navy Recruitment
	27	Job Seekers Registration
	28	Application Form Submission
State Government Services		
	29	Haryana eDistrict Services
	30	MP State Services
	31	West Bengal eDistrict Services

e-District /SSDG (State)	32	Maharashtra State Services
	33	Karnataka eDistrict Services
	34	Jharkhand eDistrict Service
	35	Uttarakhand eDistrict Service
	36	Chhattisgarh eDistrict Services
	37	Puducherry eDistrict Services
	38	Himachal Pradesh Panch Paraman
	39	Daman & Diu
	40	Dadra & Nagar Haveli
	41	AP RTA Services
	42	eVahan Jammu & Kashmir
	43	Himachal Swasthya Bima Yojana (HIMCARE)
	44	Tamil Nadu PDS Card Printing
Other G2C Services	45	Sarthi
	46	E-Challan
	47	eStamp
	48	E-Vahan - Transport Services
Bharat Bill Payment System	49	BBPS Mobile Postpaid
	50	BBPS DTH
	51	BBPS Landline Postpaid
	52	BBPS Electricity
	53	BBPS Broadband Postpaid
	54	BBPS Water
	55	BBPS Gas
B2C		
Tour & Travels	56	Flight Ticket
	57	Bus Ticket
	58	e- Recharge (Mobile &DTH)
	59	SBIePay Maharashtra Transport
	60	SBIePay Maharashtra eGRAS
	61	SBIePay Maharashtra Nursing
	62	Rashtrapathi Bhavan Museum Ticket
FASTag	63	FASTAG Issuance
	64	FASTAG Purchase
	65	FASTAG Top up
	66	FASTAG Service
Educational Services	67	NIELIT Facilitation Centre
	68	Tally Software Registration
	69	ITI Registration
	70	Course Registration
	71	Online Admission
	72	CAD Registration
	73	Scholarships

Financial Services		
Banking Services	74	Acceptance of Loan applications
	75	EMI collections
Insurance	76	Life Insurance (Renewal)
	77	General Insurance (Renewal)
Utility Services		
Income Tax Return	78	GST Return
	79	TDS Return
	80	DSC
	81	LLP Registration

All these CSC services provided through Post Offices are equally accessible. Further, the accessibility of CSC services offered in Post Offices also depends on integration of state services with the digital seva portal of CSC-SPV.

Availability of power supply and internet connectivity in Post Offices and demand for CSC services are the major challenges faced by Post Offices while delivering CSC services.

With improvement in the quality of internet connectivity at Post Offices and sustain awareness campaign, the number of CSC transactions in Post Offices have increased as compared to the previous year.

By providing CSC services to citizens, Department of Posts has been able to leverage the strength of its network to deliver citizen centric services to people living in both urban and rural areas of the country.

No additional fund has been allotted to Department of Posts for providing CSC related services, since CSC services are being provided using the existing infrastructure of Post Offices. Commission is shared between Department of Posts and CSC-SPV in the ratio 80:20.

Customer can raise the ticket to redress their grievances on the Digital Seva Portal of CSC e-Governance Service India limited. The same are attended to and resolved by a dedicated team in CSC e-Governance Service India limited."

List of vacant plots of Department of Posts (as on 31.03.2021)

S.No.	State/Union Territory	Total number of vacant plots
1	Andhra Pradesh	109
2	Andaman & Nicobar Islands	005
3	Arunachal Pradesh	001
4	Assam	035
5	Bihar	089
6	Chandigarh	007
7	Chhattisgarh	008
8	Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu	000
9	Delhi	018
10	Goa	003
11	Gujarat	108
12	Haryana	017
13	Himachal Pradesh	021
14	Jammu & Kashmir	006
15	Jharkhand	059
16	Karnataka	345
17	Kerala	139
18	Ladakh	000
19	Lakshadweep	000
20	Madhya Pradesh	040
21	Maharashtra	080
22	Manipur	003
23	Meghalaya	002
24	Mizoram	006
25	Nagaland	007
26	Odisha	039
27	Puducherry	002
28	Punjab	008
29	Rajasthan	148
30	Sikkim	001
31	Tamil Nadu	144
32	Telangana	109
33	Tripura	003
34	Uttarakhand	019

35	Uttar Pradesh	072
36	West Bengal	076
	Total	**1729**

**Pending projects of Post Office (PO) Buildings for the past 10 years**
Sl. No.	*State*	*Name of pending project*	*Project announced in year*	*Building plan approved in year*	*Estimated cost at time of announcement*	*Estimated cost at present*	*Cost escalation*	*current status of construction*	*Reasons for delay*
1	**Bihar**	Majhaulia PO	2018	2018	Rs.182.68 Lakhs	Rs.182.68 Lakhs	No escalation	Work in progress	The work is likely to be completed by 30/09/2021
2		Bhagalpur	2018	2018	Rs.577.72 Lakhs	Rs.577.72 Lakhs	No escalation	Work in progress	The work is likely to be completed by 15/03/2022
3	**Chhattisgarh**	Sadar bazar PO	2019	2019	Rs. 209.66 Lakhs	Rs.209.66 Lakhs	No escalation	Tile work & granite work, plumbing & sanitary work and compound wall work is in progress	work delay due to covid -19

4	**Delhi**	PO Prashant Vihar Rohini	2018	2018	Rs. 41.58 Lakhs	Rs. 41.58 Lakhs	No escalation	Pre-construction formalities underway	Municipal approval being pursued.
5		Dilshad Garden Delhi	2019	2019	Rs.111.69 lakh	Rs.111.69 lakh	No escalation	work in progress	work delay due to covid -19
6	**Jharkhand**	Chaibasa	2016	2016	Rs.357.83 Lakhs	Rs.357.83 Lakhs	No escalation	Building work completed. Site Development work in progress.	Delay due to lockdown in Covid 19 pandemic.
7	**Jammu & Kashmir**	Bhadarwah PO	2020	2020	Rs. 159.64 lakhs	Rs. 159.64 lakhs	No escalation	Tender being floated	work delay due to covid -19
8	**Karnataka**	Construction of Bejai PO building at Kadri Hills vacant site.	2020	2020	182.77 Lakhs	182.77 Lakhs	No escalation	Work in progress	No delay
9		Vijayapura Hudco colony for	2018	2018	198.37 Lakhs	198.37 Lakhs	No escalation	Work in progress	No delay

		accommodating Jalanagar SO						
10		Karwar	2019	2019	892.37 Lakhs	892.37 Lakhs	No escalation	work in progress	No delay
11	**Kerala**	Karamana PO	12th five year plan	2021	Rs.597.61 lakhs	Rs 170 Lakh	Cost reduced due to change in SOA	Pre-construction formalities underway	Schedule of Accommodation (SOA) revised as per requirement.
12		Poojappura HO	12thfive year plan	2020	Rs. 1982 lakh	Rs. 2017 Lakh	Cost escalated due to change in drawing.	Pre-construction formalities underway	The drawing revised and hence delay in start in construction.
13		Sasthamangalam PO	12th five year plan	2019	Rs 692 lakh	Rs 692 lakh	No escalation	Municipal approval awaited.	Municipal approval awaited.
14		Kalpetta HO	12th five	2018	Rs. 519 Lakh	Rs. 519 Lakh	No escalati	Work in progress	Likely to be completed by Feb, 2022.

			year plan				on		
15	**Maharasht ra**	SP college HSG PO Vijay nagar Pune	2019	2019	Rs.375.01 lakhs	Rs.375. 01 lakhs	No escalati on	structural work complete, brick work in progress	work delay due to covid -19
16		P.O. Bldg at Satpur (Nasik)	2020	2020	Rs 119.49 lakhs	Rs 119.49 lakhs	No escalati on	Pre-construction formalities completed	work awarded on 24.05.2021
17	**North East**	Re-construction of PO & SPMs Quarter Building at Daporijo, Arunachal Pradesh.	2018	2018	Rs.177.62 lakh	Rs.177. 62 lakh	No escalati on	Foundation work started	Due to some conflict with the contractor on account of defect in structural drawing work is held up.,
18	**Odisha**	Malkangiri	2018	2018	Rs.133.79 Lakh	Rs.133.7 9 Lakh	No escalati on	Work in progress and likely to be completed before 31/08/21	Due to lockdown in Covid 19 pandemic.

19		Patnagarh	2019	2019	Rs.154.20 lakh	Rs.154.20 lakh	No escalation	Work in progress and likely to be completed before 31/10/21	Due to lockdown in Covid 19 pandemic.
20	**Uttar Pradesh**	PO at Sulem Sarai, Allahabad	2021	2021	Rs. 153.00 lakhs	Rs. 153.00 lakhs	No escalation	Pre construction formalities being completed	No delay
21		HPO Bdh at Maharajganj, Gorakhpur	2020	2020	Rs.464.38 lakhs	Rs.464.38 lakhs	No escalation	Pre-construction formalities being completed	Construction is likely to be started soon.
22	**West Bengal**	Proposed Sech Bhawan Post Office Bldg. with I. Q. and 1 No Type-VI Quarter for CPMG's Residence at D.	2020	2020	Rs. 558.63 lakh	Rs. 558.63 lakh	No escalation	Pre-construction formalities is being done	Municipal approval awaited.

		E. Block, Salt Lake						

ANNEXURE-III

DETAILS OF BUILDINGS RENTED BY THE DEPARTMENT FOR MORE THAN 20 YEARS

Sr. No.	Circle/State	No. of buildings rented
1	Andhra Pradesh	1028
2	Assam	449
3	Bihar	0
4	Chhattisgarh	148
5	Delhi	0
6	Gujarat	0
7	Haryana	287
8	Himachal Pradesh	0
9	J&K	202
10	Jharkhand	363
11	Karnataka	225
12	Kerala	781
13	Madhya Pradesh	273
14	Maharashtra	972
15	North East	49
16	Odisha	522
17	Punjab	224
18	Rajasthan	499
19	Tamil Nadu	755
20	Telangana	616
21	Uttar Pradesh	1256
22	Uttarakhand	0
23	West Bengal	1530
	Total	**10,179**

Part-II

Observations/Recommendations

Relevance of the Department of Posts in the changing scenario

1. **The Committee note that the Department have taken various initiatives to stay relevant in the current scenario to retain mail business and provide financial and ecommerce services as per the market requirements. The Department have tried to amalgamate technology in traditional mail business by adopting methods like sending SMS notifications of booking and delivery information to the customers, real time delivery updation through Postman Mobile App , tracking facility, COD facility, setting up of Nodal Delivery Centres with four wheelers for door delivery of parcels etc. Besides, the Department have entered into agreements with various banks in the country for delivery of cheque books, debit and credit cards, with UIDAI for delivery of Aadhaar cards, with different High Courts for delivery of notices/summons, with Supreme Court for delivery of judgements, with Regional Transport Authorities in different states for delivery of driving licenses/vehicle Registration Certificates and traffic challans, etc.**

    The Committee further note that 190 Parcel hubs have been set up for streamlining the processing and expeditious delivery of parcels and improve capacity to handle ecommerce business. During COVID-19, to meet the urgent national requirement at a critical time, a dedicated nationwide Road Transport Network (RTN) for shipment of essential items especially ventilators, medicines, Covid Kits etc. was planned and

operationalized. 219 Nodal Delivery Centres (NDCs) are operational for mechanized delivery of parcels. Smart Post Booking Kiosks as well as delivery boxes have been started. Core Banking System (CBS) has been implemented in all post offices. The Department have also started providing ATM, e-banking, Mobile Banking facility which enables customer to avail services 24x7 hours. The Department have implemented various e-modes to customers like NEFT and RTGS. The Department have extended all its savings schemes to all Branch post offices. Further, in order to facilitate old aged pensioners, Department have migrated to online submission of Jeevan Pramaan Certificate by introducing biometric enabled digital service. The Committee note that the Department have provided mobile devices to Branch post offices in the rural areas for carrying out online postal and financial tranactions.

It has also been noted that the Department has on-boarded the National Automated Clearing House (NACH) Platform of National Payment Corporation of India (NPCI) in December 2016 and Aadhaar Payments Bridge System (APBS) in December 2017 for seamless disbursement of Social Sector Pension payments including Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Generation Scheme (MGNREGA), Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY) and other schemes sponsored by various Ministries through Post Office Savings Bank accounts. In pursuance of the decision of the Cabinet Committee on Security, Department has opened 1789 post offices in Panchayat Headquarters in 32 worst affected Left Wing Extremism (LWE) districts. Further, to strengthen its vast Rural Postal Network, Department has

opened 810 Post Offices by relocation / redeployment, 983 Franchise Outlets in urban areas and new infrastructure was supplied to 52721 rural Branch Post Offices.

Commendably, the post office has diversified into delivery of citizen centric services like Aadhaar enrolment, Common Service Centres and Passenger Reservation System for Indian Rail. The Committee note that the Department, being the behemoth that it is, faces a host of legacy issues which are being overcome through optimisation of mail network , implementation of Core System Integration for Railway Mail Service, real time exchange of data for delivery updation, introduction of barcoded bag labels for unregistered mail, setting up of parcel hubs, Core Insurance Solution for premium payment for PLI and RPLI, setting up of new Foreign Post Offices and Radio Frequency identification based tracking.

The Committee are impressed with the efforts made by the Department in this direction and appreciate the constructive approach of the Dept. The Committee expect the Department to continue the efforts and are all praises for the measures taken which will go a long way in building the image of the Department as technology savvy and customer friendly. The Committee place on record the stellar role played by the Department in establishing the communication network of the country in a competitive landscape and hope that the Department will rise to even greater heights in the future.

Roadmap for Revenue Generation

2. **The Committee note that the Department have introduced various citizen centric services such as Aadhaar facility in the Post Offices, Post Offices Passport Seva Kendras (POPSK) which has not only enhanced the social relevance of the Department but also led to increase in revenue. Opening of more savings bank accounts including Senior Citizen Savings Schemes/Sukanya Samridhi Yojana Accounts for senior citizen and the girl child is being undertaken for increased remuneration from Ministry of Finance. The Department are continuously trying to diversify its business area and products to increase the revenue generation. The Department are adopting modern technological methods and upgrading its physical infrastructure for improvement in Mail Delivery System. With the implementation of core system integration and dedicated road transport network, it is trying to improve the efficiency in the delivery as well as real time monitoring of mail system which will help in achieving 10% market share in the parcel and mail segments by 2024. A major part of the expenditure of the Department i.e. 91% goes into salary and pension and other allowances. Department has also forayed into citizen centric services like CSC (Common Service Centre). Post offices are being developed as the centre of financial inclusion by means of IPPB and POSB banking facilities. By carrying out all these activities, the Department is trying to earn revenue and reduce its deficit.**

    The Committee further note that the Department are earning revenue from various postal services/products like Speed Post; Business Post; Express Parcel; Business Parcel; Bill Mail Service; e-Post; Postage

through Franking Machines and Pre-postage; Sale of Stamps; Commemorative Stamps; My Stamps; Philatelic Ancillaries; Money Order & Indian Postal Order; Retail Post; Logistic Post; E-Bill Collection; Railway ticket booking; MGNREGA; Net Receipts / Payments to Other Postal Administration (Other Countries); Savings Bank & Cash Certificate Remuneration etc. The major obstacles being faced by the Department in revenue generation are online submission of Job application, Online money transmission, Digital payments through RTGS, NEFT, IMPS, Competition with private courier service and availability of instantaneous communication through messaging apps and social media. The Committee are aware that the Department are planning to take measures to remove the obstacles and contain the revenue deficit. Due to considerable slowdown in economic activities during the pandemic which badly impacted the postal services, the financial activities reduced considerably. The Department are streamlining all its activities to improve the efficiency and periodically review their its services and products keeping in view the changing market scenario, customer needs, industry benchmarks etc. and takes steps/action to modify service features to improve the postal services and boost the revenue growth of the Department. Technology integration and infrastructure up-gradation is also being done in a systematic manner to increase the efficiency and reduce the cost of operation. The Department have focused approach to cater to the needs of the emerging markets viz. e-Commerce to increase revenue.

The Committee while expressing hope that these initiatives will be helpful in increasing the profitability of the Department, recommend that the Department should form tie-ups with Government agencies like KVIC, Tribes India, etc. which could be a big potential revenue driver for them paired with aggressive marketing. The Committee feel that monetisation of land parcels, construction of warehouses on land owned by the Department will mobilize much needed funds for the Dept. The Committee are of the opinion that the Department should exploit their unparalleled reach by tie up with e-commerce companies to augment their revenue earnings. The use of post office buildings to provide retail services should also be explored. The Committee recommend that the Department should aggressively explore such opportunities in the market for growing business and continue with efforts to augment revenue and reduce deficit.

Role of the Post Office during the Pandemic

3. The Committee note that during the unprecedented situation caused by spread of Covid-19 pandemic and the consequential nationwide lockdown, rail, road and air connectivity initially came to a halt. Since the Department of Posts has traditionally relied on railways and airlines to transport mails and parcels across the country, with restricted trains services and air services, mail and parcel movement across the country also came to a stand-still. To retain a reliable communication link of migrant workers with their homes and also to transfer goods to their

families and to meet the urgent national requirement at a critical time, a dedicated nationwide Road Transport Network (RTN) for shipment of essential items especially ventilators, medicines, Covid Kits etc. was planned and operationalized by the Department for the first time in its history of 166 years. 76 National Routes have been operationalised.

Further, the Committee note that for disasters like a pandemic, India Post Payments Bank (IPPB) has created Disaster Resilient Financial infrastructure. More than 1.36 Lakh Post offices across the country have been enabled as Banking Touch points and more than 2 Lakh Postmen and Gramin Dak Sewaks (GDS) have been trained as Doorstep Banking service providers. These access points and Doorstep agents have been provided with Micro ATMs and Biometric Devices through which they can perform Inter-Operable Banking service transactions for any Bank. This has effectively brought all banks at the doorstep of every citizen thus reducing the distance to the Bank to zero. The platform thus created has been tested for its interoperability and resilience in critical and disaster situations such as the recent CoVID-19 induced Lockdown. Aadhaar Enabled Payment System (AePS) of IPPB can aid cash payment of DBT and social security beneficiaries at their doorstep in various States. Special focus has been given to providing Doorstep Banking services through AePS in the sealed/containment areas, migrant labour camps and Hotspots so that the population affected due to restrictions imposed do not suffer adversely. During the recent lockdown this Financial Infrastructure was able to take multiple times additional load and performed flawlessly. More than Rs 8000 Crore were disbursed to

customers of various Banks during April-Dec 2020 period, focusing on the Elderly, Disabled, Hotspots and Containment Zones including the Direct Benefits Transfers under Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana which also include migrant workers.

The Committee further note that the post office provided doorstep services through the India Post Payment Bank in North Eastern Region, Left Wing Extremism districts and aspirational districts of the country during the Covid-19 pandemic. During March to November 2020, 59.02 lakh transactions were done in the NER with cash withdrawal amounting to Rs. 106 crore approx. For the LWE districts, 1.84 crore transactions were performed with Rs. 383 crore as the withdrawal amount. For the aspirational districts, 2.52 crore transactions were performed with Rs. 540 crore as the amount withdrawn. The Committee note that IPPB has functioned as the lifeline for the citizens of these areas at the times when they were isolated from the rest of the country.

The Committee admire the manner in which India Post have made special efforts to offer services to migrant workers and thereby tap a niche market in times of the ongoing pandemic when the migrant workers find it difficult to establish and retain a reliable communication link with their distant homes and also to transfer money and goods to their families. The Committee while appreciating the efforts made by the Department hope that the Department would continue with their efforts and turn these calamitous times into an

unprecedented opportunity to showcase their unique role in the Indian economy.

Accessibility of the Post Office in Remote Areas

4.   The Committee note that the postal department has been able to fulfil the Government objective of having an interoperable banking access point within 5 KM of any household and creating alternate accessibility for customers of any bank. As per the data available from National Informatics Centre (NIC), IPPB coverage is there in 5,03,973 villages within the existing available records for more than 5.53 lakhs villages. In addition, a call centre is being operated by IPPB where anyone can call for opening of accounts and if required the postman or some other officer will visit the people to assist them in opening the bank accounts and delivery of banking services at door step thus effectively bringing distance to the Bank to ZERO. It is also observed that Aadhaar enabled payment service is also available with IPPB which helps customers of other banks also to avail the banking service through IPPB.

However, as opposed to the laudable role played by the IPPB, the Committee have noted that the area covered per post office varies greatly Statewise. It was the highest for the UT of Jammu and Kashmir where a single post office has to cater to an area of 130.73 square km. The North East came a close second where 60.51 sq km was covered by a post office.

The Committee underscore the achievements made by IPPB and recognize it as a bulwark to provide banking services to the hinterlands.

However, the Committee are perturbed by the challenges posed in serving large geographical areas by a single post office in the J&K and NER. The Committee urge the Department to pay attention to neglected areas where due to various reasons, the establishment of post offices has been neglected in the past and hope that the Dept. would improve its physical presence by opening more Branch offices in these UT/States and apprise the Committee about the progress made in this matter.

Building physical infrastructure for parcel delivery paying special attention to NER and aspirational districts

5. The Committee note that for the augmentation of parcel delivery mechanism, the Department have planned and executed their own dedicated Road Transport Network which worked as a crucial supply chain available for shipment of essential goods, medicines , COVID kits , ventilators etc during the lockdown. It enabled pharmaceutical companies (including ePharma companies) and ICMR to operate and serve the nation during the lockdown and thereafter. These national routes involved a daily run of over 25000 Km per day. More than 93 Tonnes of essential items were shipped in around 20000 bags per day during lockdown up to end of May, 2020. Around 36,000 tonnes of essential items, medicines and medical equipment were distributed during pandemic through Road Transport Network including special arrangements of supply chain vehicles made during the period. To monitor the movement of vehicles

and timely shipment of essential items being carried, an online monitoring Dashboard was created by the Department.

To further strengthen this dedicated road transport connectivity up to tier 2, tier 3 cities, the Department is in process of setting up a bigger nationwide Road Transport Network which will have 68 National routes and 350 regional routes connecting with these routes in a hub & spoke manner. The new network will connect 400 cities and will be a crucial national infrastructure available to take the gains of e-Commerce to the smaller cities and rural areas. The Committee note that the Department have undertaken Mail and Parcel Network Optimization projects and development of infrastructure for warehousing and logistics scheme to develop the physical infrastructure for mail processing concerning Speed Post, Registered Post and Unregistered Mail. More than 50,000 mobile phones have been supplied to the postmen in the urban areas and more than 1 lakh in the rural areas for realtime delivery updation.

With reference to the North Eastern States, LWE areas and geographically disadvantaged locations, the Department have created 190 Parcel hubs out of which 10 are in the NER and LWE areas. 09 locations have been identified in NE states, 10 each in LWE areas and Aspirational Districts for setting up of Nodal Delivery Centres (NDCs) through mechanized delivery of parcels. These are being established to improve the performance of doorstep delivery on the day of receipt of parcels in the destination post office using two wheelers and four wheelers.

The Committee is well aware of the fact that the North Eastern States stand at a disadvantage due to their location and various other reasons. The Committee take cognizance of the fact that the LWE areas, aspirational districts and NER have long been neglected and exhort that they may be given priority in building physical infrastructure for parcel delivery which would consequently promote the growth of e-commerce. While appreciating the efforts made to reach the remote and under developed areas, the Committee hope that the Department will focus and persist on bringing financial inclusion to these areas. The Department may apprise the Committee of the development in this regard.

Encroachment of Post Office Lands

6. The Committee note that the number of encroached plots owned by Department of Posts is the highest in Karnataka (38) and in Bihar (27) for the last three years. The Department have informed that they are making all-out efforts to remove encroachment with the help of public representatives, local administrations and judicial remedies available. In order to check the threat of encroachment, Estate Officers have been appointed/nominated in each Circle under the Public Premises (Eviction of Unauthorized Occupants) Act, 1971 and notified in the Gazette of India to exercise the powers of Estate Officers to deal with cases related to unauthorized occupation of Departmental lands and buildings. Also, boundary walls are being constructed on the vacant lands. To utilize the vacant lands, Department is constructing Head Post Office buildings

(where they are presently being operated from rented buildings) and small Post Offices with locally available materials for working strength up to 5 persons. The Committee further note that the Department had paid Rs. 167 crore as rent in 2017-18, 161 crore in 2018-19, 169 crore in 2019-20 and 90 crore till December, 2020.

The Committee further note that the Department is lagging behind in the implementation of the Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan where 310 buildings were retrofitted in 2018-19, 33 in 2019-20 and 34 in 2020 for the use of the differently-abled. The Committee exhort the Department to make renewed efforts to reclaim the lands encroached by unscrupulous elements and take pre-emptive measures of fencing the plots and employing security personnel. The Committee also recommend that the Department may speed up the retrofitting of buildings to the benefit of the differently abled and make them more accessible thereby increasing the customer base and building brand image as a disabled friendly organization. The Committee also press upon the Department to conduct access audits for the post office buildings on an annual basis and take follow up action to the best of its abilities.

Amelioration of Service Conditions of Gramin Dak Sevaks including financial upgradation

7.   **The Committee note that at present, 2.37 lakh Gramin Dak Sevaks (GDS) are working in the Department of Posts. The major duties of the Gramin Dak Sevak are smooth and timely functioning of post office, overall management of postal facilities, maintenance of records, marketing postal services, procurement of business, conveyance and delivery of mail at doorstep, deposits/payments/other transactions under IPPB. The GDS work for a minimum of four hours and maximum five hours a day and are being paid Time Related Continuity Allowance (TRCA). The Committee note that a Committee was set up to examine the TRCA structure, long pending issues and other service conditions of Gramin Dak Sevaks under the Chairmanship of Shri Kamlesh Chandra, Retired Member, Postal Services Board, vide Gazette Notification dated 19.11.2015. The said Committee submitted its report on 24.11.2016. Some of the recommendations of Kamlesh Chandra Committee Report have been implemented like Time Related Continuity Allowance (TRCA), enhancement of GDS Gratuity, Service Discharge Benefits, 180 days Maternity Leave to female GDS, Composite Allowance, Cash Conveyance Allowance, Combined Duty Allowance, Risk and Hardship Allowance, Issuance of Identity Cards, Voluntary Discharge Scheme, Children Education Facilitation Allowance, Limited Transfer Facility and Emergency leave.**

The Committee appreciate that the Department has taken welfare measures for the GDS such as Maternity leave for female GDS and Children Education Facilitation Allowance, Risk and Hardship Allowance and other allowances like Office maintenance, stationery, boat , cycle maintenance, combined duty allowance etc. However, the Committee still feel that a lot of ground needs to be covered in the matter as the GDS have not been provided any group health insurance. The Committee expect the Dept. to pay attention to the financial upgradation of GDS on completion of 12 years, 24 years and 36 years of engagement. The Committee are also perturbed to note that the GDS are not covered under the Employees' Provident Fund Act or Employees' State Insurance Act and expect the Department to examine the matter.

The Committee further recommend that the scope of Circle Welfare fund be extended to cover immediate family members such as dependent daughter in law, dependent separated/unmarried daughter and dependent grandchildren to protect them from destitution in the unfortunate event of death of the Gramin Dak Sevak. The Department may keep the Committee apprised of the progress made in the matter.

Settlement of Dormant Accounts in Post Office Savings Bank and settlement of deceased claims

8. The Committee note that if a matured account / certificate in Post Office Savings Bank is not closed within 10 years from the date of maturity, the account is treated as Unclaimed Account and the proceeds of such

account are transferred to Senior Citizen Welfare Fund (SCWF). However, the account / certificate holder at any point of time can approach post office to claim the maturity proceeds within 25 years from the date of transfer of account to SCWF. Thereafter, the amount is permanently transferred to SCWF. 3.01 crore unclaimed accounts / certificates are identified under Senior Citizens Welfare Fund (SCWF) as on 30.09.2022. A total balance of Rs. 19,828 Crore is lying unclaimed as on 30.09.2022.

The Committee further note that all-out efforts are being made to settle maximum unclaimed accounts by giving wide publicity and by launching special drives at Circle, Region, Division, Post Office level including notices and publicity in newspapers. Door to door campaign and special drives are also being launched at Post Office / Divisional/Regional/Circle level through the Gramin Dak Sevaks/Postmen. Continuous correspondences are also being made with all the Head of the Circles from the Directorate for settlement of maximum accounts as per the existing rules. The Committee are perturbed to note that the number of accounts not having KYC are approximately 15 crore for POSB Savings Accounts and 9 crore for POSB savings certificates. Similarly, the number of accounts not having nomination are 22 crores for POSB Savings Accounts, 5.2 crores for POSB Savings Certificates and 3 crores for IPPB Accounts.

The Committee note that the process of settlement of deceased claim cases has already been reviewed and streamlined for smooth operation as well as early settlement. The present process being followed for settlement of deceased claim cases has been implemented since

August, 2020 which has further been streamlined by delegating the powers of sanction of deceased claim cases to lower level sanctioning authorities in November, 2020. As such, the claims which were earlier sent to PMG / CPMG for sanction are now being settled at Divisional level only. All claims are now being settled either in the post office (all nomination cases) and Divisional Office in case of no nomination cases. Provision of 'nomination' has been made mandatory at the time of opening of new accounts that will help in settlement of deceased claim cases within one working day. The Department further informed that deceased claim cases having nomination are settled in 1 working day and deceased claim cases where no nomination exists are settled in 7 working days. In case no nomination exists in POSB Accounts/Certificates, the deceased claim cases are settled on the basis of obtaining prescribed legal evidence documents. If no legal evidence document is available and the eligible amount to be paid exceeds Rs. 5 lakh, claim is settled on obtaining Succession Certificate issued by the court and if the amount is up to Rs. 5 lakh, claim is settled on obtaining the letter of indemnity, affidavit and letter of disclaimer. Turn-around time is 7 days if the claim falls under the financial powers of the post office. If the sanctioning authority is other than the post office, the claim will be forwarded to the authority concerned who will sanction the claim within 7 days from the date of receipt of the claim application.

The Committee are satisfied to note that the Department have simplified the process of claim settlement thereby avoiding unnecessary hassles to the family of the deceased person and thus project the Department as a

customer centric company. However, it is evident that the enormous number of accounts not having KYC and/or nomination will eventually lead to problems in settlement of claim. The Committee emphasise that the Department needs to pay urgent attention to the matter and collect KYCs on an annual basis from the account holders in order to steer clear of the possibility of more dormant accounts in the future. Pre-emptive action now will prevent fire fighting later. The Committee stress that the Department may make renewed efforts to settle dormant accounts by tracing the legal heirs through regular advertisements in print and electronic media.

Strategic Role and building image of the Department of Posts

9. The Committee note that Department of Posts (DoP) had traditionally been a carrier of mails and documents and the entire transmission, processing and delivery network was built for documents and small packets. As market has now shifted to merchandise parcels, entire transmission, processing and delivery infrastructure is being created afresh for handling parcels. Department has successfully implemented computerization & networking of its more than 1.64 lakh Post Offices in order to provide doorstep services to its customers. In order to introduce flexibility & agility in its financial services, services of IPPB are delivered to the customers at their doorsteps through Postmen and Gramin Dak Sevaks of Department of Posts. IPPB in a very short span of time has opened more than 4.50 crore accounts & delivered more than Rs. 12,000

crore cash at the doorsteps of customers having account in any bank through Aadhaar Enabled Payment System (AePS).

The Committee find it commendable that NEFT-RTGS (National Electronic Fund Transfer-Real Time Gross Settlement) have been rolled out for POSB in order to integrate it with the mainstream banking system, strengthening the POSB IT system especially in the area of mobile and internet banking and offering POSB and PLI/RPLI services at the doorsteps through Postmen and GDS and forging partnerships with Election Commission of India for Election Photo Identity Card (EPIC) delivery. The Committee also note that the Department have plans to enhance parcel building capacity by setting up 32 additional Nodal Delivery Centres, extending to tier 2 and 3 cities, 12 National and 84 State level Postal Road Transport Network (RTN) to be set up and setting up of Dak Ghar Niryat Kendras (DNK) at district level in order to provide international e-Commerce export booking facility to small traders/artisans/MSMEs.

The Committee note that the image-building exercises have been undertaken to improve the perception of the post office in the eyes of the consumers including social media. Pan India TV Campaigns (Doordarshan & Digital Cinema Theaters) and radio jingle campaigns are being run to disseminate information about postal products and services. Activities such a Stamp design competition, letter writing competitions are organised at various levels across the country by Department of Posts throughout the year. Through social media, Department of Posts has undertaken various image building exercises to improve the perception of the post office in the eyes of consumers, such as awareness about India

Post's products and services under umbrella campaign #AapkaDostIndiaPost & #DigitalDostIndiaPost, depicting success stories, providing clarity for dos and don'ts, prohibited articles, etc., assisting the customers during Covid pandemic and spreading awareness for the same through Covid related campaigns #CovidMeinAapkaDost and #Unite2FightCorona on social media channels. Department of Posts brings out digital publicity material on specific products and services for the information of the Customers. It has also brought out eBooks like "India Post Meets Covid-19 Challenge" and disseminated widely on the ways in which Department extended services to the public during the pandemic, especially during lock down period.

The Committee are happy with the meticulous manner in which the postal department has turned out to be a media savvy organization projecting its distinctive role in the apparatus. The Committee admire the methodical approach with which the doorstep service model has been executed by the IPPB and hope that the Department would extend the service to school/college students for payment of fees and/or delivery of course material/assignments to aid e-learning. The Committee advise that the services of post office may also be utilized by Central Government Health Scheme, ESI and Ayushmaan Bharat Yojana for delivery of medicines to the elderly and the needy to avoid them travelling long distances particularly through unfriendly terrain. The Committee recommend that the able bodied postmen may also be utilized for

disaster relief in flood stricken areas for delivery of essential food items and may be apprised of the progress in this regard.

Modernisation of e-post office through self booking kiosks and smart delivery boxes

10. **The Committee note that a gamut of measures have been implemented by the Department for the modernization of e-post offices. They include the self booking kiosk where the user can key in the details of address in the kiosk or alternatively can pre-fill the details using a web or mobile App of India Post and feed it in the kiosk through a Token ID. The user thereafter selects the option of article type and can generate the relevant barcode. The user will paste the barcode on the article and will scan the same by using the scanner installed in the Kiosk. User will then drop the article inside a slot in the Kiosk. The Kiosk calculates the postal charges and displays the same for payment. The user will have to complete the payment process through UPI (QR option). On successful payment of the amount, a transaction receipt is generated. A message is also sent to user on the mobile number and through e-mail. Postal officials will thereafter clear the articles from the Kiosk at pre-fixed time and hand over the articles to Postal Assistant of the attached Post office for further processing and dispatch. Another initiative is the Smart Delivery Box where postman will deposit the article in the slots of Smart Delivery Box after capturing the article number & addressee mobile number on the App. A text message will be sent to the addressee that an article**

addressed to him/her has been deposited in the Smart Delivery Box and the article can be collected 24x7. Addressee can access the Box through the Self Delivery Box App, to be downloaded from Google Play Store. While collecting the article, the addressee will open the App and enter the mobile number. After successful authentication through an OTP, access shall be granted. The addressee will open the slot in Smart Delivery Box through the App and collect the article from Smart Delivery Box.

The Committee compliment the Department on the milestones covered in the modernization of post offices and the progress made to adopt the best practices in the industry. The Department has exemplified the best in the Government sector and is at the front in the implementation of IT to boost operational efficiency, increase automation and promote the enduring value of mail. The Committee expect the Department to carry on their efforts and look forward to more progressive dynamism in the area.

Cyber Security in the Department of Posts

11. The Committee note that a slew of policies have been framed by the Department of Posts in order to ensure the data security and to guard against unauthorized access/threats. It includes a Data Classification Policy where all data assets must be inventoried, assigned an asset owner, classified, and documented to ensure that each receive the appropriate level of protection. It also includes a data encryption policy

which defines the Security requirements for data encryption on laptops, physical (portable and removable) media and Secure File Transfer within India Post Domain. This policy ensures the confidentiality and integrity of India Post's data/ information through the implementation of cryptographic controls. It further encompasses a Patch and Vulnerability Management Policy under which the discovery of a new vulnerability, disclosure of a new exploit or emergence of a new malware threat and the capability to incorporate protection from them on a real time basis fall under Threat and Vulnerability Management.

The Committee further note that the Department has an Application Security Policy which provides a security framework for applications developed or purchased by India Post and a Database Security Policy by which all databases are secured to ensure the confidentiality of customer information, the integrity of the business processes, and the availability of the systems. In addition, there is a Password Policy that establishes a standard for creation of strong passwords, the protection of those passwords, and the frequency of change of the passwords.

The Committee appreciate the fact that the cyber security policy of the Department outlines the guidelines and provisions for preserving the security of data and technology infrastructure of Department of Post. This policy delineates security requirements, roles, and responsibilities necessary to protect enterprise data and information systems from unauthorized access, inappropriate disclosure, or compromise.   The Committee find it praiseworthy that this policy is defined in the context of

complying with the policy framework requirements considering best practices adopted by IT industry and periodic Vulnerability assessment is carried out, analysed and risks addressed for mitigation. The Department participates in the CERT-In drills to understand the security posture.

The Committee find it heartening that both Nanyatha App and Postman Mobile App (PMA) have been developed 'in house' by the Centre of Excellence in Postal Technology (CEPT), Mysore and the Apps have been able to achieve their objective of monitoring the clearance of letter boxes and to update the delivery status of articles on real-time basis.

The Committee note that the postal staff are being trained in Cyber Security at various levels. All officers of the Department during their probation are attached to CEPT for imparting training on various technology related activities. For rest of the staff, basic training is imparted at Postal Training Centres on IT Security with the objective of ensuring end point security. CEPT has conducted Master Development program twice where Circle SPOCs have been trained in various disciplines, who in turn train the local Post office staff. DoP engaged Core System Integrator (CSI) for implementation and monitoring of all Security tools at the Data Centre and Post Offices.

The Committee are well pleased with the initiatives taken by the Department to protect its data from outside threats and expect the Department to continue with their efforts with zeal and vigor thereby emerging as the leading Government entity in cyber security initiatives. The Department may also consider involving subject matter experts as consultants in order to keep abreast of the latest developments in the

field of cyber security. The Committee bank on the Department to continue the training of employees on an ongoing basis to refresh their knowledge with the current security threats.

Pending projects in Estate Management

12. The Committee note that twenty two projects of Post Office buildings have been pending for the past 10 years. Out of these, the most glaring cases are that of four Post offices in Kerala namely Karamana, Poojappura, Sasthamangalam and Kalpetta which were announced in the Twelfth Five Year Plan. The Department have provided implausible reasons for the delay like revision in drawing, slow municipal approval which are not convincing to the Committee. The Committee are unhappy to note that the said projects have been delayed for an unexplicably long duration of time and have unjustly deprived a large portion of the populace of Kerala from postal services.

The Committee have further noted that the yearly outflow on rent of postal buildings is approximately Rs.105.07 Crore. 10179 buildings have been rented by the Department for more than 20 years. The Committee find it entirely unreasonable that the Department has been paying enormous sums of money on rent for a considerable number of years. Consequently, the numbers add up and lead to a revenue deficit in the long run. At the same time, the Department could have constructed and utilized its own buildings on its own lands demarcated for official use but instead, the construction is being delayed and the land is being

encroached by unscrupulous elements due to apathy of the post office personnel.

The Committee are dissatisfied by the state of affairs at the Estate Management Division and strongly emphasise that the Department should prioritise the completion of projects and move its operations from rented buildings to owned ones to reduce costs. The Committee may be apprised of the headway made in this matter.

Role played by the post office in achieving Sustainable Development Goal and Reduction in Emissions

13. The Committee note that the Department of Posts is a member of the Universal Postal Union (UPU). The UPU being a specialized agency of United Nations also contributes in attainment of the relevant Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through some of their activities. As regards the goals of 'no poverty', 'zero hunger' and 'reducing inequality', there is a large role of post offices in financial inclusion and literacy among the citizens through Post Offices Savings Bank Schemes, Direct Benefit Transfer, Pension Payments, Aadhaar enabled Payment System (AePS) at the doorstep through India Post Payments Bank and Postal Life Insurance. Department have also been creating employment for people through post office agents and franchise. With respect to goals for 'Gender Equality', 'Quality Education', all Women Post offices have been opened and facilities created for women employees to promote gender sensitivity and

equality. Postal Department have also been promoting Sukanya Samriddhi Yojana (SSY) through post offices to open accounts for the girl child and secure their future and quality education. Regarding the goals for 'Affordable and Clean Energy', 'Climate Action', activities have been undertaken for rain water harvesting in post office premises and instalment of solar panels on rooftop of post offices to generate clean energy. With regards to the goals for 'Decent Work and Economic Growth', 'Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure', in order to promote exports through postal channel, the number of Foreign Post Office gateways (Offices of Exchange) have been increased from five to eight and at 19 locations Customs clearance facilities in Foreign Post Offices have been made operational to facilitate small exporters and MSMEs.

The Committee note that the Department have not quantified the its emissions. However, with introduction of IT systems in the Department, usage of paper & printing has been substantially reduced in the last five years. Also, with introduction of CNG vehicles and a modern fleet of vehicles, total emissions have been reduced. The Department installs roof top solar power packs on departmental buildings, wherever feasible which further contribute towards reduction in carbon footprint. Department have proposed to induct Electric/CNG vehicles in its fleet from 2021-22 to 2025-26 to reduce fuel consumption. Small post office concept of the Department is based on maximizing use of local building materials for construction, in order to reduce the environmental impact.

The Committee recognize that the diverse network and presence of Posts make them a potentially strategic driver of the SDG agenda and are

impressed with the commitment shown by the Department towards building a sustainable future and foster social advancement and human well-being. The Committee expect the Department to align their strategies in order to benefit MSMEs through offering affordable trade services and thereby aiding socioeconomic growth. Doing so, they would fulfil their obligation to the world and responsibility to the future.

The Committee observe that the Department is in a nascent stage when it comes to cutting the emissions and offsetting the carbon. They need to ramp up their efforts considerably in order to achieve reduced consumption of natural resources and use of renewable energy in its operations. The Committee would like to be apprised of the endeavours of the Department to reduce consumption of fossil fuels. The Committee would like to know the roadmap to develop postal infrastructure which has the lowest possible environmental impact alongwith recycling and waste reduction as part of its Social Responsibility.

Role of the Department of Posts in Dissemination of information and Gender Equality

14. The Committee note the role of India Post in promoting e- Govt. initiatives and the dissemination of information on welfare schemes. India Post has played an important role in promoting Government initiatives and dissemination of information on welfare schemes by displaying information about them through displays and banners on more than 1.64 lakh Post Offices across the country. India Post participated in several welfare campaigns such as Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Campaign,

Department of Consumer Affairs' consumer legal rights awareness campaign, information and promotion of Ministry of MSME's ST/SC Entrepreneur's Hub, Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana, Jan Andolan 1.0 & 2.0 Campaign, Free vaccination for all, etc. Banners and posters were displayed in Post Offices across the country to provide awareness and information about these Government schemes to public visiting the Post Offices. LED display Boards are set up on top of the building and in the public hall of the Post Offices. As and when creatives with instructions are received from MIB, they are disseminated digitally through Web Banner on the website of Department of Posts (indiapost.gov.in), through social media handles (Twitter, Koo, Instagram, Facebook) and through LED display. Recently MIB has shared creatives on Jan Andolan 2.0 and on the message of free vaccination for all which was disseminated widely.

The Committee further note that DOP promotes Girl Child welfare and development programs. DOP has taken up campaigns promoting Women and Child Development. The Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Campaign is widely disseminated. The Sukanya Samriddhi Yojana is a flagship scheme for securing the future of Girl Children. Under this scheme a Sukanya Samriddhi account (SSA) is opened for the girl children in Post Offices. Department of Posts has opened 2.04 Crore (FY 2020-2021) accounts through more than 1.5 lakh Post Offices across the country. In fact, 84% of SSA accounts in the country are opened in Post Offices. It has been instructed to all Postal Circles to raise awareness on SSA and include maximum number of girl children under the fold of SSA. To achieve it,

various initiatives, programs, events are conducted by Postal Circles in partnerships with Women and Child Development Departments and School Education Departments of several State Governments. Pan India radio jingles are also being run to raise awareness on SSA and its benefits. Apart from this, social media creatives are also regularly shared regarding SSA.

The Committee appreciate the initiatives taken by the Department in the dissemination of information and the welfare of the girl child. The Committee understand that due to expansive network and public service mandate, DoP can help promote education of women, help end discrimination, exploitation and violence through information campaigns and use their Universal Service Obligation to ensure all women have access to reproductive health resources and social welfare. Department of Posts, being a major employer, can take steps to ensure that women are encouraged and supported to work for them. The Committee acknowledge that Department of Posts can help to bridge the gap between the people in need and the organizations trying to reach them which includes programs targeted to raise awareness of gender equality and promote inclusion and empowerment of women. The Committee look forward to continuing active participation of the Department in this regard.

Review of functioning of Post Office Common Service Centres

15. The Committee note that the 1,21,133 Post offices are providing Common Service Centre(CSC) services in the country which includes 22,382 departmental post offices and 98, 751 branch post offices in rural areas. Further, the Committee are given to understand that 1,38,906 postal employees (35,162 Departmental employees and 1,03,744 Gramin Dak Sevaks) have been trained to provide CSC services through post offices. The Committee have also been informed that the revenue earned for transactions done on CSC platform related to Common Service Centre services is shared between CSC-SPV and Department of Posts in the ratio of 20:80. The Department have informed that the revenue earned by the CSCs operated by the Department of Posts is Rs. 7,45,351.39 in 2020-21, Rs. 38,87,621.46 in 2021-22 and Rs. 59, 23, 788.58 in 2022-23 till December, 2022 which totals up to Rs. 1,05, 56, 761.43 since the inception of PO-CSC. The Committee have also been informed that a total of 81 services are being offered by PO-CSCs which include Digital Seva Portal, Election, Labour, Pension and Employment services , E-District, bill payments, tour and travels, FASTag, Educational, banking, insurance services, Income Tax return etc. They have also submitted that the availability of power supply and internet connectivity in post offices and the demand for CSC services are the major challenges faced by post offices while delivering CSC services.

   The Committee based on their Study Visit observed that the PO-CSCs visited by the Committee were largely focused on bill payment services. If this is the case, then the Committee would like that such CSCs

need to enlarge the scope of services being delivered to comply to the mandate of CSCs provided under the MOU signed for that effect. The Committee emphasise on the need of training for delivery of CSC services.

Further, it is observed that the Department of Posts, being a behemoth organization, is capable of discharging the responsibilities entrusted to the CSC-SPV independently. The Department have, time and again, reaffirmed their abilities to provide the gamut of e-Governance services on their own. The Committee emphasise that instead of sharing 20 % of the revenue with the CSC which is a private entity, the business model and MoU between the Department and the CSC needs to be revisited and the possibility of handing over the CSC services to the Department of Post may be explored. The Committee would highly appreciate if the desired action is taken at the earliest.

New Delhi;   PRATAPRAO JADHAV,
……6…February.., 2024   Chairperson,
……17….Magha,1945 (Saka)   Standing Committee on
                                          Communications and Information Technology.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
(2020-21)
MINUTES OF THE EIGHTH SITTING OF THE COMMITTEE

The Committee sat on Wednesday, the 16 December, 2020, from 1000 hours to 1150 hours in Main Committee Room, Parliament House Annexe, New Delhi.

PRESENT

Dr. Shashi Tharoor- Chairperson

MEMBERS

Lok Sabha

32. Shri Karti P. Chidambaram
33. Dr. Nishikant Dubey
34. Smt. Locket Chatterjee
35. Smt. Raksha Nikhil Khadse
36. Shri Jayadev Galla
37. Ms. Mahua Moitra
38. Shri P. R. Natarajan
39. Shri Santosh Pandey
40. Shri Sanjay Seth
41. Shri Bhanu Pratap Singh Verma

Rajya Sabha

42. Dr. Anil Agrawal
43. Shri Syed Nasir Hussain
44. Shri Syed Zafar Islam

Secretariat

1.	Shri Y. M. Kandpal	-	Joint Secretary
2.	Dr. Sagarika Dash	-	Additional Director
3.	Smt. Geeta Parmar	-	Additional Director
4.	Shri Shangreiso Zimik	-	Deputy Secretary

List of Witnesses
DEPARTMENT OF POSTS (DoP)

Sl. No.	Names	Designation
1.	Shri Pradipta Kumar Bisoi	Secretary (Posts)
2.	Shri Vineet Pandey	Director General Postal Services
3.	Shri Anil Kumar Nayak	AS & FA
4.	Shri Alok Sharma	Member (PLI)
5.	Ms. Sandhya Rani	Member (Banking)
6.	Dr. Charles Lobo	Member (Operations)
7.	Shri Prannoy Sharma	Secretary (PSB)

2.   At the outset, the Chairperson welcomed the representatives of the Department of Posts (DoP) to the sitting of the Committee convened to hear their views on the subject 'Department of Posts-Initiatives and Challenges'. The Chairperson in his initial remarks recalled that the India Post has the largest postal network in the world where 90 percent of the post-offices cater to rural population with a post-office serving on an average 6200 customers and desired to know the strategy adopted by the Department to deal with the increasing competition in the industry, impact of globalization, legacy issues in the Department besides steps taken for expansion of Common Service Centres, pruning the operational costs, etc.

3.   Thereafter, the Secretary, DoP briefed the Committee about various technology initiatives being taken up by the department like strengthening of Centre for Excellence for Postal Technology(CEPT), Mysore, use of

interoperable Europay, MasterCard, and Visa (EMV) chip based cards, strengthening of supply chain infrastructure, setting up of parcel hubs and nodal delivery centres with process optimization, mechanization and tracing facility, launch of new Road Transport Network with Long Haul National Routes, launch of Postman Mobile App, establishment of Dak Ghar Niryat Kendras, signing of agreement with United States Postal Service (USPS)and launch of e-packet service, etc. Other initiatives like issue of digital devices to postmen, issue of customized My Stamps, construction of post offices on Department owned land, efficient handling of public grievances through CPGRAMS, social media cell and a toll free number and the launch of Dynamic Queue Management System were also brought to the notice of the Committee. He then highlighted on the financial inclusion agenda of the IPPB furthered with the Aadhar enabled Payment System (AePS) and the DakPay App, IPPB to be made into a Small finance bank by 2024, revenue generation initiatives, Aadhaar Enrolment cum Updation Centers in Post Offices, providing Passport services to citizens in far flung areas through Post Office Passport Sewa Kendras (POPSK), Digital Life Certificate (DLC) Service for the pensioners etc. On the initiatives taken by the Department during the COVID pandemic, the Committee were informed of the COVID-19 response of the Department which inter-alia included delivery of shipments, disbursal of cash by AEPS, transactions through IPPB accounts, payment of social security by eMoney Order, Digital Life Certificate at doorstep, etc. A few challenges being faced by the Department in the matter of supply of hardware, process reengineering in sync with technology changes, capacity building for changing technology, cap of Rs. 1 lakh on deposit for IPPB accounts and the maintenance of Rs. 500 as minimum balance in savings account, etc. were also brought to the notice of the Committee.

4.   The Committee, then sought clarification on various issues viz. activities of the Department during Covid-19, updates on the IT Modernisation project, spread of mobile banking, reach of the PLI scheme, encroachment upon post office lands, extending internet connectivity nationwide, capturing a larger market share in e-commerce deliveries, profitability and scalability of operations, global models and unclaimed deposits, competition with private players, post office as a system of delivery to citizens living abroad, revenue earned from the postal services, competitive landscape, requirement of minimum balance in saving accounts, verification of voter list by the Department of Posts, distribution of COVID- 19 vaccines, Direct Benefit Transfers, cases of misappropriation of funds, coverage of remote areas under Universal Service Obligation, etc. The representatives of the DoP responded to the queries of the Members.

5.   The Chairperson, then, congratulated the representatives of the Department of Posts for the recognition of their services by the Universal Postal Union and thanked them for deposing before the Committee.

<div align="center">The witnesses then withdrew.

Verbatim Proceedings of the sitting have been kept on record.

The Committee, then, adjourned.
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STANDING COMMITTEE ON COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION

TECHNOLOGY (2022-23)

MINUTES OF THE SIXTH SITTING OF THE COMMITTEE

The Committee sat on Friday, the 06 January, 2023 from 1100 hours to 1320 hours in Committee Room D, Parliament House Annexe, New Delhi.

PRESENT

Shri Prataprao Jadhav -Chairperson

MEMBERS

Lok Sabha

45. Shri Karti P. Chidambaram

46. Shri Nishikant Dubey

47. Dr. Sukanta Majumdar

48. Shri Sanjay Seth

Rajya Sabha

49. Dr. Anil Agrawal

50. Shri Syed Nasir Hussain

51. Shri Kartikeya Sharma

52. Shri Praful Patel

53. Shri Lahar Singh Siroya

Secretariat

5.   Shri Satpal Gulati   -   Joint Secretary

6.   Shri Nishant Mehra   -   Deputy Secretary

LIST OF WITNESSES

Sl. No.	Name	Designation
1.	Shri Vineet Pandey	Secretary
2.	Shri Alok Sharma	Director General Postal Services
3.	Shri Partha Sarathi Das	Additional Secretary & Financial Adviser
4.	Shri Ajay Kumar Roy	Chief General Manager (Parcel Dte.)
5.	Smt. Amarpreet Duggal	Deputy Director General (PG)
6.	Shri Raj Kumar Mishra	Deputy Director General (Rural Business & Planning)
7.	Shri Kushal Kumar Pathak	Deputy Director General (Tech.)
8.	Shri Pawan Kumar Singh	Deputy Director General (FS&PBI)

Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology

Sl. No.	Name	Designation
1.	Shri Sushil Pal	Joint Secretary
2.	Shri P.R. Chandekar	Director

CSC e-Governance Services

Sl. No.	Name	Designation
1.	Shri Sanjay Kumar Rakesh	MD & CEO

2.   At the outset, the Chairperson welcomed the Members to the sitting of the Committee convened to hear the views of the representatives of the Ministry of Communications (Department of Posts) on the subject 'Department of Posts-Initiatives and Challenges.'

(The witnesses were then called in)

3.   The Chairperson welcomed the officials of the Department of Posts to the sitting of the Committee. He, in his opening remarks, drew attention to the emergence of electronic alternatives, expectation of customers, presence of organized/unorganized couriers for mail conveyance, financial players like banks and insurance companies due to which the Department of Posts is facing many challenges to remain relevant during this digital era. He highlighted the need to shape up the Post offices into multi service centres for providing greater impetus

to do business and converting the post office as a one stop shop through Common Service Centres to further the vision of Gram Swaraj and Atmanirbhar Bharat. He asked the Department to update the Committee about the scope of MoU, role and responsibility of CSC, business model, revenue model, mechanism to ensure accountability and performance monitoring as per the MoU mandate. He desired that the Committee may also be informed about tangible gains achieved since the adoption of Post Office CSC model, how far this model has ensured the digital empowerment of every citizen, created rural employment opportunities, improved logistics business in the rural areas including cottage industries, Self Help Groups and Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises by providing them a platform. He underlined that the Department need to apprise the Committee of the bouquet of Government-to-Citizen (G2C), Business-to-Citizen (B2C) and Government-to-Business (G2B) services offered by the Post Office Common Service Centres, whether these services are uniformly accessible in all the different states/UTs, major challenges/constraints faced by PO-CSCs such as lack of basic infrastructure and internet connectivity etc. and the extent to which Post office CSC-SPV has been able to achieve its intended objectives. He asked the Department to explain how they plan to build a financially sustainable model and the plan to revise fee structures, the availability of Grievance Redressal

system for the end-users as well as the Village Level Entrepreneurs (VLEs), manpower related issues in CSC-SPV and qualitative assessment measures in place, etc.

4. The representatives of the Department briefed the Committee through a powerpoint presentation which included the last mile reach of the post office, the number of departmental and branch post offices, leveraging the strength to serve people, providing Government services like examination surveys, financial services like E Money order and IMTS, G2C services like passport and Aadhaar, remittances through Aadhaar enabled payment services, Digital Life certificates, insurance services through PLI and RPLI, etc. They highlighted how the Department of Posts and the India Post Payments Bank are promoting financial inclusion together by offering banking services with an omni channel phygital approach which combines technology of IPPB and distribution of DoP . They further mentioned that the Post Office Savings Schemes had 25.14 crore accounts with deposits of Rs. 14.58 lakh crores (including certificates) and 2.69 crore Sukanya Samriddhi accounts which account for 84 % of total SSY accounts in the country.

5.   They further outlined various initiatives like maturity payment of all eight Post Office Savings Bank (POSB) scheme accounts being credited directly into Post office

Bank account now, NEFT/RTGS payment for POSB customers, internet banking, mobile banking and interoperable ATM card facility for POSB customers. All POSB schemes have been made available in Village Branch Post Offices(BOs), withdrawal limit in BOs increased from 5000/- to 20,000/-, deposit limit in BO raised to Rs. 50,000/-, etc. The deposit and withdrawal limit from post office other than where the account stands has been raised from Rs. 25,000/- to Rs. 50,000/-, CRM/IVRS facilities for POSB customers, Centralised cheque clearance system, simplified deceased claim settlement process, SMS alert for POSB transactions, launch of PM Cares for Children schemes, cheque collection facility introduced in BO, E-Passbook facility for POSB customers, balance enquiry and mini statement are other new initiatives launched by Department of Posts. The challenges faced and the steps taken in financial services like the migration to Core Banking System, e-passbook facility for POSB customers, simplification of POSB procedures were also explained.

6.   The representatives of the Department apprised the Committee that steps have been taken to popularize PLI/RPLI like extension of clientele to all graduates, PLI app launched for online training and licentiate examination, online payment of premium, etc. They further elaborated on initiatives like opening 190 e-Commerce and parcel hubs, 192 mechanised Nodal Delivery Centres, launch of Road Transport Network, MoU between India Post-GeM for fulfillment of GeM orders through Speed

Post, extension of postal export logistics to 28 Foreign post offices, electronic filing of postal bill of exports, set up of 100 Dak Ghar Niryat Kendras, agreement with the United States Postal Service (USPS), e- Packet service, smart kiosks etc. They further explained on implementation of IT Modernisation project aimed at enabling delivery of maximum services at doorsteps while facing challenges such as supply of required hardware, network connectivity, interoperability and process reengineering, capacity building, etc. in order to fulfil the objectives of reducing costs, improving productivity, better customer experience, ensuring governance and compliance, increasing collaboration, single user interface for post offices, better post offices network with higher bandwidth, use of cloud computing etc . They further discussed the Human Resource Initiatives like recruitment plan to fill up vacancies, GDS recruitment and other challenges like delays in transfer, manual processing of Sports quota recruitment etc. alongwith launch of Dak Karmayogi portal, Har Ghar Tiranga campaign, Postcard campaign, international Day of Yoga 2022, special campaign for disposal of pending matters, improvement in look and feel of post offices, etc.

7.   Thereafter, the Committee deliberated and sought clarification on various issues which *inter alia* included (i) unclaimed deposits lying in post office savings bank, (ii) post offices that have been closed down, (iii) viability of postal department in the e-commerce sector,(iv) net profit or loss of Department, (v) incentives given

to the Development Officers (DOs), (vi) 5G networks for the post offices, (vii) new vacancies filled State-wise, (viii) role of technology that is being used to modernise the postal service, (ix) implementation of Bharatnet , (x) security of data collected by post offices, (xi) post offices declared as heritage buildings, (xii) single child policy popularized in Tamil Nadu through post offices, (xiii) promotion of philately, (xiv) recruitment in sports quota, (xv) policy regarding the vacant land belonging to the Department, etc.

8.   Subsequently, the representatives of the Department replied to the queries of the Members. The Members raised further queries on issues such as business model of Common Service Centres, services provided by CSCs in post offices, buildings and lands owned by the Department , e-commerce business handled by the Parcel Directorate, deposit limit of India Post Payment Bank, problems with internet connectivity, recruitment policy, revenue sources of the Department , insurance products offered, Dak Niryat Kendra, filling up of vacancies on regional basis, MoU between Department and CSC, provision of optical fibre by CSC, monitoring of PO-CSCs, training programmes conducted for CSCs, issues faced in using Aadhaar enabled payments, etc. The Members also congratulated the Department on taking over the leadership of the Asian Pacific Postal Union (APPU).

9. The representatives of the Department responded to a number of queries raised by the Members. The Chairperson, then, emphasized that the heritage post offices can be utilized as revenue generating sources and the funds so earned can be used to construct post offices in rural areas. The Chairperson then directed that written replies may be furnished to the Committee to the points on which information was not readily available. The Chairperson, then thanked the representatives of the Department of Posts for deposing before the Committee.

The witnesses, then withdrew.

A copy of verbatim record of the proceedings was kept on record.

The Committee, then, adjourned.