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**STANDING COMMITTEE ON COMMUNICATIONS
AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
(2024-25)**

EIGHTEENTH LOK SABHA

**MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS
(DEPARTMENT OF POSTS)**

**[Action Taken by the Government on the Observations/Recommendations
of the Committee contained in their Fifty-seventh Report (Seventeenth Lok
Sabha) on 'Department of Posts-Initiatives and Challenges']**

FIRST REPORT



**LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI**

December 2024/ Agrahayana 1946 (Saka)

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Sabha) on 'Department of Posts-Initiatives and Challenges']**

Presented to Lok Sabha on 18.12.2024

Laid in Rajya Sabha on 18.12.2024



**LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI**

December, 2024/Agrahayana, 1946 (Saka)

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**Composition of the Standing Committee on Communications and
Information Technology (2024-25)**

Dr. Nishikant Dubey - Chairperson

Lok Sabha

2. Shri C.N. Annadurai
3. Shri Anil Baluni
4. Dr. Rabindra Narayan Behera
5. Shri Anup Sanjay Dhotre
6. Shri Gurmeet Singh Meet Hayer
7. Shri Sanjay Haribhau Jadhav
8. Shri S. Supongmeren Jamir
9. Shri Appalanaidu Kalisetti
10. Smt. Poonamben Hematbhai Maadam
11. Ms. Mahua Moitra
12. Shri G. Kumar Naik
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18. Shri Arun Kumar Sagar
19. Shri Devesh Shakya
20. Shri Vishnu Datt Sharma
21. Shri Rajesh Verma

Rajya Sabha

22. Shri Saket Gokhale*
23. Smt. Priyanka Chaturvedi
24. Shri Ilaiyaraaja
25. Shri Amar Pal Maurya
26. Dr. Sasmit Patra
27. Shri V. Vijayendra Prasad
28. Shri S. Niranjana Reddy
29. Shri Kartikeya Sharma
30. Shri Lahar Singh Siroya
31. Shri K.T.S. Tulsi

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| 1. Shri Y. M. Kandpal | - | Joint Secretary |
| 2. Smt. A. Jyothirmayi | - | Director |
| 3. Smt. Rinky Singh | - | Executive Officer |

Committee constituted w.e.f. 26th September, 2024 vide Para No.833 of Bulletin Part-II dated 26th September, 2024.

* Shri Saket Gokhale has been nominated vide Para No. 853 of Bulletin Part –II dated 03rd October, 2024.

INTRODUCTION

I, the Chairperson, Standing Committee on Communications and Information Technology (2024-25), having been authorized by the Committee, present this First Report on Action Taken by the Government on the Observations/ Recommendations of the Committee contained in their Fifty-seventh Report (Seventeenth Lok Sabha) on the subject 'Department of Posts - Initiatives and Challenges' relating to the Ministry of Communications (Department of Posts).

2. The Fifty-seventh Report was presented to Lok Sabha and also laid on the Table of Rajya Sabha on 8th February, 2024. The Ministry of Communications (Department of Posts) furnished their Action Taken Notes on the Observations/Recommendations contained in the Fifty-seventh Report on 8th May, 2024.

3. The Report was considered and adopted by the Committee at their Sitting held on 16th December, 2024.

4. For facility of reference and convenience, Observations/Recommendations of the Committee have been printed in bold in Chapter-I of the Report.

5. An analysis of Action Taken by the Government on the Observations/Recommendations contained in the Fifty-seventh Report of the Committee is given at Annexure-II.

**New Delhi;
16 December, 2024
25 Agrahayana, 1946 (Saka)**

**NISHIKANT DUBEY,
Chairperson,
Standing Committee on
Communications and Information Technology.**

CHAPTER I

REPORT

This Report of the Standing Committee on Communications and Information Technology deals with the action taken by the Government on the Observations/Recommendations of the Committee contained in their Fifty-Seventh Report (Seventeenth Lok Sabha) on 'Department of Posts - Initiatives and Challenges' relating to the Ministry of Communications (Department of Posts).

2. The Fifty-seventh Report was presented to Lok Sabha/laid in Rajya Sabha on 8th February, 2024. It contained 15 Observations/Recommendations. Replies of the Government in respect of all the Observations/Recommendations have been received from the Ministry of Communications (Department of Posts). All the 15 Recommendations have been categorized as accepted and have been placed under Chapter-II. However, in view of the Action Taken Reply of the Department, some of the Recommendations (Nos. 2, 6, 7, 9 & 11) have been commented upon in Chapter-I of the Report. Categorization of all the Observations/Recommendations is as under.

- | | |
|--|----------------------------|
| (i) Observations/Recommendations which have been accepted by the Government Rec. Sl. Nos.:– 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8, 9,10,11,12,13,14 and 15 | Total-15 Chapter-II |
| (ii) Observations/Recommendations which the Committee do not desire to pursue in view of the replies of the Government Rec. Sl. No.:– NIL | Total — NIL Chapter-III |
| (iii) Observations/Recommendations in respect of which replies of the Government have not been accepted by the Committee and require reiteration Rec. Sl. No.:– NIL | Total – NIL Chapter-IV |
| (iv) Observations/Recommendations in respect of which replies of the Government are of interim in nature Rec. Sl. No.:– NIL | Total – NIL Chapter-V |

3. **The Committee trust that utmost importance would be given to implementation of the Observations/Recommendations accepted by the Government. The Committee further desire that Action Taken Statement on the Observations/Recommendations contained in Chapter-I of this Report should be furnished to them at an early date.**

4. The Committee will now deal with action taken by the Government on some of their recommendations.

Roadmap for Revenue Generation

(Recommendation Sl. No. 2)

5. The Committee, in their Fifty-seventh Report, had recommended as under:

“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 services and availability of instantaneous communication through messaging apps and social media. The

Committee are aware, 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 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 Deptt. 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.”

6. In their Action Taken Reply, the Department of Posts submitted as under:–

“The Department is fully committed to make continued efforts as advised by the Committee. Out of 1000 DNKs enabled for exports, 904 have already received booking from customers. The Revenue accrued to the Department is around Rs. 25 Crore so far has considerable growth potential with stabilization of the scheme. Integrations with e-commerce companies, online customs clearance and documentation, cost savings and value-added offerings contribute to the financial sustainability of the Department while facilitating exports.

Department aims to streamlining its activities by periodic review of services and products, adapting to changing market scenarios and customer needs, which are crucial aspects for revenue growth. Additionally, aggressive marketing and strategic partnerships, such as tie-ups with e-commerce companies, banks and other Govt. agencies will further enhance revenue generation opportunities. Technology induction and infrastructure upgrade for maintaining its unparalleled reach and service quality are other key aspects to revenue generation. Establishing a dedicated road transport network & set up of nodal delivery centers, real time monitoring etc are some other factors to enhance the efficiency of the Mail Delivery System, which shall eventually lead to growth in business and revenue generation.

The Department is making necessary technological upgradations to match industry standards and garner a larger share of the Courier, Express and Parcel (CEP) market. Application Programming Interface (APIs) are being

developed for data exchanges between the Department of Posts and its e-commerce partners and other customers. APIs have been developed for parcel services such as Pick-up, Tariff Calculation, PIN code validation, Parcel Scan events, Routing, Label Generation and Cancellation. A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Department of Posts and Tribal Co-operative Marketing Development Federation of India (TRIFED) for delivery of tribal products of the artisans of North-Eastern India was signed on 06.06.2023. The Department of Posts has entered in partnership with 14 regional offices of TRIBES India and is providing logistics support to artisans to connect their products with the market. Apart from this, Department is also working with major e-commerce companies like Amazon, Shiprocket, Decathlon etc.

The Department is using its vacant land for construction of Postal buildings to reduce its rental liability. The Department has 25081 Departmental Post Offices, out of this 19324 Post Offices are functioning from rented buildings. In last 5 years, 182 new Postal buildings have been constructed.”

7. The Standing Committee on Communications and Information Technology (2023-24), in their Fifty-seventh Report, had taken note of the initiatives of the Department for containing the revenue deficit and for improving the efficiency of its services and products. They had hoped that these initiatives would help in augmenting their profitability. Some of the other suggestions made by the Committee were (a) to form tie-ups with Government agencies like KVIC, Tribes India, etc.; (b) to monetize land parcels and construct warehouses on the land owned by the Department to mobilize funds; (c) to exploit their unparalleled reach by tie up with e-commerce companies to augment their revenue earnings; (d) to explore the use of post office buildings to provide retail services; and (e) to aggressively seek opportunities in the market for growing business and continue with efforts to augment revenue and reduce deficit.

The Department of Posts, in their Action Taken Reply, submitted that they are fully committed to make efforts as advised by the Committee. They have also submitted that they are (i) making necessary technological upgradations to match industry standards and garner a larger share of the Courier, Express and Parcel (CEP) market; (ii) developing Application Programming Interface for data exchanges between the Department of Posts and its e-commerce partners and other customers; (iii) aiming to streamline their activities by periodic review of services and products, adapting to changing market scenarios and customer needs, which are crucial aspects for revenue growth; (iv) a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Department of Posts and Tribal Co-operative Marketing Development Federation of India (TRIFED) for delivery of tribal products

of the artisans of North-Eastern India was signed on 06.06.2023; (v) entered in partnership with 14 regional offices of TRIBES India and is providing logistics support to artisans to connect their products with the market; (vi) Working with major e-commerce companies like Amazon, Shiprocket, Decathlon, etc.; and (vii) using its vacant land for construction of Postal buildings to reduce its rental liability.

Having taken note of the various steps taken by the Department w.r.t. their Recommendations, the Committee desire to be apprised of the updated status on all initiatives mentioned by them [from point (i) to (vii)] particularly about the MoU with TRIFED and partnership with 14 regional offices of TRIBES India. The Committee note that the Department is silent in replying to the recommendation to monetise the land parcels and construct warehouses on the land owned by the Department to mobilise funds. The response/action taken in this regard may be communicated to the Committee. Further, while noting that out of 25,081 Departmental Post Offices, 19,324 are functioning from rented buildings and 182 new Postal buildings have been constructed during last 5 years, the Committee would like to call upon the Department to continue their efforts for utilising its vacant land for constructing new Postal Buildings so that their rental liabilities could be reduced and enlighten the Committee about the outcome along with the updated details of their vacant land.

Encroachment of Post Office Lands

(Recommendation Sl. No. 6)

8. The Committee, in their Original Report, had made the following Observation/Recommendation:—

“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.”

9. The Department of Posts, in their Action Taken Reply, submitted as under:–

“The recommendation of the Committee has been noted. Department is 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 Unauthorised 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. Department is constructing Post Office buildings on vacant lands which ultimately check the encroachment. Department has constructed 182 Postal Buildings in last 5 years.

Department of Posts constructs ramps and rails, under “Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan”, for making post offices accessible to the differently abled persons. Construction of rail and ramps are mandatory for all new buildings constructed in the Department of Posts, while old buildings are also retrofitted with such facilities. 397 Braille Signages have been constructed by the Department in the buildings making them easily accessible to differently abled persons. The details are as under:

| Sl. No. | Activity | Constructed during last 3 years and up to 31.03.2024 |
|---------|--------------------|--|
| 1 | Ramps and railings | 1514 |
| 2 | Adaptive Restrooms | 283 |
| 3 | Tactile floorings | 285 |

Circle have set a monitoring committee for the implementation of the accessibility norms in accordance with the Rights of person with Disabilities Act, 2016. As on December 2023, 728 Access Audits have been conducted by the Circles at their levels.”

10. The Committee, in their Original Report, had noted that the number of encroached plots owned by Department of Posts was the highest in Karnataka (38) and in Bihar (27) and they were lagging behind in the implementation of the Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan wherein 310 buildings were retrofitted with ramps and railings in 2018-19, 33 in 2019-20 and 34 in 2020 for the use of the differently-abled. The Committee, therefore, had exhorted the Department to make renewed efforts to reclaim the lands encroached by unscrupulous elements and to take pre-emptive measures of fencing the plots, employing security personnel and amelioration of Service Conditions of Gramin Dak Sevak. The Committee had also recommended the Department to speed up the retrofitting of buildings to the benefit of the differently-abled and to conduct access audits for the Post Office buildings on an annual basis.

Taking note of the efforts made by the Department for removing encroachment with the help of public representatives, local administrations and judicial remedies available, the Committee observe that in order to make buildings easily accessible to differently-abled persons, Monitoring Committee for the implementation of the accessibility norms in accordance with the Rights of Person with Disabilities Act, 2016 has been set up. Further, as on December, 2023, 728 Access Audits have been conducted by the Circles at their levels. The Committee desire to have an updated status about the Monitoring Committee that was set up for the implementation of the accessibility norms and also furnish the action taken on the 728 Access Audits that have been conducted by the Circles till December, 2023.

Amelioration of service conditions of Gramin Dak Sevak including financial upgradation

(Recommendation SI. No. 7)

11. The Committee, in their Original Report, made the following observations/recommendations:–

“The Committee note that at present, 2.37 lakh Gramin Dak Sevak (GDS) are working in the Department of Posts. The major duties of the Gramin Dak Sevak are smooth and timely functioning of Post Offices, 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.”

12. The Department of Posts, in their Action Taken Reply, submitted as under:–

“The Department has recently introduced a Gramin Dak Sevak (Grant of Financial Upgradation) Scheme, 2024 on 15.03.2024. Under the Scheme, every GDS will be eligible for three financial upgradations of a fixed amount of Rs. 360/-, Rs. 460/- and Rs. 600/- on completion of 12, 24 and 36 years of his engagement. The scheme will remove stagnation in their service conditions.”

13. **The Committee, in their Original Report, had noted that there were 2.37 lakh Gramin Dak Sevaks (GDSs) working in the Department of Posts. To examine long pending issues and other service conditions of Gramin Dak Sevaks a Committee under the Chairmanship of Shri Kamlesh Chandra, Retd Member, Postal Services Board was set up on 19.11.2015 and it had submitted its Report on 24.11.2016. Some of the recommendations of the Kamlesh Chandra Committee Report were implemented. However, the Committee find that the Department has been silent regarding group health insurance. Further, the Committee had also expected the Department to examine the matter wherein the GDSs were not covered under the**

Employees' Provident Fund Act or Employees' State Insurance Act and had recommended 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.

On the other hand, the Department have merely stated that 'Gramin Dak Sevak (Grant of Financial Upgradation) Scheme, 2024' was introduced on 15.03.2024, wherein every GDS would be eligible for three financial upgradations of a fixed amount of Rs. 360/-, Rs. 460/- and Rs. 600/- on completion of 12, 24 and 36 years respectively of his engagement and this scheme will remove stagnation in their service conditions. The Committee note with concern that except for the information on a meagre financial upgradation of GDS, the reply of the Department is silent on all other aspects. The Committee would like to be apprised of the status of action taken on all the suggestions/concerns expressed by the Committee.

Strategic Role and building image of the Department of Posts

(Recommendation Sl. No. 9)

14. The Committee, in their Original Report, made the following observation/recommendation:—

“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 as 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 Ayushman 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. “

15. The Department of Posts, in their Action Taken Reply, submitted as under:–

“The Dak Ghar Niryat Kendra schemes of Department of Posts, initiated in 2022-23, is in sync with Government strategy and schemes like ‘One District One Product’, ‘Districts as Export Hubs’ (DEH) and promotion of ‘Geo-Tagged’ (GI) products by extending the reach of export points through Post Offices across the country upto district level.

DNK scheme is leveraging physical and digital infrastructure of DoP to strategically contribute in Government of India vision to utilize the vast postal network for Public Service Delivery by boosting exports.

The PLI Dte is taking utmost efforts to reach to the common citizens of the nation through various online and offline modes. The customer satisfaction through various insurance facilities and suitable online/offline grievances redressal platforms is functional.

The Mail Operations of the Department of Posts plays an important role in shaping and enhancing the image of the Department, serving as the backbone of its service delivery mechanism. In an era of digital communication, the efficiency, reliability, and innovative displayed in mail handling and mechanized delivery processes directly influence public perception and trust in the Department. By ensuring timely and secure delivery of parcels and letters, optimizing logistics through technological integration, and maintaining standards of customer service, Mail Operations not only uphold the Department's legacy of connecting people across distances but also strengthen its relevance and reliability in the digital age.

The Department has taken a comprehensive view of the parcel value chain and has established exclusive facilities for processing and delivery of parcels which are Parcel Hubs and Nodal Delivery Centers respectively. It has also developed standard operating procedures, introduced mechanization and necessary IT interventions for supporting operations in these facilities and integrating with customers' systems through API. Products and services of Department are available to all for last mile delivery."

16. The Committee, in their Original Report, had appreciated the methodical approach with which the doorstep service model had been executed by the India Post Payments Bank (IPPB) and the manner in which the Postal Department turned out to be a media savvy organization. The Committee had hoped 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 and the services of Post Office may also be utilized by Central Government Health Scheme, ESI and Ayushman Bharat Yojana for delivery of medicines to the elderly and the needy who could avoid travelling long distances particularly through unfriendly terrain. The Committee had also recommended that able-bodied postmen may be utilized for disaster relief in flood stricken areas for delivery of essential food items.

In the Action Taken Note, the Department have provided details of some of the Schemes which *inter-alia* include (i) 'The Dak Ghar Niryat Kendra Scheme' (ii) Efforts of the PLI Directorate to reach the common citizens of the nation through various online and offline modes; (iii) Suitable online/offline grievances redressal platforms; (iv) Role of Mail Operations of the Department of Posts in shaping and enhancing the image

of the Department; (iv) Parcel value chain; etc. However, the reply of the Department is silent w.r.t. utilizing the services of Post Office for Central Government Health Scheme, ESI and Ayushman Bharat Yojana for delivery of medicines to the elderly and the needy. Similarly, the Department have not responded to the recommendation of the Committee about the need for utilization of services of able bodied postmen for delivery of essential food and other relief items to the needy persons during disaster/flood relief operations. The Committee would like to look into the feasibility of these services and apprise them accordingly.

Cyber Security in the Department of Posts

(Recommendation Sl. No. 11)

17. The Committee, in their Original Report, had made the following Observation/Recommendation:—

“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."

18. The Department of Posts, in their Action Taken Reply, submitted as under:—

"DoP has its Information Security Management Policy (ISMP) and Cyber Crisis Management Plan (CCMP) in place. Besides, Cyber Security Guidelines for Govt. Employees issued by MeitY has also been shared with all concerned to ensure its compliance. Further Technology Division is also considering to engage SME's as consultants to assist CISO and other staff in cyber security matters in future. For now, consultants from PWC are assisting in cyber security issues."

19. **In their Original Report, the Committee had appreciated the 'Cyber Security Policy' of the Department of Posts and had expected them to continue with the initiatives to protect their data from outside threats and also training of employees. The Department, in their Action Taken Note, informed the Committee that they have Information Security Management Policy (ISMP) and Cyber Crisis Management Plan (CCMP) in place and have shared Cyber Security Guidelines (issued by MeitY) with all concerned to ensure its compliance. Further, the Committee note that the Technology Division of the Department is considering to engage SME's as Consultants to assist CISO and other staff in cyber security matters in future. The Committee would like to be apprised of the steps taken in this regard and the outcome of the same.**

CHAPTER II

OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS WHICH HAVE BEEN ACCEPTED BY THE GOVERNMENT

(Recommendation Sl. No. 1)

Relevance of the Department of Posts in the changing scenario

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 transactions.

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 (MGNREGS), 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 52,721 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.

Reply of the Government

The Department is fully committed to make continued efforts as advised by the Committee.

Department of Posts has launched a scheme to set up 1000 Dak Ghar Niryat Kendra (DNKs) in selected Post Offices to promote Commercial exports utilizing post office network. This has expanded the reach and access of postal export facilities to artisans, craftsmen, small producers and business units across the country to sell local products directly in global markets through digitized and simplified export processes and documentation. By end of February, 2024, around 3.75 lakh commercial shipments with export value of Rs. 83 crore have been exported through DNKs.

Core Insurance Solution has been introduced for PLI/RPLI services. Technology section, PLI Directorate on the recommendations/inputs from Circles/Customers regarding improvisations in the system, has made several advancements/changes which have facilitated the PLI/RPLI Policy holders. Further, in the light of changing technological environment, Technology section, PLI Directorate is fully committed to ensure smooth and advanced PLI/RPLI technological operations.

The Department of Posts plays a crucial role in today's communication and logistics landscape. By adopting technology, like SMS alerts and article tracking Department have made sending and receiving mail easier and more efficient. Department have also collaborated with banks and government agencies to offer a wide range of services, making life simpler for customers. During emergencies like COVID-19, Department of Posts shown agility by setting up Road Transport Network which ensure timely delivery system for essential items. Despite facing challenges, the Postal Department keeps improving its network and systems, ensuring it remains a vital part of our communication infrastructure and providing reliable and essential services delivery system for all.

- a. Aadhaar Centres:** Efforts are being made to increase the efficiency of Aadhaar Centres by increasing Aadhaar enrolment and Updation and also shifting Aadhaar Centres from low potential locations to high potential locations such as Branch Post Offices and Field Post Offices served by Army Postal Services.
- b. India Post Passenger Reservation System:** Department is also considering to expand the IP-PRS service through common service centres to increase the reach of railway ticket booking for customers.
- c. Post Office Passport Seva Kendras:** Department of Posts and Ministry of External Affairs have mutually decided to open 491 POPSK in different Parliamentary Constituency of the country. Currently,

POPSKs are operationalized in 437 locations. Efforts are being made to open POPSKs at remaining feasible locations also. Further, provisions have been made to run selected POPSKs on all 6 days (Mon-Sat) to cater public demands and increase the efficiency of POPSK. Department has also introduced a new service i.e. Police Clearance Certificate since September 2022 to meet the demand of the public. The infrastructure is made Divyangjan friendly.

Department of Posts has initiated several steps to bring about reliability, visibility and improvement in parcel operations. To expedite processing and door step delivery of parcels, Nodal Delivery Centres have been established across the country for exclusive delivery of parcels. These delivery centres have been provided with appropriate equipment for processing parcels. The delivery agents have been provided with mechanized two wheelers and four wheelers for making doorstep delivery. A network consisting of 190 Parcel Hubs including 77 (Level-1) and 113 (Level-2) hubs has been made operational for expedited and safe processing of parcels. The Parcel Hubs have been provided equipment including semi-automatic sorting systems, where required, for efficient and exclusive processing of parcels. Further, new Parcel Hubs are also being introduced as required, from time to time. Department has also developed a dedicated Road Transport Network to ensure timely and secure transmission of parcels to all the Parcel Hubs in the country. Several security, operational and technological measures have been taken to ensure safe, efficient and seamless transmission of parcels. The Department is also taking steps to increase its parcel handling capacity from existing nearly 3.97 lakh parcels per day in 2023-24 to approximately 5.3 lakh parcels per day by 2025-26.

(Ministry of Communications (Department of Posts)
O.M. No28-5/2024/BGT/D-7230 dated 08.05.2024)

(Recommendation SI. No. 2)

Roadmap for Revenue Generation

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 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 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 focussed 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.

Reply of the Government

The Department is fully committed to make continued efforts as advised by the Committee. Out of 1000 DNKs enabled for exports, 904 have already received booking from customers. The revenue accrued to Department is around Rs. 25 crore so far has considerable growth potential with stabilization of the scheme. Integrations with e-commerce companies, online customs clearance and documentation, cost savings and value-added offerings contribute to the financial sustainability of the Department while facilitating exports.

Department aims to streamlining its activities by periodic review of services and products, adapting to changing market scenarios and customer needs, which are crucial aspects for revenue growth. Additionally, aggressive marketing and strategic partnerships, such as tie-ups with e-commerce companies, banks and other Govt. agencies will further enhance revenue generation opportunities. Technology induction and infrastructure upgrade for maintaining its unparalleled reach and service quality are other key aspects to revenue generation. Establishing a dedicated road transport network & set up of nodal delivery centres, real time monitoring etc are some other factors to enhance the efficiency of the Mail Delivery System, which shall eventually lead to growth in business and revenue generation.

The Department is making necessary technological upgradations to match industry standards and garner a larger share of the courier, express and parcel (CEP) market. Application Programming Interface (APIs) are being developed for data

exchanges between the Department of Posts and its ecommerce partners and other customers. APIs have been developed for parcel services such as Pick-up, Tariff Calculation, PIN code validation, Parcel Scan events, Routing, Label Generation and Cancellation. A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Department of Posts and Tribal Co-operative Marketing Development Federation of India (TRIFED) for delivery of tribal products of the artisans of North-Eastern India was signed on 06.06.2023. The Department of Posts has entered in partnership with 14 regional offices of TRIBES India and is providing logistics support to artisans to connect their products with the market. Apart from this, Department is also working with major e-commerce companies like Amazon, Shiprocket, Decathlon etc.

The Department is using its vacant land for construction of Postal buildings to reduce its rental liability. The Department has 25,081 Departmental Post Offices, out of this 19,324 Post Offices are functioning from rented buildings. In last 5 years, 182 new Postal buildings have been constructed.

(Ministry of Communications (Department of Posts)
O.M. No28-5/2024/BGT/D-7230 dated 08.05.2024)

Comments of the Committee
(Please see Para No. 7 of Chapter I)

(Recommendation Sl. No. 3)

Role of the Post Office during the Pandemic

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 (LWE) 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.

Reply of the Government

The Department is fully committed to make continued efforts as advised by the Committee. India Post Payments Bank (IPPB) & Department of Posts (DoP) have continued the cash delivery through Aadhaar Enabled Payment System (AePS) to customers of any Bank and have performed more than 10 crore transactions and delivered more than Rs. 30,000 crore of cash to the doorstep of customers. Other Government to Citizen services like Aadhaar Mobile Number update and Digital Life Certificate services are also delivered by IPPB-DoP and more than 7 crore customers have been beneficiary of these services.

(Ministry of Communications (Department of Posts)
O.M. No28-5/2024/BGT/D-7230 dated 08.05.2024)

(Recommendation Sl. No. 4)

Accessibility of the Post Office in Remote Areas

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.

Reply of the Government

As on 31.03.2023, there are a total of 1,64,972 post offices throughout the country, 1,49,478 of which are located in rural areas. On an average, a post office in India serves an area of 19.93 sq. km and a population of 8,415 people.

The norms for opening and retention of a post office have been relaxed in respect of opening of post offices in hilly, tribal, desert and inaccessible areas. In addition to the aforementioned relaxations, the Ministry of Finance approved the opening of 5746 new branch post offices in rural areas of the country in March 2023, in accordance with the government's mandate to bring all villages within 5 km of a brick and mortar bank branch or post office. Against this sanction, 5551 new branch post offices have already been opened and 30 of these new post offices are in the UT of J&K, and 1428 in the North Eastern Region. Therefore, the average area covered by a post office has been reduced. Further, rationalization of the Post Office network to ensure improved access is a continuing process.

(Ministry of Communications (Department of Posts)
O.M. No28-5/2024/BGT/D-7230 dated 08.05.2024)

(Recommendation Sl. No. 5)

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

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.

Reply of the Government

The Department is fully committed to make continued efforts as advised by the Committee. The Department would like to inform Committee the continued efforts made in last few years for expansion of network, through opening of new Branch Post Offices, with particular emphasis on remote and underdeveloped areas, have brought the post offices closer to citizens.

The Department has taken set up ten (10) Nodal Delivery Centres in North East Region (Agartala, Kohima, Imphal, Shillong, Aizawl, Silchar, Nagaon, Guwahati, Dibrugarh and Gangtok) for expedited and mechanized delivery of parcels using two-wheeler and four-wheeler vehicles. Nine Nodal Delivery Centres have been established in aspirational districts i.e. Vishakhapatnam, Purnia, Muzaffarpur, Begusarai, Gaya, Nawada, Ranchi, Firozpur and Haridwar. 16 (8x2) routes are being operated by the Department in North Eastern Region covering a total distance of 9,782 Kms per day connecting the region with other parts of the country. Department has tied-up with the Tribes India, the online portal of Tribal Co-Operative Marketing Development Federation of India Limited (TRIFED) for providing logistics support for booking, transmission and delivery of the products and artifacts from North-Eastern region to the rest of the country and abroad.

Department has constructed 23 Post Offices in last 5 years in the North East. Year wise details are as under:

| S.NO. | State | 2019-20 | 2020-21 | 2021-22 | 2022-23 | 2023-24 | Total |
|-------|------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|-------|
| 1 | North East | 0 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 8 | 23 |

(Ministry of Communications (Department of Posts)
O.M. No28-5/2024/BGT/D-7230 dated 08.05.2024)

(Recommendation Sl. No. 6)

Encroachment of Post Office Lands

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.

Reply of the Government

(a) The recommendation of the Committee has been noted. Department is 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 Unauthorised 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. Department is constructing Post Office buildings on vacant lands which ultimately check the encroachment. Department has constructed 182 Postal Buildings in last 5 years.

(b) Department of Posts constructs ramps and rails, under “Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan”, for making post offices accessible to the differently abled persons. Construction of rail and ramps are mandatory for all new buildings constructed in the Department of Posts, while old buildings are also retrofitted with such facilities. 397 Braille Signages have been constructed by the Department in the buildings making them easily accessible to differently abled persons. The details are as under:

| S.NO. | Activity | Constructed during last 3 years and up to 31.03.2024 |
|--------------|--------------------|---|
| 1 | Ramps and railings | 1514 |
| 2 | Adaptive Restrooms | 283 |
| 3 | Tactile floorings | 285 |

(c) Circle have set a monitoring committee for the implementation of the accessibility norms in accordance with the Rights of person with Disabilities Act, 2016. As on December 2023, 728 Access Audits have been conducted by the Circles at their levels.

(Ministry of Communications (Department of Posts)
O.M. No28-5/2024/BGT/D-7230 dated 08.05.2024)

Comments of the Committee

(Please see Para No. 10 of Chapter I)

(Recommendation Sl. No. 7)

Amelioration of Service Conditions of Gramin Dak Sevaks including financial upgradation

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.

Reply of the Government

The Department has recently introduced a Gramin Dak Sevak (Grant of Financial Upgradation) Scheme, 2024 on 15.03.2024. Under the Scheme, every GDS will be eligible for three financial upgradations of a fixed amount of Rs. 360/-, Rs. 460/- and Rs. 600/- on completion of 12, 24 and 36 years of his engagement. The scheme will remove stagnation in their service conditions.

(Ministry of Communications (Department of Posts)
O.M. No28-5/2024/BGT/D-7230 dated 08.05.2024)

Comments of the Committee

(Please see Para No. 13 of Chapter I)

(Recommendation Sl. No.8)

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

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 emphasize 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.

Reply of the Government

Although, Reserve Bank of India does not prescribe to make nomination mandatory, however, India Post Payments Bank still makes the facility to avail nomination prominently available to customer during the opening of the account itself.

- (a) India Post Payments Bank is extensively doing social media to spread awareness among the customers with respect to the Importance of adding nominee in an account.
- (b) In targeted manner, India Post Payments Bank sends SMS to customer not having availed nomination facility and urges them to avail the facility.
- (c) India Post Payments Bank is also educating the Gramin Dak Sevak during all their trainings and regular interactions with the Bank that they need to ask the customers/encourage customers to update nominee details while opening an account.

A detailed KYC policy is already in place in the Department of Posts. Master Circular on KYC norms in POSB/SC under Anti-Money Laundering (AML)/Combating the Financing of Terror (CFT) regime had been revised vide SB order 12 of 2023. The revised KYC norms complied with the guidelines of Financial Intelligent Unit-India (FIU-IND) and Financial Action Task Force (FATF). The KYC policy of POSB was declared on the following elements:

- a. Customer Acceptance Policy
- b. Risk Management
- c. Customer Identification Procedure
- d. Monitoring of Transactions: Record keeping and Reporting

For the purpose of KYC, the customer is categorized with the perspective of risk involved. The categorization is as under:-

- i. Low Risk- Where the customer is having account(s) and savings certificate (s) having total balance not exceeding Rs. 50,000/-.
- ii. Medium Risk- Where the customer is having account(s) and savings certificate(s) having total balance exceeding Rs. 50,000/- and upto Rs. 10 Lakh.
- iii. Where the customer is having account(s) and savings certificate(s) having total balance exceeding Rs. 10 lakh.

The process of collecting KYC and nomination of POSB customers is carried out as per the KYC policy of the department. Besides, w.e.f. 01.04.2023, all POSB account holders have to mandatorily furnish Aadhar or the proof of application of enrolment of Aadhar at the time of opening of account, and if Aadhar enrolment proof is submitted, the account holder shall furnish Aadhar within a period of six months from the date of opening of Account. Existing depositors who had not submitted Aadhar were also requested to submit Aadhar through duly filled-in SB-KYC form, to continue the operation of their account. Besides, no transaction is allowed if mobile number is not present in the account of the customer. For the settlement of dormant accounts, the post office attempts to contact the account holder by all reasonable means of communication. Any post office savings account, in which no transaction take place for three consecutive financial years is treated as silent. As advised by the committee, continued efforts would be made to revive such accounts.

(Ministry of Communications (Department of Posts)
O.M. No28-5/2024/BGT/D-7230 dated 08.05.2024)

(Recommendation Sl. No.9)

Strategic Role and building image of the Department of Posts

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 as 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 Ayushman 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 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.

Reply of the Government

The Dak Ghar Niryat Kendra schemes of Department of Posts, initiated in 2022-23, is in sync with Government strategy and schemes like 'One District One Product', 'Districts as Export Hubs' (DEH) and promotion of 'Geo-Tagged' (GI) products by extending the reach of export points through post offices across the country upto district level.

DNK scheme is leveraging physical and digital infrastructure of DoP to strategically contribute in Government of India vision to utilize the vast postal network for Public Service Delivery by boosting exports.

The PLI Dte is taking utmost efforts to reach to the common citizens of the nation through various online and offline modes. The customer satisfaction through various insurance facilities and suitable online/offline grievances redressal platforms is in functional.

The Mail Operations of the Department of Posts plays an important role in shaping and enhancing the image of the Department, serving as the backbone of its service delivery mechanism. In an era of digital communication, the efficiency, reliability, and innovative displayed in mail handling and mechanized delivery processes directly influence public perception and trust in the Department. By ensuring timely and secure delivery of parcels and letters, optimizing logistics through technological integration, and maintaining standards of customer service, Mail Operations not only uphold the Department's legacy of connecting people across distances but also strengthen its relevance and reliability in the digital age.

The Department has taken a comprehensive view of the parcel value chain and has established exclusive facilities for processing and delivery of parcels which are Parcel Hubs and Nodal Delivery Centres respectively. It has also developed standard operating procedures, introduced mechanization and necessary IT interventions for supporting operations in these facilities and integrating with customers' systems through API. Products and services of Department are available to all for last mile delivery.

(Ministry of Communications (Department of Posts)
O.M. No28-5/2024/BGT/D-7230 dated 08.05.2024)

Comments of the Committee

(Please see Para No. 16 of Chapter I)

(Recommendation Sl. No. 10)

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

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.

Reply of the Government

The Department is fully committed to make continued efforts as advised by the Committee. The Department of Posts has taken significant steps towards modernizing Post Offices through the introduction of self-booking kiosks. These innovations aim to streamline postal services and enhance customer convenience. With the self-booking kiosks, users can easily book their article at their own, make payments via UPI, and receive transaction receipts, improving efficiency and reducing waiting times. 30 Self Booking Kiosks has already been installed at prominent locations and the Department has planned to install 70 more such machines in coming months at the identified locations for ease of customers. These advancements signify the Department's commitment in embracing technology and ensuring a more efficient and user-friendly postal experience.

Department is installing Smart Parcel Delivery Kiosks at selected locations in major cities of the country. These kiosks will be installed in Post Office premises or other public places having high footfall to enable the customers to collect their parcels 24x7 at their convenience.

(Ministry of Communications (Department of Posts)
O.M. No28-5/2024/BGT/D-7230 dated 08.05.2024)

(Recommendation Sl. No. 11)

Cyber Security in the Department of Posts

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.

Reply of the Government

DoP has its Information Security Management Policy (ISMP) and Cyber Crisis Management Plan (CCMP) in place. Besides, Cyber Security Guidelines for Govt. Employees issued by MeitY has also been shared with all concerned to ensure its compliance. Further Technology Division is also considering to engage SME's as Consultants to assist CISO and other staff in cyber security matters in future. For now, Consultants from PWC are assisting in cyber security issues".

(Ministry of Communications (Department of Posts)
O.M. No28-5/2024/BGT/D-7230 dated 08.05.2024)

Comments of the Committee

(Please see Para No. 19 of Chapter I)

(Recommendation Sl. No. 12)

Pending projects in Estate Management

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 inexplicably 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.

Reply of the Government

(a) 182 new buildings have been constructed in last 05 years to reduce the rental liability. 45 Post Office buildings constructed during the FY 2022-23 and 55 Post Office buildings constructed during the FY 2023-24 under Estates Management Scheme. The list of the Postal buildings constructed during financial year 2022-23 and 2023-24 is as follows:

TABLE-I

| Post Office Construction Projects completed in the year 2022-23 | | |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| S. No. | Name of circle | Project Name |
| 1 | Bihar | Majhaulia |
| 2 | | Bhagalpur |
| 3 | | Kurnaul |
| 4 | | Holiday Home Nalanda |
| 5 | Delhi | Dilshad Garden, Delhi |
| 6 | | Kirby Place |
| 7 | Maharashtra | Vijaynagar, Pune |
| 8 | Telangana | Ramayampet |
| 9 | | Echoda |
| 10 | ANDHRA PRADESH | Chintapalle |
| 11 | | Bhavanipuram |

| | | |
|----|---------------|--------------------------------|
| 12 | | V. Kota |
| 13 | Assam | Badulipar |
| 14 | | Puranigudam |
| 15 | | Sualkachi |
| 16 | | Moirabari |
| 17 | GUJARAT | Vav |
| 18 | | Ranuj |
| 19 | | Thara |
| 20 | | Malpur |
| 21 | | Umarpada |
| 22 | | Ilav |
| 23 | | Sarigam |
| 24 | | Unai |
| 25 | | Thamna |
| 26 | | Palaj |
| 27 | | Malpur |
| 28 | Karnataka | Brahma Sagra |
| 29 | | Mudho, Bagalkot Dn |
| 30 | North East | Mechuka, Arunachal Pradesh |
| 31 | | Mamilt, Mizoram |
| 32 | Odisha | Narasinghpur, Cuttack South |
| 33 | | Patnagarh |
| 34 | | Manamunda |
| 35 | Uttar Pradesh | Baragaon, Jhansi |
| 36 | | Sahpau Mathura |
| 37 | | Bhamora, Bareilly |
| 38 | | Pilibhit City |
| 39 | | Ramnaga, Bareilly |
| 40 | | Barnapur, Bahraich Dn. |
| 41 | | Dhammaur Bazar |
| 42 | | Panwari |
| 43 | | Kichhauchha, Faizabad Division |
| 44 | West Bengal | Chakbhrigu |
| 45 | | Hili |

| TABLE-II | | |
|---|----------------|---|
| Post Office buildings constructed in 2023-24 | | |
| Sl.No. | Circle | Name of the Building |
| 1 | Assam | Sarupathar |
| 2 | | Nakachari |
| 3 | | Pathalipam |
| 4 | | Jamunamukh |
| 5 | Bihar | Khushruppur |
| 6 | | Motihari Holiday Homes |
| 7 | Gujarat | Khimat |
| 8 | | Sector-23, Gandhinagar |
| 9 | | Type-VI Qtr at Saurashtra University rajkot |
| 10 | | Vadia |
| 11 | Himachal | Sarahan |
| 12 | | Chowki Maniar |
| 13 | | Haripur |
| 14 | Jharkhand | Godda |
| 15 | | Rohini |
| 16 | Karnataka | Cambridge Layout, Halasuru Bazar |
| 17 | | Vertical expansion of BG RO |
| 18 | | Arehalli |
| 19 | | Karwar |
| 20 | | Lachyan |
| 21 | | Alnavar |
| 22 | | Sulahpet |
| 23 | | Padubiri |
| 24 | Kerala | Kalpetta |
| 25 | | Karamana |
| 26 | | Kunnicode |
| 27 | | Edathua |
| 28 | Madhya Pradesh | Jatara |
| 29 | Maharashtra | Satpur |
| 30 | North east | Kakching |
| 31 | | North Vanliaphai |
| 32 | | Thingsulthiah |
| 33 | | East Lungdar |
| 34 | Punjab | Sanghol |
| 35 | Rajasthan | Sankhu |
| 36 | | Kundal |
| 37 | | Dushwakhara |
| 38 | | Rawatsar |
| 39 | | Jojawar |
| 40 | | Bambora |
| 41 | | Dantaramgarh |
| 42 | Tamil Nadu | Villivakkam |

| | | |
|----|---------------|---|
| 43 | | Nidamangalam |
| 44 | | Tirumanilaiyur |
| 45 | | Sultanpet |
| 46 | | Pudupalayam |
| 47 | | Valmiki Nagar |
| 48 | | Manaduthandapathu |
| 49 | | Jawahar Nagar |
| 50 | | Silamarathupati |
| 51 | Telangana | Nawabpet |
| 52 | | Boath |
| 53 | Uttar Pradesh | Rampur Mathura |
| 54 | | C/o NDC and Parcel hub Rapti nagar in Gorakhpur |
| 55 | | Maharajganj |

(b) The status of four post offices of Kerala namely Karamana, Poojappura, Sasthamangalam and Kalpetta are as follows:

| S.NO. | Project | Present Status |
|-------|----------------|---|
| 1 | Poojappura | Poojappura is a multistory building which consists of G + 5 floors. The roof slab of five floors have been casted and final slab casting work is under progress. |
| 2 | Sasthamangalam | Sasthamangalam is a G+3 building. The building is constructed upto slab height from front side. From back side, three number of slabs have been casted and remaining fourth and final slab is to be casted. |
| 3 | Karamana | Work completed. |
| 4 | Kalpetta | Work completed. |

(Ministry of Communications (Department of Posts)
O.M. No28-5/2024/BGT/D-7230 dated 08.05.2024)

(Recommendation SI. No. 13)

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

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 Samridhi 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 its CO₂ 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 socio-economic 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.

Reply of the Government

The Department is committed to use renewable energy resources to reduce carbon footprint. All newly constructed buildings are having equipped with Solar Power packs and Rain Water Harvesting structures. Solar Power Packs are also being installed in existing buildings to ensure the sustainable development. During last 5 years, 355 Solar Power Packs and 637 Rain water Harvesting Structures have been constructed/ installed in the Circles.

The Department directly and indirectly targets achievement of the SDGs. Through its tie ups with e-commerce players, many of whose sellers are artisans, self help groups (SHG), Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises (MSME), small start-ups, bodies such as TRIFED and reaching their products to the market, the Department plays a role in reducing poverty and inequality. With extensive computerisation of its post office counters, processing hubs and delivery offices, the Department has significantly reduced its usage of paper. With elimination of lac seals for closing bags with lead seals, the

Department has provided for a clean and healthy working environment for its staff and eliminated polluting discharge into the air.

The Department of Posts is committed to the relevant Sustainable Development Goals. The Use of technology in customer convenience and overall satisfaction comes to its top priority. The use of E-office/Email in official correspondence will reduce the paper/stationary usage gradually. In this way Department of Posts will continue to contribute even better towards the social responsibility and natural obligations to reduce/control carbon emissions.

The Department of Posts has made significant strides towards reducing emissions and promoting sustainability through the introduction of CNG vehicles in its fleet. Department has purchased 30 such vehicles for mail operations. These vehicles contribute to reduction in fuel consumption and emissions, aligning with goals for 'Affordable and Clean Energy' and 'Climate Action'. As part of its social responsibility, the Department continues to explore initiatives aimed at minimizing resource consumption, promoting renewable energy, and adopting eco-friendly practices throughout its operations.

(Ministry of Communications (Department of Posts)
O.M. No28-5/2024/BGT/D-7230 dated 08.05.2024)

(Recommendation Sl. No. 14)

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

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 Samridhi Yojana is a flagship scheme for securing the future of Girl Children. Under this scheme a Sukanya Samridhi 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 that 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.

Reply of the Government

In furtherance to vision and mission of the Bank, India Post Payments Bank is committed to further Financial Literacy to last mile and last person in the country. In conduct of financial literacy camps, India Post Payments Bank practices three guiding principles for spreading financial literacy:

- i. Awareness: Spreading the knowledge of financial products and services.
- ii. Attitude: Creating a positive attitude towards adaptation of financial products for life cycle needs, goals and a secure future.
- iii. Conduct: Encourage to practice learnings in day to day life.
- iv. encourage for saving and investment.
- v. apply financial discipline.
- vi. prevention against various frauds such as Phishing, online scams, internet banking fraud, OTP related frauds to protect and save their hard-earned money.
- vii. Explaining debt management.

These Camps are done focusing mainly Youngsters/Females/Senior Citizens/Farmers/Workers. These camps are organized at places like schools, Panchayats, Degree colleges, Universities, Factories and other such potential areas to impart financial awareness. India Post Payments Bank has conducted more than 20,000 camps.

For Post Office Savings Bank (POSB), the interest rates are fixed by Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance based on various factors and Department of Posts functions as an agency on their behalf. In respect of Sukanya Samriddhi Account (SSA), it is being submitted that the interest rate of 8.2% on SSA w.e.f. 01.01.2024 is the highest being offered on any POSB Scheme. There are 3.12 crore live SSA Accounts with the Department as on 31.12.2023.

For the welfare of women and girl child, a new scheme named Mahila Samman Savings Certificate (MSSC) was introduced w.e.f. 01.04.2023. Account under this scheme can be opened by a woman for herself or by the guardian on behalf of a minor girl. On an application to the Post Office, a Single Holder Type Account may be opened on or before 31.03.2025. A minimum of One Thousand Rupees and any sum in multiples of One Hundred Rupees may be deposited in an account and no subsequent deposit is allowed. An individual may open any number of accounts in the scheme subject to a maximum limit for deposit of Rs. 2 lakh in one account or in all the accounts under this scheme held by an account holder. There is a time gap of three months between the existing account and the opening of another account. The rate of interest applicable is 7.5 per cent per annum, which shall be compounded on quarterly basis.

Premature withdrawal is allowed for a maximum of 40 per cent of the eligible balance after expiry of one year from the date of opening of account. Under this scheme, accounts can be opened through internet banking by existing SB account holder having e-Banking facility. 22.80 lakh such accounts have been opened by 31.12.2023.

The Department would make sincere efforts to implement the recommendations of the committee for taking initiatives to raise awareness of gender equality and promote inclusion and empowerment of women and all field units would be asked to implement it and increase the share of women in all other POSB schemes as well.

Department of Posts is playing an important role promoting Government initiatives and dissemination of information on welfare schemes with special focus on Girl Child welfare and development programs such as Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Campaign, etc.

Further with special focus on Sukanya Samridhi Yojana (SSA), Mahila Samman Savings Certificate (MSSC) DoP is striving for awareness through its vast network.

(Ministry of Communications (Department of Posts)
O.M. No28-5/2024/BGT/D-7230 dated 08.05.2024)

(Recommendation Sl. No. 15)

Review of functioning of Post Office Common Service Centres

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.

Reply of the Government

Presently, over 1.4 lakh Post offices, including departmental and branch post offices, are providing services through the Digital Seva Portal of Common Service Centre (CSC) in the country. Apart from bill payments, services related to passport, PAN Card, registration for National Pension Scheme (NPS), renewal of general insurance products and booking of Bus/railway/flight tickets are also undertaken at the PO-CSC counters. All the post office counters providing CSC services have been manned by a pool of trained employees. The directions of the Committee on need for regular training have been noted and periodic training to post office staff on CSC related services is being provided through physical as well as online mode by CSC-SPV. The revenue earned by the CSCs operated by the Department of Posts was about Rs. 76 lakh in 2022-23 and Rs. 51 lakh in 2023-24. The Postal Circles and field units of CSC-SPV have been taking marketing initiatives to promote and publicize citizen-centric CSC services being provided through post offices, so as to bring awareness and increase the demand for such services other than bill payments, especially in the rural areas. The observations of the Committee in this regard have been noted for compliance.

(ii) CSC e-Governance Services India Limited is a Special Purpose Vehicle under Companies Act, 1956, set up by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) to oversee the implementation of the Common Service Center scheme that is a part of the Digital India Project, and necessary support including funds etc are provided to them by MeitY. Handing over of services provided by CSC-SPV to DoP would involve examination of legal, administrative and operational issues by MeitY. The implications with respect to the tie ups of CSC eGovernance Services India Limited with a large number of private/ business entities to provide B2C services like Utility bill collection, booking of tour and travels tickets, mobile and DTH recharge, insurance premium collection; various educational institutions for running coaching classes, diploma courses etc will also have to be examined by MeitY. DoP provides Post Office Savings Bank (POSB) services as an agency function of Ministry of Finance. Further, India Post Payments Bank (IPPB) which is a payments bank owned by Govt. of India, offers banking services and insurance and other third party products through the network of post offices. CSCs other than the CSCs functioning in Post Offices, offer banking and financial services of other entities that are similar to the services offered by DoP and IPPB. Hence, if the CSC services are handed over to DoP, conflict of interest may arise with IPPB and POSB, which are playing significant role in financial inclusion.

(Ministry of Communications (Department of Posts)
O.M. No28-5/2024/BGT/D-7230 dated 08.05.2024)

CHAPTER- III

OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS WHICH THE COMMITTEE DO NOT DESIRE TO
PURSUE IN VIEW OF THE REPLIES OF THE GOVERNMENT

-NIL-

CHAPTER IV

OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS IN RESPECT OF WHICH REPLIES OF THE
GOVERNMENT HAVE NOT BEEN ACCEPTED BY THE COMMITTEE AND REQUIRE
REITERATION

-NIL-

CHAPTER V
OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS IN RESPECT OF WHICH REPLIES
OF THE GOVERNMENT ARE INTERIM IN NATURE

-NIL-

New Delhi;
16 December, 2024
25 Agrahayana, 1946 (Saka)

NISHIKANT DUBEY,
Chairperson,
Standing Committee on
Communications and Information Technology

ANNEXURE – I
STANDING COMMITTEE ON COMMUNICATIONS AND
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
(2024-25)
MINUTES OF THE SEVENTH SITTING OF THE COMMITTEE

The Committee sat on Monday, the 16 December, 2024 from 1015 hours to 1045 hours in Committee Room No. 'C', Parliament House Annexe, New Delhi.

PRESENT

DR. NISHIKANT DUBEY- Chairperson

MEMBERS

Lok Sabha

2. Dr. Rabindra Narayan Behera
3. Shri Anup Sanjay Dhotre
4. Shri S. Supongmeren Jamir
5. Shri G. Kumar Naik
6. Dr. M.K. Vishnu Prasad
7. Shri Ramasahayam Raghuram Reddy
8. Shri Devesh Shakya
9. Shri Vishnu Datt Sharma

Rajya Sabha

10. Shri Amar Pal Maurya
11. Dr. Sasmit Patra
12. Shri V. Vijayendra Prasad
13. Shri Lahar Singh Siroya
14. Shri K.T.S. Tulsi

SECRETARIAT

- | | | | |
|----|---------------------|---|------------------|
| 1. | Shri Y.M. Kandpal | - | Joint Secretary |
| 2. | Smt. A. Jyothirmayi | - | Director |
| 3. | Shri Rajesh Mohan | - | Deputy Secretary |

2. At the outset, the Chairperson welcomed the Members to the Sitting of the Committee convened to consider and adopt one draft Action Taken Report on Fifty-Seventh Report (17th Lok Sabha) relating to the Department of Posts and four draft Reports on Demands for Grants (2024-25) relating to the Ministries/Department under the jurisdiction of Committee.

3. The Committee, then, took up the following five draft Reports for consideration and adoption:-

(i) Draft Report on Action Taken by the Government on the Observations/Recommendations of the Committee contained in their Fifty-Seventh Report (17th Lok Sabha) on “Department Of Posts – Initiatives and Challenges” relating to the Ministry of Communications (Department of Posts).

(ii) XXXX....XXXX..... XXXX....XXXX..... XXXX....XXXX..... XXXX....XXXX

(iii) XXXX....XXXX..... XXXX....XXXX..... XXXX....XXXX..... XXXX....XXXX

(iv) XXXX....XXXX..... XXXX....XXXX..... XXXX....XXXX..... XXXX....XXXX

(v) XXXX....XXXX..... XXXX....XXXX..... XXXX....XXXX..... XXXX....XXXX

4. The Committee adopted the Reports without modifications.

5. The Committee authorized the Chairperson to finalize the draft Action Taken Reports and present the same to the House during the current Session of Parliament.

6. XXXX....XXXX..... XXXX....XXXX..... XXXX....XXXX..... XXXX....XXXX

The Committee, then, adjourned.

XXXX....XXXX Matter not related to the Report.

ANNEXURE – II

ANALYSIS OF ACTION TAKEN BY THE GOVERNMENT ON THE OBSERVATIONS/ RECOMMENDATIONS CONTAINED IN THEIR FIFTY-SEVENTH REPORT

(SEVENTEENTH LOK SABHA)

[Vide Paragraph No. 5 of Introduction]

| | |
|--|------------|
| (i) Observations/Recommendations which have been accepted by the Government | |
| Rec. Sl. Nos.: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14 and 15 | |
| Total | 15 |
| Percentage | 100 |
| (ii) Observations/Recommendations which the Committee do not desire to pursue in view of the replies of the Government | |
| Rec. Sl. No.: NIL | |
| Total | NIL |
| Percentage | 0 |
| (iii) Observations/Recommendations in respect of which replies of the Government have not been accepted by the Committee and require reiteration Rec. Sl. No.: NIL | |
| Total | NIL |
| Percentage | 0 |
| (iv) Observations/Recommendations in respect of which the replies of the Government are of interim in nature | |
| Rec. Sl. Nos.: NIL | |
| Total | NIL |
| Percentage | 0 |