

20

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

EIGHTEENTH LOK SABHA

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

REAL ESTATE MANAGEMENT IN THE DEPARTMENT OF POSTS

TWENTIETH REPORT



**LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI**

August 2025/ Sravana, 1947 (Saka)

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Presented to Lok Sabha on	19.08.2025
Laid in Rajya Sabha on	19.08.2025



LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI

August 2025/ Sravana, 1947 (Saka)

CONTENTS		Pg. range
REPORT		
PART – I		1-43
CHAPTER – I		1-7
INTRODUCTION		
I.	Introductory	1-2
II.	Extent of Postal Network in the Country	2-6
III.	Need for Renovation of Postal Offices and Infrastructure Upgradation	6-7
CHAPTER – II		8-24
ESTATES MANAGEMENT SCHEME		
I.	Scheme on Estates Management	8-9
II.	Components of the Scheme on Estates Management	9-
A.	Construction of New Postal Buildings	11-12
B.	Renovation of post office buildings / staff quarters	12-16
	• Renovation of Post Office Buildings	12-15
	• Renovation and construction of Staff Quarters	15-16
C.	Preservation and conservation of heritage buildings	16-19
D.	Welfare Components in Building Design and construction	20-24
	(i) Obligation towards Sustainable Development through Installation of Rooftop Solar Power Packs & Construction of Rain Water Harvesting Structures	20-22
	(ii) Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan – Installation of Braille signages; and Ramps & rails	22
	(iii) Gender concerns – Feeding rooms & ladies' toilets	22-24
III.	Work to be taken up in the current financial year	24
CHAPTER – III		25-43
REAL ESTATE MANAGEMENT		
A.	Total asset base of the Department of Posts & Monetization of assets	26-28
B.	Vacant plots of land and Issues related to encroachment of vacant plots	29-32
C.	Revenue Generation and commercial utilization of vacant plots of land	33-37
D.	Curbing Rental Expenditure & Reducing dependence on hired / rented Postal Buildings	37-41
E.	Management of Postal estates held by the Department	41-43
PART – II		44-69
OBSERVATIONS / RECOMMENDATIONS		
ANNEXURE		70-71
Annexure – I : List of Heritage Buildings of Department of Posts		70-71
APPENDICES		72-77
I.	Minutes of the Twelfth Sitting of the Committee held on 13.02.2025	72-75
II.	Minutes of the Sixteenth Sitting of the Committee held on 18.03.2025	76-77
	(i)	

**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
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12. Shri G. Kumar Naik
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15. Ms. Kangna Ranaut
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17. Shri Ramasahayam Raghuram Reddy
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Rajya Sabha

22. Shri Saket Gokhale*
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24. Shri Ilaiyaraaja
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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

SECRETARIAT

- | | | | |
|----|---------------------|---|-----------------------------|
| 1. | Shri Y.M. Kandpal | — | Additional Secretary |
| 2. | Smt. A. Jyothirmayi | — | Director |
| 3. | Shri Amrith Kumar | — | Deputy Secretary |
| 4. | Ms. Divya Rai | — | Assistant 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 Twentieth Report on the Subject 'Real Estate Management in the Department of Posts' relating to the Ministry of Communications (Department of Posts).

2. The Standing Committee on Communications and Information Technology (2024-25) selected this Subject for detailed examination and Report to the Parliament. The representatives of the Ministry of Communications (Department of Posts) tendered evidence before the Committee on the Subject on 24th April, 2025.

3. In their Sitting held on 11th August, 2025, the Committee considered and adopted the Report. The Committee wish to express their thanks to the representatives of the Department of Posts (Ministry of Communications) who tendered evidence before the Committee and furnished valuable information.

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

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

New Delhi;
11 August, 2025
20 Sravana, 1947 (Saka)

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

PART - I

CHAPTER – I

INTRODUCTION

I. INTRODUCTORY

1.1. The Department of Posts is a part of the Ministry of Communications and with its postal network of 1,64,999 Post Offices as on 31st March, 2025, India Post is the largest Postal network in the world. The Department of Posts undertakes the core activity of processing, transmission & delivery of mail including the premium services of speed post and parcels apart from money remittances, banking, life insurances and social benefits payments such as Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) and other social security schemes. Department of Posts has an obligation to provide Universal Postal Service to public which inter-alia includes access within reasonable distance.

1.2. To achieve this and to manage postal operations of the Department of Posts, there are 1,64,999 Post Offices in 23 Postal Circles spanning across the length and breadth of the Country. Out of this, around 1,49,385 are located in Rural areas. Average persons served per Post Office is 8,415 - 6,030 in Rural areas and 31,422 in Urban areas. A Post Office in the country serves an average area of 19.92 Square Kilometer. The Department has a total of 25,091 Departmental Post Offices. To bring in efficiency and make the departmental operations customer friendly, the Department has inducted technology in a big way. Rafi Ahmed Kidwai National Postal Academy in Ghaziabad and 6 Regional Postal Training Centers at Guwahati, Darbhanga, Saharanpur, Vadodara, Madurai and Mysuru have been set up for training and skill upgradation of the officers and staff of the Department.

1.3. Mail and Parcel services, both domestic and international, are the primary offerings of the Department of Posts (DoP), branded as India Post. Further, with 1,49,385 Post

Offices (90%) located in rural areas, India Post has been instrumental in providing communication, banking and logistics services. These offices are citizen-facing facilities providing point of sale and delivery services, supported and connected by over 1,100 sorting and processing facilities which form the backbone of the mail and parcel operations.

1.4. **Structure of the Department of Posts at a glance as on 31st March, 2025:**

Total Postal Circles	23
Total Post Offices	1,64,999
Departmental Post Offices	25,091
Total Head Post Office	810
Total Sub Post Office	24,281
Branch Post Offices	1,39,908
Rural Post Offices	1,49,385
Urban Post Offices	15,614
Total Departmental employees	1,90,161
Total Gramin Dak Sevaks	2,78,633
Functioning in Departmental Buildings	4,527
Functioning in rented buildings	18,740
Functioning in rent-free buildings	1853
Vacant Plots	1460

II. **EXTENT OF POSTAL NETWORK IN THE COUNTRY**

1.5. **Postal Circles:** The Postal network of the Country is divided into 23 Circles for administrative convenience. Circles are generally co-terminus with a State with some exceptions such as Gujarat Circle (which also administers the Union Territory of Daman & Diu and Dadra & Nagar Haveli), Kerala Circle (which includes the Union Territory of Lakshadweep), Maharashtra Circle (which has within its jurisdiction the State of Goa), North East Circle (which comprises six North Eastern States Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland & Tripura), Punjab Circle (which also administers the Union Territory of Chandigarh), Tamil Nadu Circle (which also administers

the Union Territory of Puducherry), West Bengal Circle (which also administers the State of Sikkim and the Union Territory of Andaman and Nicobar Islands) and Jammu & Kashmir Circle (which also administers the Union Territory of Ladakh). Each Circle is headed by a Chief Postmaster General.

1.6. **Postal Regions:** The Circles are further divided into Regions comprising groups of field units, called Divisions (Postal & Railway Mail Service). Each Region is headed by a Postmaster General. In the Circles and Regions there are other functional and supporting units like Postal and Circle Stamp Depots and Mail Motor Service (MMS). There are 23 Postal Accounts Offices in the Department.

1.7. **Operational Units:** Post Offices in the country are categorized into Head Post Office, Sub Post Office and Branch Post Office. Branch Post Offices are mostly located in rural areas and are manned by Gramin Dak Sevaks (GDS). The Sub-Post Offices are Departmental Offices located in both rural and urban areas. Head Post Offices are located in important towns and cities mostly at district levels.

1.8. Circle-wise data regarding total number of Departmental buildings, Rented buildings and Rent-free buildings functioning under the Department as on 31st March, 2025 is as follows:-

Departmental and Rented Building as on 31.03.2025													
Circle	Departmental Buildings			Rented Building			Rent-free Building			Total			Grand Total
	Postal	RMS*	Other Units	Postal	RMS	Other Units	Postal	RMS	Other Units	Departmental Buildings	Rented Buildings	Rent Free Buildings	
Andhra Pradesh	194	8	3	1330	34	0	80	0	0	205	1364	80	1649
Assam	184	4	17	407	10	2	27	7	0	205	419	34	658
Bihar	184	2	16	779	37	3	109	5	1	202	819	115	1136
Chhattisgarh	47	4	1	262	4	5	46	0	0	52	271	46	369
Delhi	124	2	6	205	6	0	33	3	0	132	211	36	379
Gujarat	335	7	2	852	14	0	31	1	0	344	866	32	1242
Daman Diu & DNH	3	0	0	6	0	0	1	0	0	3	6	1	10
Haryana	81	0	0	360	1	0	69	0	0	81	361	69	511
Himachal Pradesh	83	0	0	371	4	0	24	0	0	83	375	24	482
Jammu & Kashmir	37	0	0	201	1	1	26	0	0	37	203	26	266
Jharkhand	70	2	1	339	14	2	59	0	0	73	355	59	487
Karnataka	409	16	7	1185	17	0	84	0	0	432	1202	84	1718
Kerala including Lakshdweep	250	8	44	1210	12	3	47	0	1	302	1225	48	1575
Madhya Pradesh	207	1	34	715	12	0	101	0	0	242	727	101	1070
Maharashtra	361	23	13	1661	40	7	114	1	0	397	1708	115	2220
Goa	18	3	0	80	3	0	9	0	0	21	83	9	113
Tripura	22	0	0	51	0	1	12	0	0	22	52	12	86
Manipur	10	0	0	43	0	0	6	0	0	10	43	6	59
Meghalaya	23	0	2	42	0	0	10	0	0	25	42	10	77
Mizoram	17	0	0	22	0	1	2	0	0	17	23	2	42
Nagaland	13	0	0	27	0	0	6	0	0	13	27	6	46

Arunachal Pradesh	24	0	0	13	0	0	16	0	0	24	13	16	53
Odisha	171	12	6	911	24	0	122	5	0	189	935	127	1251
Punjab	116	1	2	492	2	0	83	0	0	119	494	83	696
Chandigarh	23	0	1	9	0	0	10	0	0	24	9	10	43
Rajasthan	424	2	0	784	13	0	149	0	0	426	797	149	1372
Tamil Nadu	294	6	6	2080	28	11	86	1	0	306	2119	87	2512
Puducherry	8	0	0	62	0	0	4	0	0	8	62	4	74
Telangana	161	2	22	582	11	6	85	1	1	185	599	87	871
Uttar Pradesh	331	10	0	1975	48	4	235	0	0	341	2027	235	2603
Uttarakhand	54	0	2	302	1	6	40	0	0	56	309	40	405
West Bengal	230	11	7	1364	54	5	114	4	0	248	1423	118	1789
Sikkim	6	0	0	12	0	0	5	0	0	6	12	5	23
A&N Islands	13	0	1	6	0	0	8	0	0	14	6	8	28
Total	4527	124	193	18740	390	57	1853	28	3	4844	19187	1884	25915
Grand Total	4844			19187			1884			25915			

*RMS – Railway Mail Service

1.9. The Department has been actively engaged in developing infrastructure by constructing new buildings for postal operations, maintenance of the existing buildings and restoration of the heritage buildings. As a part of its commitment to sustainable development, the Department is giving due attention to installation of Solar Power Packs and Rain Water Harvesting system in all the newly constructed buildings; Ramps & rails for differently abled persons and senior citizens, under Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan; and separate toilets, creches and retiring rooms for ladies are being constructed.

1.10. Further, to improve the post office infrastructure, the Department has initiated construction of Post Offices on available vacant plots of land of the Department, with basic facilities of toilets, ramps, counters, etc. The construction cost of these Post Offices will be lesser, as it will use locally available material as per the CPWD norms, standard

designs etc. By this way the vacant lands can be utilized. Keeping in view the green initiative and to ensure sustainability of ground water level, rain water harvesting structures are being constructed in the existing departmental buildings wherever feasible.

III. NEED FOR RENOVATION OF POSTAL OFFICES AND INFRASTRUCTURE UPGRADATION

1.11. According to the Department, to enhance operational efficiency, improve service delivery, increase business, improve customer experience, create a conducive work environment for the staff and enhance the brand image of India Post, the first mile infrastructure is required to be radically upgraded through construction and major renovation of Post Office and administrative buildings and preservation of heritage buildings. This will also reduce reliance on rented spaces and frequent shifting of public facing offices. It was also added that priority will be accorded to building postal facilities that are accessible to persons with disabilities and adopting green initiatives, such as solar power and rainwater harvesting. Staff satisfaction, particularly in difficult areas, would also be achieved by providing staff quarters.

1.12. Owing to the aforementioned objectives envisaged by the Department of Posts, the Committee note that Estates Management holds immense potential along with a mix of challenges and opportunities. Some of the pressing issues faced by the Department include renovation of heritage postal buildings; utilization of vacant plots of land under the Department of Posts; encroachment of vacant plots; increasing rental expenditure and the need to improve quality, efficiency and accessibility of services being rendered by the Department.

1.13. Against this backdrop, the Committee have taken up for examination the Subject 'Real Estate Management in the Department of Posts', wherein multifarious issues plaguing the Postal sector with respect to real estate management and optimization are dealt in detail with the aim of identifying challenges and proposing workable solutions

intended to help the Department attain financial viability through overall management of its real estate.

CHAPTER – II

ESTATES MANAGEMENT SCHEME

I. SCHEME ON ESTATES MANAGEMENT

2.1 According to the Department, the Estates Management Scheme is a Central Sector Scheme approved for the period 2021-22 to 2025-26, with a financial outlay of Rs.479 crore. The key objectives of the Scheme are:

- a) To ensure development of appropriate infrastructure;
- b) To provide a congenial work environment;
- c) To improve the delivery of postal services in a cost-effective way; and
- d) To implement various statutory provisions regarding Gender concerns and Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan.

2.2 The Scheme includes construction of postal buildings; preservation and conservation of heritage buildings; installation of roof top solar power packs and rain water harvesting structures to contribute towards sustainable development; provision of Braille signage and ramps and rails under the Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan for improving the accessibility of Post Offices; and construction of separate toilets and retiring rooms for ladies along with construction of crèches for addressing gender concerns.

2.3 The Scheme also provides for construction and maintenance of staff quarters for employees of the Department of Posts and is intended to be achieved through continuous and targeted programmes for infrastructure development.

2.4 Against the approved provision of Rs. 479 crores under the Scheme from Financial Year 2021-22 to 2025-26, year-wise financial allocation and expenditure under the Estates Management Scheme is as follows:

(Rs. in crore)

Scheme	Financial Year	Fund allotted	Utilization	% Utilization
Estates Management Scheme	2020-21	39.87	43.76	109.75
	2021-22	64.4	59.13	91.81
	2022-23	70.10	68.62	97.88
	2023-24	119.06	117.53	98.71
	2024-25	118.82	115.62	97.30
	2025-26	120.50	-	-

2.5 The year-wise physical targets set and achieved from 2021-22 to 2024-25 is as follows:

(Rs. in crore)

Activity	2021-22		2022-23		2023-24		2024-25	
	Targets set	Achieved	Targets set	Achieved	Targets set	Achieved	Targets set	Achieved
Construction of Post office buildings	20	44	20	45	40	55	40	48
Renovation of postal building	50	60	50	103	40	84	40	115

2.6 Further, regarding allocation of funds, the Department, in its written replies submitted that:

“The Department would be very grateful for recommendations by the Committee for significantly higher budgetary support for estates management in the Department over the next 5 years”.

II. COMPONENTS OF THE SCHEME ON ESTATES MANAGEMENT

2.7 As per the submissions of the Department, following are the components of the Scheme on Estates Management: –

- A. Construction of new postal buildings;
- B. Renovation of post office buildings / staff quarters;
- C. Preservation and conservation of heritage buildings;
- D. Welfare components in Building Design and construction

2.8 Welfare components in Building Design and construction include the following :–

- (i) Obligation towards Sustainable Development through – (a) Installation of Roof top Solar Power Packs; & (b) Construction of Rain Water Harvesting Structures;
- (ii) Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan – Installation of Braille signages and Ramps & rails; and
- (iii) Gender concerns – Infrastructure facilitating female employees and customers such as Feeding rooms, crèches and ladies' toilets.

2.9 Details of the provisions for components of the Scheme for the period 2021-22 to 2024-25, as submitted by the Department, are as follows:-

(Rs. in crore)						
S. No.	Provisions for Components	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
1	Construction of Post office buildings, Mail Offices and related activities	28.30	27.02	40.86	33.78	35.00
2	Construction of small Post Offices	13.24	11.07	24.55	19.37	22.00
3	Upgradation of the Postal buildings including renovation and other activities such as restoration, Preservation/ Conservation of Heritage Buildings.	22.75	31.01	47.73	57.13	55.00
4	Technology Induction, Consultancy and Project Management of Estates	-	-	0.50	0.50	0.50
5	Gender Concerns	0.11	1.00	1.44	1.10	1.00
6	Solar Power Pack	-	-	1.56	4.33	4.50
7	Rain Water Harvesting	-	-	0.72	0.75	0.75
8	Sugamya Bharat Abhiyaan	-	-	1.70	1.86	1.7420
	TOTAL	64.40	70.10	119.06	118.82	120.50

A. Construction of New Postal Buildings:

2.10 With respect to new buildings that were constructed for office use and staff quarters in order to enable shifting of post offices from rented buildings to departmental buildings with better amenities, approximately Rs. 198 crore was spent on construction from FY 2021-22 to FY 2024-25.

2.11 New buildings constructed so far in the current Scheme period from 2021-22 to 2024-25 are:

FY	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	Total
No. of buildings constructed	44	45	55	48	192

2.12 Circle-wise details with respect to construction of new buildings by the Department of Posts from the year 2020-21 to 2024-25, as provided by the Department, is as follows:-

Sr. No.	Circle	No. of Buildings Constructed				
		2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
1	Andhra Pradesh	0	1	3	0	2
2	Assam	4	5	4	4	3
3	Bihar	7	1	4	2	1
4	Chhattisgarh	0	1	0	0	2
5	Delhi	1	0	2	0	1
6	Gujarat	0	22	11	4	3
7	Haryana	0	0	0	0	0
8	Himachal Pradesh	0	0	0	3	1
9	Jammu & Kashmir	0	1	0	0	1
10	Jharkhand	0	4	0	2	1
11	Karnataka	4	0	2	8	4
12	Kerala	0	0	0	4	2
13	Madhya Pradesh	1	0	0	1	5
14	Maharashtra	0	1	1	1	4
15	North East	0	0	2	4	2
16	Odisha	8	2	3	0	3
17	Punjab	0	0	0	1	0
18	Rajasthan	0	3	0	7	1
19	Tamil Nadu	1	1	0	9	1
20	Telangana	0	2	2	2	2
21	Uttar Pradesh	1	0	9	3	7
22	Uttarakhand	0	0	0	0	1
23	West Bengal	4	0	2	0	1
	Total	31	44	45	55	48

2.13 According to the Circle-wise data provided by the Department of Posts, from financial year 2020-21 to FY 2024-25, a total of 223 Postal buildings were constructed by the Department with the maximum number of constructions being 40 in the Circle of Gujarat followed by 20 each in the Circles of Assam and Uttar Pradesh; and the third highest number of Postal buildings was 18 constructed in the Circle of Karnataka. However, in the same period, no constructions were done within the Circle of Haryana and only 1 building each was constructed in Punjab and Uttarakhand Circles, respectively.

2.14 Monitoring of the Building Projects– The Department has submitted that Estates Division monitors the progress of building projects at Postal Directorate /Postal Circle level. Review meetings are also being held at regular intervals to review the building projects and their progress once a quarter. Building Co-ordination meetings are also held in each of the Circles to monitor the progress.

B. Renovation of post office buildings / staff quarters:

- Renovation of Post Office Buildings

2.15 While deposing before the Committee, the representative of the Department informed that old buildings are renovated to increase their life span and approximately Rs. 158 crores were spent on renovation of Postal buildings from Financial Year 2021-22 to FY 2024-25.

2.16 The Department also furnished the following information regarding number of renovation projects completed so far in the current Scheme period (2021-22 to 2024-25):

FY	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	Total
No. of buildings renovated	60	103	84	115	362

2.17 Circle-wise details with respect to renovation of buildings by the Department of Posts from financial year 2020-21 to FY 2024-25 have been provided as under:

S. No.	Circle	No. of Buildings Renovated				
		2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
1	Andhra Pradesh	1	2	2	1	4
2	Assam	11	1	5	8	11
3	Bihar	1	3	6	6	5
4	Chhattisgarh	0	3	0	2	3
5	Delhi	2	5	4	4	4
6	Gujarat	0	6	1	7	3
7	Haryana	0	0	2	6	3
8	Himachal Pradesh	1	7	3	1	4
9	Jammu & Kashmir	0	0	0	3	1
10	Jharkhand	1	1	4	2	6
11	Karnataka	1	6	11	3	7
12	Kerala	2	4	7	2	4
13	Madhya Pradesh	0	4	6	5	3
14	Maharashtra	2	3	6	5	7
15	North East	3	1	7	4	6
16	Odisha	1	1	1	0	10
17	Punjab	1	2	8	3	0
18	Rajasthan	0	0	1	4	10
19	Tamil Nadu	1	4	9	0	10
20	Telangana	1	4	2	3	3
21	Uttar Pradesh	4	1	11	8	5
22	Uttarakhand	0	1	0	2	1
23	West Bengal	2	1	7	5	5
Total		35	60	103	84	115

2.18 According to the data provided by the Department of Posts, from Financial Year 2020-21 to FY 2024-25, a total of 397 buildings were renovated by the Department with the maximum number of building renovations being 36 in the Circle of Assam followed by 29 in the Circle Uttar Pradesh; and the third highest number of 28 building renovations being carried out in the Circle of Karnataka. However, in the same duration, only 4 buildings each were renovated in the respective Circles of Jammu & Kashmir and Uttarakhand and only 8 buildings were renovated in the Postal Circle of Chhattisgarh.

2.19 While submitting before the Committee during oral evidence about the number of postal buildings that are in need of repair and reconstruction, the representative of the Department stated that:

“...Another hon. Member has asked that there are some very old head office buildings. In that context, I would like to tell the Committee that we have categorized every single Departmental building. We have 4,373 as of now.

Out of that, 1,694 are in basically sound condition. I would not say they are beautiful, but they are solid, good buildings. The ones that will need substantial repair are 1,895, and comprehensive repair is needed for 674. Additionally, there are 110 that need to be demolished for reconstruction...”

2.20 Apprising the Committee about the need for funds regarding renovation of postal buildings, the representative also submitted that:

“...We want to renovate all our buildings – departmental and rented. For rented, there are certain restrictions, about not more than Rs. 50,000 can be spent on a rented building. So, to spend more, we will have to have more removable fixtures so that if we shift the building, so we are doing it in that way. But we need money. So, that is our plea to the Committee, please in the Government, we need that support of the hon. Committee...”

2.21 Further, elaborating on the hindrances encountered while undertaking renovation activities in rented postal buildings, the Department in its written reply submitted that:-

“In rented postal properties any renovation work requires the consent of the landlords, which is often delayed or denied since there is a limitation of Rs 50,000 only that can be spent on rented premises.”

2.22 When asked about the timeline regarding completion of renovation activities in postal buildings across the Country, the Department in its written reply submitted that:-

“The Department plans to complete renovation and installation activities in postal buildings across the country over the next 5 years provided the requisite funds are made available.”

2.23 In a recently conducted study visit of the Committee in UT of Andaman and Nicobar, while examining the Subject, ‘Real Estate Management of the Department of Posts’, the Committee had drawn the attention of the representatives of the Department of Posts to the precarious condition of the old heritage post office building of the island. On being asked about the action taken/proposed to be taken about the renovation of

heritage post offices in Andaman and Nicobar Island, the Department, in its written reply, submitted that:

“There is no heritage building of the Department of Posts in the Union Territory of Andaman and Nicobar. Sri Vijaya Puram Head Post Office (erstwhile Port Blair HO) is an old building but is not a heritage building. Year-wise expenditure incurred on its maintenance from 2021-22 to 2024-25 is as under:

Year	Amount spent (Rs. in Lakh)
2021-22	10.55
2022-23	0
2023-24	44.28
2024-25	9.45
Total	64.28

2.24 When asked about drawing up an estimate of funds that would be required to upgrade and suitably renovate existing postal infrastructure as well as to construct new postal infrastructure across the Country, the Department in its written replies submitted that:

“A PIB Memorandum for the Estates Management Scheme for the next 5 years is under preparation. Niti Aayog has been approached for Third Party Evaluation of the performance of the scheme in the period 2021-22 to 2025-26, as this is required for continuation of the scheme beyond 2025-26.”

- Renovation and construction of Staff Quarters

2.25 According to the Department, the Scheme on Estates Management also envisages residences for employees of the Department of Posts and it was intended to be achieved through continuous and targeted programmes for infrastructure development.

2.26 When asked about the proposal of the Department regarding construction of staff quarters to cater to the existing manpower currently employed therein, the Department in its written reply submitted:-

“The Department of Posts has 820 postal colonies to cater to the existing manpower employed by it. The Department is focusing on renovating quarters in these colonies in order to improve their living condition. The Department allotted Rs.14.44 crores for renovation of

36 Postal colonies during 2024-25. During 2025-26, Rs.13.93 crores have been allotted for renovation of 43 Postal colonies.”

2.27 The Department has also informed that Rs. 19.37 crore had been spent from FY 2021-22 to FY 2024-25 for renovation of 54 Postal colonies.

2.28 However, during the Sitting of the Committee the representative of the Department, while apprising about the dilapidated condition of staff quarters under the Department of Posts, submitted before the Committee:

“...The staff quarters are in a very bad situation. We have 820 colonies, and we need to repair 793 of them. Twenty-seven were done in this five-year plan; 793 need major renovations; and some need to be demolished. This is also part of the fund requirement we have raised. We are very concerned about it. They are in a very bad shape. We try to do minor repairs and some whitewashing, but it is not adequate. The situation is very poor, especially in States like Himachal or in the North-East where there is frequent rain. It is a very sad scenario...”

C. Preservation and conservation of heritage buildings

2.29 As stated by the Department, postal services in India are being provided since 1854. Further, some post offices are operated from very old buildings of historical importance and 44 such buildings have been identified as heritage buildings.

2.30 When asked to elaborate on the ‘heritage’ category list of postal buildings, the Department in its written reply submitted:-

“Heritage status is bestowed on postal buildings based on various criteria which include, *inter-alia*, age of the building, distinct architectural styles, preserving high artistic or aesthetic values, representing the work of a master, association with events that have made significant contribution to our history etc...”

2.31 On being asked about the measures being adopted by the Department for those landmark postal buildings that hold historical significance and require restoration and maintenance but have not been included under the list of heritage buildings presently, the Department in its written reply furnished that:

“Department of Posts has constituted a Postal Heritage Conservation Committee (PHCC) at Directorate level and Circle Heritage Cells (CHCs) at Circle level. Circle Heritage Cells in their respective circles are responsible for suggesting names of buildings for inclusion in the list of heritage buildings of the Department as per extant policy. These suggestions are examined by the PHCC of Department of Post. The names of new buildings are included in the list of heritage buildings on the recommendation of PHCC...

...In order to take due care during routine maintenance work of heritage buildings and other old buildings which are not included in the list of heritage buildings, 25 officers of Civil Wing have been given training at the National CPWD Academy at Ghaziabad for their proper upkeep and renovation projects are taken up from the available funds for Estates Management, in addition to regular maintenance. Funds are allotted for their maintenance on need basis.”

2.32 Further, when quizzed, whether this list of 44 buildings was inclusive of the all-heritage postal infrastructure in the Country and whether there existed any postal buildings of heritage nature that still remain unfunded and uncategorized as on date, the Department in its written reply furnished the following details:

“...After the framing of policy for conservation of heritage buildings in November, 2023, new buildings are included in the list of heritage buildings on the recommendation of Postal Heritage Conservation Committee (PHCC). Five new buildings viz. Matheran PO (Maharashtra), Solapur HO (Maharashtra), Ajmer HO (Rajasthan), Prayagraj HO (Uttar Pradesh) and Red Building, Chennai (Tamil Nadu) have been included in the list of heritage buildings of the Department on its recommendation bringing the total number of such buildings to 49. Moreover, no heritage buildings have remained unfunded and uncategorized.”

2.33 The revised list of heritage buildings, including the 5 new additions apart from the originally identified 44 heritage buildings, is placed at **Annexure – I**.

2.34 Since some of these heritage buildings require restoration works, while some require specific and regular planned maintenance, Department of Posts has submitted that it is giving special thrust to restoration of heritage buildings. For specialized work of restoration/preservation of heritage buildings, the Department is seeking assistance of Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), Central Public Works Department (CPWD), State

Archaeological Departments and Indian National Trust for Arts and Cultural Heritage (INTACH), in addition to its own P&T Civil Wing.

2.35 Regarding steps taken to preserve the heritage and historical value of Postal estates, the Department in its written reply submitted that:

“Department has been taking necessary steps for preservation of its heritage buildings. Conservation policy has been framed for their upkeep. Do’s and Don’ts for regular maintenance of heritage buildings have been implemented. Work of restoration/preservation of heritage buildings is done with the assistance of Archaeological Survey of India (ASI)/Central Public Works Department (CPWD)/State Archaeological Departments/Indian National Trust for Arts and Cultural Heritage (INTACH). 25 personnel of Civil wing have been trained by National CPWD Academy for regular maintenance of heritage buildings.”

2.36 While deposing before the Committee, the representative of the Department informed that Rs. 51.73 crore had been spent on renovation work in 44 buildings from FY 2021-22 to FY 2024-25.

2.37 Elaborating on the need for funds for renovation and restoration of heritage Postal infrastructure, the representative of the Department, in the deposition before the Committee, submitted as under:

“...हेरिटेज बिल्डिंग्स में 44 में से केवल चार का रिनोवेशन का काम हो पाया है और कुछ कार्य चल भी रहा है। यह काम फेजेस में होता है जैसे मुम्बई की जो मेन जीपीओ की बिल्डिंग है, उसका बहुत बड़ा कार्य चल रहा है। 40 बिल्डिंग्स ऐसी हैं, जिनका रिनोवेशन होना जरूरी है। उसके लिए हमें पैसे की आवश्यकता है। सब तरह से हम काम करने को तैयार हैं। हमें जैसे ही फंड मिलता है, उसके हिसाब से हम इनकी जो रिक्वायरमेंट्स हैं, उसकी डिटेलिंग भी हम एक प्रोजेक्ट के रूप में इस वर्ष बनाकर रेडी रखेंगे, ताकि हमें जैसे ही फंड मिले, वैसे ही हम कार्य शुरू कर पाएं और जिससे हम सिर्फ हेरिटेज बिल्डिंग्स का ही नहीं, बल्कि डाकघरों का भी निर्माण कर पाएं।...”

2.38 Further, apprising the Committee about the inclusion of postal buildings in the heritage list, the representative, while emphasizing on the dire need for funds for restoration of heritage postal infrastructure, also submitted that:

“Out of the 44 heritage buildings you asked about, I think two more have been recently identified. We need to get authentic data on the age of the buildings. Some historian or archaeological survey has to tell us. We keep looking at old buildings, and two more have been identified. They will soon be included in the status once they are officially brought in. There is a method, and the time required for 40 more buildings is significant. Four buildings are under renovation, and the last phase of the Mumbai project is ongoing. It will take about a year and a half, according to estimates. However, the other 40 buildings need funds for restoration because we have only been able to restore four buildings with the money we have. It costs a lot to restore heritage buildings in five years. If we need to restore ten times that number, we will need ten times the money approximately.”

2.39 Regarding efforts made in maintenance of heritage Postal buildings in the absence of sufficient funds, the Department in its written reply submitted that:

“Maintenance of heritage buildings is done with the help of expert agencies like CPWD, State Archaeological Departments, ASI and INTACH. The Department had approached Ministry of Culture for funds through National Culture Fund (NCF) in 2024 but it was not fruitful. On the advice of the Ministry of Culture, the Department approached Public Sector Banks and PSUs directly for support through their CSR funds. It received only two responses viz one from NHPC, a PSU under the Ministry of Power and another from Oil India Limited, a PSU under Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas. The proposal of NHPC has been sent to the Ministry of Power for approval. The approval is awaited from Ministry of Power. Oil India Limited has also been conveyed the details of the project and engagement modalities. Further response is awaited.”

2.40 Regarding collaboration with the Ministry of Culture for upkeep and maintenance of heritage buildings, the Department further conveyed that:

“Department of Posts approached Ministry of Culture to obtain funds through National Culture Fund (NCF) for upkeep and maintenance of heritage buildings on 31.01.2024. However, NCF intimated that NCF do not have separate funds for upkeep of heritage buildings. It arranges such funds from corporate entities under their CSR

Programs. Further, it was informed that currently, NCF has no donor (corporate entity) to fund the upkeep of heritage postal buildings.”

D. Welfare Components in Building Design and construction

2.41 The Department is cognizant of the need to improve facilities and access for its customers. Towards this, it has taken a number of steps as detailed below:-

(iv) Obligation towards Sustainable Development through Installation of Roof top Solar Power Packs & Construction of Rainwater Harvesting Structures

2.42 When queried about the ways in which the Department addresses environmental concerns such as energy consumption and waste management within its operations and real estate management, the reply submitted is as under:

“The Department is addressing environmental concern by:

- a. Using renewable energy resources like installing Solar Power Packs on its buildings to reduce carbon footprint. Newly constructed buildings are being equipped with Solar Power Packs;
- b. Rain water harvesting structures are being constructed to conserve water as per green building norms;
- c. Maintaining afforestation in open areas; and
- d. Major waste of used papers which is shredded and auctioned.”

2.43 When inquired whether all the 653 rainwater harvesting structures installed were being maintained regularly every year, the Department in its written reply submitted that some of the rainwater harvesting structures were being maintained regularly by the respective Circles to ensure optimum harvesting of rainwater.

2.44 During the Sitting of the Committee, the representative of the Department also submitted that newly constructed buildings are being equipped with Solar Power Packs and rain water harvesting facilities have been made mandatory for all new buildings. The Department also submitted that as on 31st March, 2025, 452 Solar Power Packs and a

total of 662 rainwater harvesting structures have been constructed which are contributing to ground aquifer recharge.

2.45 On being asked about ways in which adherence is ensured to the designated standards for infrastructure with fittings related to installation of rooftop solar panels and rain water harvesting systems in postal buildings across the Country, the Department in its written reply submitted that:

“Department of Posts follows the relevant guidelines of MNRE, CPWD and other Govt. bodies for Solar Power Pack installation works. The same is adhered by incorporating the prevailing guidelines/ specifications in the tenders and the execution is looked after by the field engineers across the country. Rain water harvesting systems in postal buildings across the country are provided as per the norms of the local body/Municipal corporation who approves the plan.”

2.46 Regarding energy production from installed Solar Power Packs (SPP), the Department, in its written reply informed that the total energy produced through installed solar power packs (SPP) during Financial Year 2024-25, was 5.3 million units. While deposing before the Committee, the representative of the Department also submitted that 378 Solar Power Pack had been installed up to the Financial year 2024-25 and estimated savings on electricity bill accrued to around Rs. 3.00 crore per year.

2.47 Elaborating on the savings resulting from generation of power through Solar Power Panels in Postal Buildings, the representative of the Department, during oral evidence apprised the Committee that:

“...हमने सेविंग्स का कुछ आंकलन किया था कि हर वर्ष इन पावर पैक्स की वजह से तीन करोड़ की सेविंग्स बिजली के बिल में हुई है, लेकिन इससे कितनी ऊर्जा बनी और उसका कितना उपयोग हुआ है, उसका मैं आपको विवरण भेज दूंगी। यह विवरण बनाया जा सकता है। कुछ केसेज़ में यह भी है कि जो पावर ग्रिड है, उसमें भी बिजली जाती है। हम जो इस्तेमाल करते हैं, उसमें उसके मुकाबले प्रोडक्शन थोड़ा ज्यादा रहता है।...”

2.48 Regarding Solar Projects being undertaken by the Department for installation of solar power panels in Postal buildings, the representative of the Department, during the Sitting, apprised the Committee as under:

“...we have done a major assessment for solar projects. There is a project underway. You have to look at the foundation of the building and see how much weight it can take because these panels are quite heavy and need to be embedded in the roof. There is some roof work involved. A list is available that we can share. The plans for major solar works have already been made by the electrical wing. Clear sites have been identified where solar power can be generated effectively and where it is feasible according to the building design. They are ready now. We are requesting funds in the new plan...”

(v) Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan – Installation of Braille signages and Ramps & rails

2.49 In order to provide access to Post Office buildings for differently-abled and elderly customers, the new post office buildings are being provided with ramps and rails and low height lifts, as per The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016. In addition to ramps and rails, Braille signages are also being installed in post offices for improving the accessibility of Post Offices for differently-abled persons. Up to FY 2024-25, Braille Signages have been provided in 1256 Post Offices and Ramps and rails have been retrofitted in 1617 post offices.

2.50 In its written submission, the Department conveyed that in order to promote inclusivity in terms of facilities for the differently-abled, construction of rail and ramps are mandatory for all new buildings; old buildings are being retrofitted with such facilities; and Braille signages are being installed.

(vi) Gender concerns –Feeding rooms, crèches and ladies’ toilets

2.51 Through the Scheme activity of Gender Concerns, the Department is constructing gender-sensitive facilities and provision of separate Ladies’ Retiring Room, Ladies’ toilets and Feeding Rooms in large Administrative Offices and Head Post Offices are being made. 184 ladies’ toilets have been constructed till 31st March, 2025. In addition, 59 feeding rooms have been provided in Post offices till the year 2024-25.

2.52 During the Sitting of the Committee, the representative of the Department reasoned that there are a large number of female employees in the Department of Posts and hence there is a need to have separate ladies' toilets, feeding rooms for lactating mothers and crèches in postal buildings wherever feasible.

2.53 Data regarding the total coverage of gender sensitive infrastructure (ladies' toilets and feeding rooms) in Departmental buildings (as on 31st March, 2025) has been provided as:

S. No.	Circle	No of buildings where ladies' toilets are required	No of buildings where ladies' toilets are available	No of buildings where ladies' toilets are not available	No of buildings where feeding rooms are required	No of buildings where Feeding rooms are available	No of buildings where Feeding rooms are not available
I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII
1	Andhra Pradesh	164	124	40	105	2	103
2	Assam	200	61	139	19	2	17
3	Bihar	137	43	183	122	6	168
4	Chhattisgarh	15	33	15	27	3	45
5	Delhi	62	61	71	44	6	94
6	Gujarat	241	205	156	73	1	187
7	Haryana	79	60	19	37	0	37
8	Himachal Pradesh	47	42	34	9	1	9
9	Jammu & Kashmir	37	8	29	37	3	34
10	Jharkhand	46	29	46	42	1	74
11	Karnataka	170	291	73	64	0	192
12	Kerala	255	181	74	110	2	108
13	Madhya Pradesh	200	135	65	191	3	188
14	Maharashtra	335	239	96	106	7	99
15	North East	86	8	78	87	2	85
16	Odisha	182	132	50	98	11	87
17	Punjab	175	130	45	80	0	80
18	Rajasthan	320	114	206	57	4	53
19	Tamil Nadu	243	184	59	226	11	215
20	Telangana	101	97	57	62	3	61
21	Uttar Pradesh	236	159	139	174	2	216
22	Uttarakhand	54	38	16	44	1	43
23	West Bengal	108	62	114	151	4	173
	Total	3493	2436	1804	1965	75	2368

2.54 However, the Department has furnished no data regarding the number of crèches presently functional or those being proposed to be built in Departmental buildings.

2.55 When ascertained whether there is a set timeline regarding bridging the gap between demand and availability of postal infrastructure catering to gender concerns in all postal buildings in the Country, the Department, in its written reply submitted that:

“The Department is addressing gender concerns through construction of ladies’ toilets and feeding rooms through Scheme activity in a phased manner. These activities are being undertaken as per availability of funds. No tentative timeline can be provided as of now as it is dependent on budgetary support.”

2.56 Conversely, on the issue of timeline envisaged for total coverage of gender sensitive infrastructure in Postal Buildings, the Department, during the Sitting of the Committee submitted that:

“...For gender sensitivities, we will share data on how many of our departmental buildings have toilets for women and how many are remaining. I think that is missing in our data. We will provide a chart and a timeline for when to cover it. That should be possible, I think, within the normal five-year plan period. These are priority areas...”

III. WORK TO BE TAKEN UP DURING THE CURRENT FINANCIAL YEAR

2.57 In their deposition before the Committee, one of the representatives of the Department apprised the Committee about targets for the current financial year under the Estates Management Scheme as follows:

- Focus on completing 80 ongoing construction projects
- Other works –
 - (i) Renovation of 143 postal buildings;
 - (ii) Preservation of 04 heritage buildings;
 - (iii) Installation of 150 solar power packs in departmental buildings;
 - (iv) Construction of 25 rain Water Harvesting structures;
 - (v) Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan – 61 buildings with ramps & rails 522 buildings with Braille signages; and
 - (vi) Gender Concerns – 39 ladies’ toilets & 22 feeding rooms.

CHAPTER – III
REAL ESTATE MANAGEMENT

3.1 The Department has submitted that in the context of the central role being played by India Post in the Country's development and the role now envisaged, there is a need to provide improved access to services and greater efficiency and quality of service delivery to effectively meet customer expectations. To capacitate first mile operations (booking of articles) and to attract more business, Post Office buildings must be in good condition, with proper branding, for improved customer experience. This is also essential because Post Office buildings are symbols of the Central Government at prime locations and in the farthest corners of the Country.

3.2 The Department of Posts has a real estate division, specifically the Directorate - MM and Estates Division, which manages and oversees the Department's real estate assets. This Division is responsible for various aspects of the Department's property, including maintaining buildings, managing leases and potentially exploring commercial use of the real estate to generate revenue.

3.3 Broadly, the components under Real Estate Management can be categorized as:

- A. Total asset base of the Department of Posts and Monetization of assets;
- B. Vacant plots of land and Issues related to encroachment of vacant plots;
- C. Revenue Generation and commercial utilization of vacant plots of land;
- D. Curbing Rental Expenditure & Reducing dependence on hired / rented Postal Buildings; and
- E. Management of Postal Estates held by the Department.

A. Total asset base of the Department of Posts& Monetization of assets

3.4 The total assets base (estates/land and buildings) of the Department conclusive in terms of area is as follows:-

S. No.	Circle	AREA (in lakh sq. metres)
1	Andhra Pradesh	4.56
2	Assam	4.52
3	Bihar	4.38
4	Chhattisgarh	1.33
5	Delhi	1.95
6	Gujarat	11.37
7	Haryana	2.01
8	Himachal Pradesh	1.12
9	Jammu & Kashmir	0.68
10	Jharkhand	1.99
11	Karnataka	12.79
12	Kerala	6.38
13	Madhya Pradesh	5.53
14	Maharashtra	12.85
15	North East	3.05
16	Odisha	6.07
17	Punjab	2.26
18	Rajasthan	8.13
19	Tamil Nadu	9.28
20	Telangana	3.29
21	Uttar Pradesh	8.69
22	Uttarakhand	1.45
23	West Bengal	7.18
	Total	120.9

3.5 As per the data furnished by the Department, the Circle of Maharashtra stands with the highest amount of asset base of 12.85 lakh sq. metres followed by Karnataka at 12.79 lakh sq. metres and then Gujarat with 11.37 lakh sq. metres.

3.6 During the Sitting, the Representative of the Department apprised the Committee that:

“...सर, जो हमारी खाली जमीनें हैं, जिनमें 1,460 प्लॉट्स का टोटल एरिया 22 लाख स्क्वायर मीटर है। आपने एरिया के बारे में पूछा था। पूरे विभाग का इलाका 120 लाख स्क्वायर मीटर है। यह रेलवेज़ का 0.57 प्रतिशत है। यह उतना बड़ा इलाका नहीं है।...”

3.7 In its written reply, the Department also informed that it has not carried out any exercise so far to determine the money/market capitalization of its assets across the Country.

3.8 Elaborating on the SOPs followed by the Department also for valuation and disposal of obsolete/old and dilapidated buildings and non-performing postal estates/buildings, the Department in its written reply submitted that:

“The Valuation and disposal of obsolete/old and dilapidated buildings and non-performing postal estates/buildings is done based upon the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) laid down in the CPWD works manual. According to the guidelines in the CPWD works manual, when a building is proposed to be dismantled, a survey report is to be prepared first. The report is submitted for approval of the competent authority. Competent authority has been delegated financial powers in CPWD manual to sanction such survey report. After the survey is sanctioned, a reserve price is determined based on the salvage value. Further, after approval of the reserve price, open tender is invited online through CPP Portal and best offered bid is accepted by the competent authority as per delegation of Financial Power.”

3.9 Regarding record-keeping and management of land records for monetization of assets, the representative of the Department, during the Sitting submitted as under:

“...जो रिकॉर्ड मैनेजमेंट है, वह इस वक्त अच्छा है और ज्यादा बेहतर किया जा रहा है, क्योंकि कुछ पुरानी जमीनें हैं तो उनके म्युटेशन के रिकॉर्ड्स देखने होते हैं। ऐसी तीन हजार जमीनें हैं। बिल्ट अप और खाली जमीन मिलाकर 6 हजार से ऊपर हैं। इनमें से करीब आधी जमीनों के रिकॉर्ड्स हम अभी तक ढूंढ रहे हैं, क्योंकि बहुत पुराना विभाग है। इलाका कितना है, एफएआर कितना बिल्ड हो सकता है, इस पर बहुत बड़ी प्रक्रिया इस वर्ष हमने की है, ताकि इसको हम मोनेटाइज कर सकें।...”

3.10 Regarding plans for achieving financial viability through monetization of postal assets, the Department in its written replies informed that:

“Department is in the process of hiring a consultant to aid and advise the Department to develop/redevelop real estate assets of the Department by recommending appropriate mode for each project for maximizing their revenue potential.”

3.11 Regarding status of the ‘Expression of Interest’ for monetization of assets and other such measures, the representative of the Department, during the Sitting informed the Committee that:

“...हमने एक कन्सल्टेंट के लिए जो बिड निकाली गई थी, जो हमें प्लॉट्स के मानिटाइजेशन के लिए मदद करेंगे, वह अनफॉर्च्युनेटली फेल हुई है। हमने दोबारा बिड डाली है। उस टैक्नीकल बिड में लोग क्वालिफाई नहीं हुए थे। अब हमने उसकी कुछ टर्म्स बदली हैं। इस प्रोसेस में एक-डेढ़ महीने का समय लग जाता है। इस बीच हम खाली नहीं बैठे हैं। हमारा जो डेटा है, वह पूरी तरह रेडी है।...”

3.12 When asked to provide details regarding the status of the ‘Expression of Interest’ (EOI) submitted for hiring consultants to develop a monetization strategy, the Department in its written replies reiterated that:

“Department had floated a Request for Expression of Interest (REOI) for hiring a consultant for development/redevelopment of the real estate assets of the department in February, 2025. However, none of the applicants could meet the prescribed criteria. A fresh REOI has been floated again on 28.04.2025. Interested participant can resubmit their EOI till 26.05.2025. Further action will be taken with regard to development/ re-development of postal estates on the advice of the consultant.”

B. Vacant plots of land and Issues related to their encroachment

3.13 According to the Department, there are 1460 vacant plots and the construction activity on these vacant plots of land is subject to availability of funds, benefit to cost ratio of the preferred post office, building, priority, public demand as taken up by public representatives, threat of encroachment, issues of accessibility, etc.

3.14 Circle-wise details of vacant plots of land are as follows:

S.No.	Name of Postal Circle	Total number of vacant plots
1	Andhra Pradesh	94
2	Assam	14
3	Bihar	64
4	Chhattisgarh	5
5	Delhi	14
6	Gujarat	53
7	Haryana	19
8	Himachal Pradesh	23
9	J&K	5
10	Jharkhand	34
11	Karnataka	308
12	Kerala	134
13	Madhya Pradesh	37
14	Maharashtra	77
15	North East	19
16	Odisha	25
17	Punjab	14
18	Rajasthan	131
19	Tamilnadu	140
20	Telangana	93
21	Uttarakhand	18
22	Uttar Pradesh	66
23	West Bengal	73
	Total	1460

3.15 As per the data submitted by the Department, Karnataka Circle holds maximum number of vacant plots of land i.e. 308, followed by 140 held by the Tamil Nadu Circle and 134 by Kerala Circle respectively. The Circles of Chhattisgarh and J&K hold the least number of vacant plots, i.e. 5 each.

3.16 Regarding GIS mapping of Post Offices and vacant plots, the representative of the Department apprised the Committee during the Sitting as follows:

“...The GIS mapping of all our post offices has already been completed. Regarding vacant plots, I will have to check. This has

been done on the PM Gati Shakti portal. We have 14 layers in that. All our data is already available. We have access; the Government has access. I think we have not mapped vacant plots yet, but I will ensure that vacant sites are mapped. We can easily do this with our own device because we have that digital address code. We already have an app for this. We will do that. That is a very important suggestion...”

3.17 When enquired whether proper land records are maintained by the Department for the total quantum of land available – vacant and under use and about measures being taken for safeguarding vacant land, the Department in its written reply submitted that:

“The land records of the Department are maintained at respective Circle/Regional level. The following measures have been taken for safeguarding vacant land:

- a. Construction of boundary walls.
- b. Construction of small post offices.”

3.18 Regarding plans for adoption of GIS based strategy for tracking, monitoring and evaluating encroachments and resultant legal disputes in the case of vacant plots of postal land, the Department in its written reply submitted that:

“The Department welcomes the suggestion of the Standing Committee of adoption of GIS based strategy for tracking, monitoring and evaluating encroachments and resultant legal disputes regarding vacant plots of postal land and will examine it for implementation.”

3.19 Further apprising the Committee about the encroachment situation of vacant plots of Postal land, the representative of the Department, during the Sitting of the Committee, submitted as under:

“...जो हमारे पास 1,460 प्लॉट्स हैं, उनमें से 209 प्लॉट्स 2000 स्क्वायर मीटर से बड़े हैं, जो अच्छा साइज माना जाता है। बाकी प्लॉट्स उसके नीचे के हैं। इनमें जो एन्क्रोचमेंट की स्थिति है, उसमें करीब 250 प्लॉट्स पर एन्क्रोचमेंट है। सब पर बहुत ज्यादा एन्क्रोचमेंट नहीं है और सब में दीवारें भी नहीं हैं। इसका एग्जैक्ट डेटा हम आपको सर्कलवाइज भेजेंगे। इस समय मेरे पास इसका संकलन नहीं है। इन प्लॉट्स की देख-रेख होती है, लेकिन कुछ जमीनों पर कुछ केसेज भी हैं। मैं उन केसेज की स्थिति भी बताऊंगी।...”

3.20 While submitting the status and number of encroached vacant lands and buildings; number of disputed or encroached lands/buildings where dispute is sub-judice; and the number and status of vacant lands where construction for renting purpose is being considered, the Department in its written reply stated that:

“The number of encroached vacant land and buildings as on date is 278. Out of them, dispute is sub-judice in 82 cases. No vacant lands have been identified where construction for renting purpose is being considered by the Department.”

3.21 Regarding proactive measures taken to check illegal encroachment and unauthorized use of postal land/estates, the Department in its written reply submitted that:

“The Department has implemented proactive measures to prevent illegal encroachments and unauthorized use of postal land and buildings. It approaches concerned revenue authorities, public representatives, local administrations and takes recourse to judicial remedies available for eviction of encroachment.

In order to check the illegal encroachment, Estate Officers have been appointed/nominated in each Postal Circle under the Public Premises (Eviction of Unauthorized Occupants) Act, 1971 and notified in the Gazette of India to exercise the powers of Estate Officers to deal with cases related to unauthorized occupation of departmental lands and buildings and boundary walls have been constructed on vacant lands.

Department is also putting its vacant land to use by constructing Post Office buildings which also check the encroachment.”

3.22 On being asked about the number of court cases, litigations and legal disputes related to property ownership, leases and renting being faced by the Department and mechanisms in place to tackle these court cases and legal disputes, the Department in its written reply submitted that:

“The Department is handling 82 court cases, legal disputes related to encroachment all over India. To manage these, it hires lawyers, takes part in Lok Adalats (special courts for quick settlement) to resolve the disputes.”

3.23 Elaborating on the role of local administration in mitigating conflicts arising due to illegal encroachment of vacant plots of land, the Department in its written reply stated that:

“Local administration plays an important role in mitigating conflicts arising from illegal encroachment of vacant land as a custodian of land records by ensuring proper land monitoring, maintaining accurate and accessible land records, and works as a law enforcing agency. Local bodies facilitate dispute resolution through mediation and community engagement. The department takes their help in removing illegal encroachments.”

3.24 Regarding steps taken to remove encroachments, during the briefing, the representative of the Department informed the Committee that:

“...We contact the municipal authorities, the DM, the police, and we also physically remove encroachments. However, we sometimes face stays on removing encroachments. We will share a full list. It is all there with us.”

3.25 When asked if the Department had been working on finding permanent solutions to the problems of vacant land encroachments and considerable rent expenditure, the Department in its written reply informed that:

“Within the funds available, the Department has been constructing boundary walls and postal buildings in a phased manner on its vacant plots of land as a permanent measure to prevent encroachment and reduce rent expenditure.”

3.26 Apprising the Committee about measures being adopted to curtail encroachment of vacant plots of postal land, the representative of the Department enlightened the Committee about collaborating with the State Government to invite constructive usage of vacant plots, thereby curbing illegal encroachment. The representative submitted that:

“...इसके अलावा स्टेट गवर्नमेंट्स के टाई-अप्स, नर्सरीज़ वगैरह का सजेशन, अच्छा सजेशन है। कुछ टाई-अप्स होते रहते हैं। इस तरह की चीजें, जैसे हार्टिकल्चर, नर्सरी आदि बहुत अच्छी हैं। इनसे प्लॉट भी बचा रहेगा। इसके लिए हम आदेश निकालेंगे और नज़र भी रखेंगे कि किन प्लॉट्स में यह वाइबल है। हमारे जो ये प्लॉट्स हैं, इनमें से कई प्लॉट्स ऐसे हैं, जो बहुत दूर हैं, शहर से बाहर हैं। इनका सारा डेटा भी मैप्ड है। जो प्लॉट्स दूर हैं या वाइबल नहीं हैं, उनके अलावा हम अन्य प्लॉट्स को इस रूप में प्रयोग में ला सकते हैं।

स्टेट गवर्नमेंट जहां कंस्ट्रक्शन कर रही है, हम वहां इन्हें कर सकते हैं। इन्हीं चीजों के लिए असल में हम लोग प्लॉट्स की मैपिंग आदि क्या हो सकता है, वह देख रहे हैं। इस तरह के टैम्परेरी अरेंजमेंट्स हो सकते हैं, जिन पर हमें अभी भवन बनाने का इरादा नहीं है।...

C. Revenue Generation through commercial utilization of vacant plots of land and increasing accessibility of Post Offices

3.27 On being enquired about the necessary reforms required for managing real estate assets in order to maximize their potential and generate adequate revenue, the Department in its written reply submitted as under:

“The Department has issued instructions on the modalities for renting out extra space in its buildings for earning extra revenue. The Department is in the process of hiring a consultant to aid and advise the Department in this regard.”

3.28 When asked about steps being taken to augment revenue generation by optimal and innovative usage of postal infrastructure and vacant plots of land and the outcome of this exercise, the Department in its written reply apprised the Committee that:

“Department had floated a Request for Expression of Interest (REOI) for hiring a Consultant for development/redevelopment of the real estate assets of the Department in February, 2025. However, none of the applicants could meet the prescribed criteria. A fresh REOI has been floated again on 28.04.2025. Further action with regard to development / re-development of postal estates etc. will be taken as per the advice of the consultant.”

3.29 Regarding revenue generation, when queried about plans for using vacant plots and vast real estate for public value creation such as partnering with State Governments to rent out vacant plots for building State infrastructure like PHCs, Schools, Horticulture hubs, nurseries etc., the Department in its written replies submitted that:

“Yes, the Department does have plans of using its vacant plots and its vast real estates in partnership with State Governments and rent out vacant plots for building State Infrastructure like PHCs, Schools, Horticulture hubs, nurseries etc. As of now, no proposal has been received, if any such proposal is received from any State

Government in future, the Department will examine it on case-by-case basis.”

3.30 When enquired whether there is any consideration or plan for generating revenue by using postal buildings as well as vacant plots of land as co-working spaces for entrepreneurs, the Department in its written reply submitted that:

“The Department welcome the suggestion of the Standing Committee of generating revenue by utilising its real estate as co-working spaces for entrepreneurs. The Department will examine it in consultation with the consultant being hired to advice the Department with regard to develop/redevelop its real estate’s assets.”

3.31 Regarding viability of vacant plots of land for revenue generation, the representative of the Department during the Sitting apprised the Committee as under:

“...इसके अलावा जो टाई-अप हम स्ट्रेटअवे कर सकते हैं, जैसे एनबीसीसी है, उनसे हमारे 22 प्लॉट्स के लिए बात चल रही है। उनका एमओयू जल्दी हो जाएगा। अतः जो हमसे आसानी से हो सकता है, वह हम कर रहे हैं। टियर-1 सिटीज़ में जो प्लॉट्स वाइबल हैं, उनके डेवलपमेंट के लिए बात चल रही है। वे हमें एक-एक प्लॉट का प्लान बनाकर देंगे। उसमें अलग-अलग मॉडल होता है। अलग से पैसे मांग रहे हैं, वह एक अलग बात है, लेकिन हम लोग उसको जितना वाइबल बना सकें, वह ज्यादा अच्छा है।...”

3.32 On being ascertained about the decision-making processes, channels of approval and revenue generation from renting out or leasing surplus postal land or buildings and through redevelopment of estates/building, the Department in its written reply informed that:

- a. “There is a leasing and licensing policy of the Department to lease out surplus space to earn extra revenue;
- b. The head of a Postal Circle is the competent authority to rent/lease out the surplus space;
- c. The Department has implemented a leasing and licensing policy to generate additional revenue by renting out surplus postal land and building space;
- d. As per the laid down procedure, the Head of the Postal Division examines and certifies that the identified space is not required for Departmental use and is surplus;
- e. Following this, a Committee comprising the Director, Postal Services, the Financial Adviser to the Regional Head, and a

Civil Engineer (Executive Engineer, Assistant Engineer, or Junior Engineer) reviews and recommends whether the surplus space should be offered on a license basis and proposes the minimum license fee based on prevailing market rates; and

- f. The final allotment of the surplus space is carried out through a transparent open tender process to ensure fairness and competitive bidding. Redevelopment of buildings is also done on the recommendation of heads of Circles.”

3.33 When asked about the steps being taken for effective service delivery and speedy redressal of grievances and concerns to augment revenue generation, the Department in its written reply submitted that:

“In the Department of Posts, Nodal Grievance Officers have been designated at the Circle level to ensure the prompt redressal of grievances and concerns. Additionally, elected representatives and members of the public may also approach the Divisional Heads (Senior Superintendent/Superintendent of Post Offices) for issues specific to their respective jurisdictions.”

3.34 During the discussion about the need for funds for revenue generation and the need to continue the Scheme on Estates Management, the representative of the Department apprised the Committee as under:

“...जैसा आपने कहा कि हमारे विभाग को कुछ कमाने की आवश्यकता है, उसे हम करने का प्रयत्न कर रहे हैं। इस कार्य को करने के लिए हमारे पास जो पैसा है, वह सीमित है। हमें 479 करोड़ रुपये मिले थे, उनमें से 123 करोड़ रुपये बचे हैं, जो इस वर्ष पूरी तरह से खर्च हो जाएंगे, लेकिन हमारी जरूरत इससे कहीं ज्यादा है। अगले पांच वर्षों के लिए हमने पीआईबी मेमो बनाया है, जो ड्राफ्ट स्टेज पर है। अभी वह लोगों के कमेंट्स के लिए अलग-अलग मंत्रालयों और विभागों के लिए डाला हुआ है, ताकि जरूरी काम हो जाए।...”

3.35 Rationalization and relocation of Post Offices along with improving their accessibility are important aspects to consider in view of the urgent need for augmenting revenue generation of the Department of Posts. In this regard, the representative of the Department, during the Sitting, apprised the Committee of the norms followed by the Department during rationalization of Post Offices and submitted that:

“...The norms that we follow for urban areas and rural areas are specified. When we do the rationalization, we keep revisiting the network. That exercise is going on. There are sometimes mergers of offices usually due to the business requirements, but we make sure that no post offices in rural areas are more than three kilometres away. Also, with the new digital technology, with the person going to the doorstep also, we will make sure that the women of the area are particularly contacted. We are doing one household survey across the country right now and see what their needs are...”

3.36 Further, regarding steps taken for rationalization and relocation of Post Office buildings, the representative of the Department, submitted as under:

“...in the last four years, the Government is very clear that we needed more offices. So, the network has increased by more than 11,000 offices. We have increased our network in rural areas. But we are also required to make sure that the network is a viable network, and we have an exercise going on, which is rationalization. It will be done for urban areas. In urban areas, we are merging offices where required. If the distance norms are not met, if the income cost norms are not met, which generally do not meet, then we are merging them. But at any cost we do not want our citizens to suffer...”

3.37 Regarding mandates for presence of Post Offices in rural areas, the representative of the Department, during the Sitting of the Committee submitted as under:

“...ग्रामीण इलाके में हम 5 किलोमीटर पर डाक घर खोलते हैं। अभी बस थोड़े से ही डाक घर रह गए हैं, जो 5 किलोमीटर के अन्दर नहीं हैं। किसी भी गांव के 5 किलोमीटर की दूरी के अंदर डाकखाना खोलने का सरकार का प्रावधान है।...”

3.38 When asked about the issues being faced by the Department in shutting down or shifting of post offices and postal buildings especially in the rural areas, the Department in its written reply submitted that:

“The problem being faced by the Department related to shifting of post offices and postal buildings is the difficulty in finding a suitable building of the desired area on the ground floor for running post offices and other postal offices at a fair rent.”

3.39 About the steps taken by the Department to increase accessibility of post offices, the representative of the Department, during the Sitting, apprised the Committee as under “

“...Sir, you asked how are we planning to improve access to services for the people. So, the access in terms of physical access, one is of course, the access for people with disabilities or elders. The other access is that we get more post offices, better quality post offices buildings near the people. So, for that, we need funds, we need to construct more buildings, improve our existing buildings and also make it visible with signage. So, there is a lot of work going on now on developing better signage so that if I am walking in a marketplace, I do not miss the post office. I do not have to search for it. So, the visibility and also branding, so that this is also the Government's image. If my post office looks bad, it spoils the image of the Central Government. We are worried about it. So, that is another factor which we ourselves are worried, I admit. It is the difficulty, the quality of the experience in the post office. Everybody now wants a better experience. So, for that also, now our public investment board memorandum includes all these things...”

D. Curbing Rental Expenditure & Reducing dependence on hired / rented Postal Buildings

3.40 As per the Department, there are a limited number of departmental buildings and due to non-availability of land at the appropriate location and insufficiency of funds for construction of new buildings, many post offices and other offices are housed in rented buildings. Fixation/revision of rent of private accommodation is generally carried out after completion of five years through the Fair Rent Assessment Committee (FRAC), as per the delegated administrative and financial powers. Expenditure on rent is incurred from non-scheme funds.

3.41 The total rent paid by the Department of Posts during the last 5 financial years i.e. from FY 2020-21 to FY 2024-25 amounts to Rs. 976.29 Crore and the year-wise breakup is as under:

S.No.	Year	Rent Paid (in Rs. crore)
1	2020-21	179.17
2	2021-22	176.75
3	2022-23	171.80
4	2023-24	250.58
5	2024-25	197.99

3.42 Submitting about quantum of rental expenditure incurred by the Department in the Financial Years from 2022-23 to 2024-25, the representative of the Department, deposed before the Committee as under:

“...रेंट का जो खर्चा हुआ है, उसका डेटा मेरे पास है। यह पैसा नॉन-स्कीम से जाता है। An amount of Rs.171 crore has been spent in 2022-23. In 2023-24, it was Rs.250 crore because many rates of rent were revised in 2023-24. There were no revisions during COVID-19, the amount increased. In 2024-25, some arrears of Rs.197 crore were paid in the previous year. So, last year, Rs.197 crore was spent on rental...”

3.43 On being asked about the steps taken for systematically reducing dependency on rented buildings for running postal operations in the Country, the Department in its written reply submitted that:

“The Department is constructing post office buildings on its vacant plots of land through funds provided under the Estates Management Scheme (2021-22 to 2025-26) to reduce dependence on rented buildings. The number of post office building constructed from 2021-22 to 2024-25 is 192 and about 50-55 more Post office buildings are expected to be completed in 2025-26.

The Department has formulated a policy for utilizing its vacant plots of land for constructing small post office buildings ranging in area from 50.37 sq. metres to 81.04 sq. metres with basic facilities like Counters, toilets, Ramps and rails but without staff quarters, inspection quarters etc. through budgetary support. Every year, 40-45 small posts offices are being constructed and post offices functioning from rented premises are being shifted there to reduce their rental liability.”

3.44 When questioned about having any fixed timeline for reducing usage of rented properties in a phased manner, the Department in its written replies submitted that:

“The Department is working on preparing a PIB Memo for management of real estates which in turn will provide budgetary

support to construct new post office buildings and reducing the usage of rented properties over the next 5 years.”

3.45 While explaining about plans of the Department to reduce dependence on rented premises, the representative of the Department submitted that:

“...Our plan is currently limited. Out of these 1,460 plots, some plots are for other purposes. The post office plots would be about a thousand plots we are planning to construct if we get the funds. For the others, we have to remain in rented premises for the time being. However, we will try to improve the condition of the rented premises if we get the funds by putting in movable fixtures and going around the rule of Rs. 50,000 because that becomes an investment in the building, and the landlord has to pay for it. They are reluctant to pay. If we put in fixtures, cover, and put facades, we can improve the situation. That is the plan...”

3.46 When quizzed about steps taken to work towards reducing rental expenditure by seeking vacant lands, wherever possible, from the State Governments at no cost, the Department in its written reply submitted that:

“The Department welcomes the suggestion of the Committee to seek vacant lands from State Government at no cost. The Department will approach State Governments for the same wherever there is demand for construction of new post office but the Department does not have its own land.”

3.47 Elaborating on the need for rented accommodation for post offices in rural areas, the representative of the Department submitted that:

“...In the beginning, I had explained that there are three types of post offices: head post offices, sub post offices, and branch post offices. The branch post offices are 1 lakh 39 thousand and the head offices and sub post offices, known as departmental Post Offices are 25,000 plus. The person who is deployed there is supposed to take a small space on rent in the village and is compensated for that and works from there. As I mentioned, some offices are running in Panchayat Bhawans or free spaces provided by the village. Otherwise, it is supposed to be rented...”

3.48 On the issue of rural Post Offices functioning out of rented accommodations, the representative of the Department, during the Sitting of the Committee, apprised the Committee about the ground realities as under:

“...ब्रांच पोस्ट मास्टर के साथ जो अरेंजमेंट है, यदि उनका अपना मकान है तो उनको पूरा हक है कि वह उसमें पोस्ट ऑफिस चला सकें। उनसे हमारा यही अरेंजमेंट है। अगर वह अपने मकान में पोस्ट ऑफिस चलाते हैं तो ठीक है। इसके अलावा, हम जमीन मांगते रहे हैं। ग्राउंड लेवल पर करीब 30 हजार पंचायत भवन में पोस्ट ऑफिस चल रहे हैं। कभी-कभी हमें फ्री में भी जमीन मिली है। मैं इसका डिटेल्स दे सकती हूँ कि हमें कहां-कहां जमीन मिली है। सेंट्रल लेवल पर पिछले सालों के बारे में मुझे मालूम नहीं हैं, लेकिन अब हमने टेकअप किया है। हम सेंट्रली स्टेट गवर्नमेंट के पीछे लगे हैं। मैं भी फील्ड में रही हूँ। हम हमेशा संपर्क में रहते थे। जहां हमें फ्री में कोई जमीन मिले या पंचायत भवन में स्पेस मिले, कई स्टेट में काफी सारी दफ्तर पंचायत भवन में बने हैं। वह लोकल इनिशिएटिव पर ज्यादा डिपेंडेंट था। अब हम सेंट्रली स्टीयर कर रहे हैं। यह फर्क है। हम पूरी कोशिश कर रहे हैं कि इसको सेंट्रली कंट्रोल करें, ताकि लोगों की इनिशिएटिव पर नहीं छोड़ा दिया जाए। कोई ज्यादा प्रोएक्टिव होता है और कोई कम होता है।...”

3.49 Regarding seeking out Panchayat Bhawans as alternatives to rented accommodations for Post Offices in rural areas, the representative of the Department during the Sitting apprised the Committee as under:

“हमारे राज्य मंत्री जी ने सभी मुख्य मंत्रियों को पत्र लिखा है कि जहां-जहां हमारे ब्रांच पोस्ट ऑफिस के आस-पास के इलाके में पंचायत भवन हैं, वे हमें उपलब्ध करायी जाएं।”

3.50 Regarding reducing dependence on rented infrastructure, when queried whether the Department had explored the possibility of creating sustainable low-cost infrastructure to meet the needs of postal services in rural areas, the Department in its written reply submitted as under:

“For departmental Sub Post Offices (SOs) in rural areas, small new post office buildings are constructed, subject to availability of funds. For Branch Post Offices (BOs), which are mostly in rural areas, the Gramin Dak Sewak Branch Postmasters have to arrange accommodation for the branch post office. Alternatively, BOs are housed in Panchayat Bhawans and other local buildings where space is available at a low cost.”

3.51 Regarding usage of MPLADS fund for low-cost projects, building, upkeep and maintenance of amenities and infrastructure in postal buildings and the standard process

followed and progress made in this regard, the Department in its written reply submitted that:

“After the issue of revised guidelines of MPLADS by Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation which came into effect from 01.04.2023 that included *“Post Offices and related utilities/ facilities”* in list of work permissible under MPLADS, the Department framed a guideline for availing funds under MPLADS for constructing post office in November, 2023. The Department welcomes funds under MPLADS for its projects.”

E. Management of Postal estates held by the Department

3.52 The details of Post Office Infrastructure in the Department of Posts is as follows –

Total Departmental Post Offices	25,096
Functioning in departmental buildings	4,373
Functioning in rented buildings	20,723
Vacant plots	1460

3.53 On being asked about details of various activities being undertaken for Real Estate Management, the Department in its written reply submitted that:

“The Department of Posts is taking several steps for management of its real estates:

These include the utilization of vacant land for construction of small post office buildings for reducing dependence on rented premises.

It also addresses problems of encroachment with the help of local authorities and courts.”

3.54 Regarding coordination with other allied Government agencies for management of estates / land buildings and challenges faced therein, the Department in its written reply submitted as under:

“Department of Posts work in coordination with other Govt agencies like CPWD, local bodies, municipal authorities etc. for management of its real estate.

Head of Postal Circles have been given permission to get new construction projects within their power executed through CPWD.

It also works with CPWD and State Archaeology Department for preservation of its heritage buildings.

The challenges being faced in getting timely approval for new construction projects are met by liaising with them.”

3.55 When inquired about policy reforms and modernization initiatives being undertaken to improve the efficiency of real estate management and whether PPP Model has been initiated, the Department in its written reply submitted that:

“Department is in the process of hiring a consultant to aid and advise the Department to develop/redevelop postal real estate assets of the Department by recommending appropriate mode for each project for maximizing their revenue potential. Simultaneously, the Department is also in discussion with NBCC, a PSU under Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA), for development of 22 vacant plots in Tier 1 cities.”

3.56 While elaborating about the role of technology in effective management of real estate properties, the Department informed that it has geo-tagged its buildings in Government Land Information System (GLIS Portal).

3.57 Providing details on the GIS mapping of Postal assets, the representative of the Department, during the Sitting of the Committee submitted as under:

“...एक डिजिटल एड्रेस कोड का प्रोजेक्ट चल रहा है। GIS mapping of every single location can be done with that. उसका पायलेटिंग हो चुका है। सभी देशवासियों के लिए डिजिटल पब्लिक इनफ्रास्ट्रक्चर का हमारे डिपार्टमेंट ने यह इनीशिएटिव लिया है। इस पर आगे काफी काम होगा।...”

3.58 Further explaining about on the use of GIS mapping of Postal estates for effectively protecting and preserving them from disasters, the representative of the Department clarified details pertaining to disaster management in postal estates and submitted as under:

“...जो भी भवन हम स्वयं बनाते हैं, उनमें आपदा प्रबंधन की व्यवस्था होती है, क्योंकि उसके स्टैण्डर्डाइज्ड नॉर्म्स हैं। आपदा प्रबंधन से संबंधित जो अन्य कार्य हम कर रहे हैं, जो उसकी समिति है, तो हम आपको बताना चाहेंगे कि वह कहां काम आएगा। एक डिजिटल एड्रेस कोड का प्रोजेक्ट चल रहा है। GIS mapping of every single location can be done with that. उसका पायलेटिंग हो चुका है। सभी देशवासियों के लिए डिजिटल पब्लिक इनफ्रास्ट्रक्चर का हमारे डिपार्टमेंट ने यह इनीशिएटिव लिया है। इस पर आगे काफी काम होगा। अतः, न केवल डाकखाने के लिए, बल्कि आपदा प्रबंधन की

दिशा में यह पूरे देश के लिए काम आएगा, क्योंकि हर जगह की मैपिंग होगी। यह बहुत इंटरस्टिंग प्रोजेक्ट है। आगे हम समिति को इसके बारे में बताएंगे। अभी यह इस स्टेज पर है कि यह लॉन्च होने वाला है। आपदा प्रबंधन के लिए यह स्थिति है, उसके अलावा फायर ड्रिल्स वगैरह का भी सिस्टम होता है। फायर के लिए उसमें रीफिल करने का प्रबंधन है।

अर्थक्वेक्स वगैरह में स्टैंडर्ड ड्रिल्स हैं। आपका सुझाव बिलकुल सही है। मुझे लगता है कि इसको हर जगह रिपीट करने की जरूरत है। मैं इस संबंध में फिर से आदेश निकलवाती हूं कि रेगुलर अर्थक्वेक ड्रिल्स वगैरह भी होनी चाहिए, क्योंकि वे सब जगहों पर नहीं हो रही हैं।...

3.59 Regarding maintenance of a 'Real Estate Management Information System' (MIS) for effectively managing postal estates, the Department in its written reply submitted that:

"The Department welcome the suggestion of the Standing Committee to develop a Real Estate Management Information System. The Department will examine it in consultation with its Technology Division."

3.60 During the Sitting, while apprising the Committee about the process for conducting valuation of assets, the representative of the Department informed as under:

"...The SOP, as you mentioned, is for the valuation of assets. It is part of that exercise through a consultant because this is a specialized activity. We may ultimately look at some Real Estate Investment Trust (REIT) kind of models..."

PART – II

OBSERVATIONS / RECOMMENDATIONS

ESTATES MANAGEMENT SCHEME

1. The Committee note that the Estates Management Scheme of the Department of Posts is a Central Sector Scheme approved for the period from Financial Years 2021-22 to 2025-26, with a financial outlay of Rs.479 crore. The key objectives of the Scheme are to: (i) ensure development of appropriate infrastructure; (ii) provide a congenial work environment; (iii) improve the delivery of postal services in a cost-effective way; and (iv) implement various statutory provisions of Gender concerns and improving accessibility and public facility in Post Offices under Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan. To cater to these objectives, initiatives such as construction of postal buildings and residences for employees of the Department, preservation and conservation of heritage buildings, installation of roof top solar power packs and rain water harvesting structures to contribute towards sustainable development, provision of Braille signage and ramps and rails under the Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan for improving the accessibility of Post Offices and construction of separate toilets and retiring rooms for ladies along with construction of crèches for addressing gender concerns are being undertaken by the Department.

The Committee appreciate that against the approved provision of Rs. 479 crores under the Scheme from FY 2021-22 to FY 2025-26, the percentage utilization of allocated funds for each financial year, up to FY 2024-25, has consistently been over 95% with the exception being 91.81% during Financial Year 2021-22. This is also corroborated by a significant accomplishment of Physical Targets set against two Scheme components *viz* ‘construction of new Postal buildings’ and ‘renovation of postal buildings’. The Committee, however, note that against the total Scheme components, namely, Construction of new postal buildings;

Renovation of Post Office buildings/staff quarters; Preservation and conservation of heritage buildings; and Welfare components in Building design and construction including Installation of Roof top Solar Power Packs; Construction of Rain Water Harvesting Structures; Installation of Braille signages and Ramps & Rails; and Gender concerns in infrastructure such as feeding rooms and ladies' toilets, the Department has furnished data regarding Physical Targets about two components only.

Further, the Committee observe that in order to fulfill set objectives, the Department needs higher allocation of fund under the Scheme during the upcoming financial years. Taking cognizance of the importance of the Scheme on Estates Management, the Committee feel that strengthening of this Scheme is unavoidable in providing not only a congenial working atmosphere for employees of the Department but also to ensure effective delivery of postal services to customers thereby making India Post a bankable and reputable brand. The Committee, therefore, recommend the Department to vigorously pursue for increased budgetary allocation for this Scheme with the Ministry of Finance while setting realistic and achievable targets for its implementation in the upcoming financial years. The Committee would like to be apprised of the progress made in this regard within six months of laying of this Report in Parliament.

CONSTRUCTION OF NEW POSTAL BUILDINGS

2. The Committee note that new buildings have been constructed for Post Offices and staff quarters by Department of Posts and it has enabled shifting of post offices from rented buildings to Departmental buildings with user friendly amenities. The Committee understand that Estates Division monitors the progress of building projects at Postal Directorate / Postal Circle level with quarterly review meetings. Building Co-ordination meetings are also held in each of the Circles to

monitor its progress. The Department has informed that approximately Rs. 198 crores were spent on construction of new buildings from Financial Years 2021-22 to 2024-25 and against a set target of 120 a total of 192 postal buildings were constructed during that period.

The Committee further observe that according to the Circle-wise data provided by the Department of Posts, from Financial Years 2020-21 to 2024-25, a total of 223 Postal buildings were constructed by the Department with the maximum number of constructions being 40 in the Circle of Gujarat followed by 20 each in the Circles of Assam and Uttar Pradesh; and the third highest number of Postal buildings was 18 constructed in the Circle of Karnataka. However, in the same duration, no constructions were done within the Circle of Haryana and only 1 building each was constructed in Punjab and Uttarakhand Circles, respectively.

Acknowledging the accomplishment of targets related to overall construction of new Postal buildings across the Country, the Committee, however, note with concern that the Circle-wise data shows significant inequalities among Postal Circles in the number of new buildings constructed. The Committee recommend that the Department, with the help of the Estates Division, undertake a detailed examination of ground realities and create a Circle-wise data regarding requirement of Postal buildings within individual Postal Circles along with a timeline and required budgetary support for achieving the same. It will ensure that benefits under this Scheme are distributed equitably as per requirement and not cornered by bigger Postal Circles in the Country. The Committee desire to be apprised of the action taken and progress made in this regard within six months of laying of this Report in Parliament.

RENOVATION OF POST OFFICE BUILDINGS

3. The Committee note that approximately Rs. 158 crores were spent on renovation of Postal buildings from Financial Years 2021-22 to 2024-25 during which, against a set target of 180 a total of 362 Postal buildings were renovated. While deposing before the Committee during the Sitting, the representatives of the Department informed that out of 4,373 Departmental Buildings, 1,895 need substantial repairs, 674 need comprehensive repairs and a total of 110 buildings need to be demolished for reconstruction. Further, regarding maintenance of Sri Vijaya Puram, Head Post Office (erstwhile Port Blair HPO) as raised by the Committee during their Study Visit to the Union Territory of Andaman and Nicobar, the Department clarified that it is not a heritage building and that an amount of Rs. 64.28 lakh has been spent on its maintenance from FYs 2021-22 to 2024-25.

The Committee are given to understand that the Department has to adhere to the maximum expenses limit of Rs. 50,000 while renovating a rented building and renovation in rented Postal properties is often delayed due to denial or delayed consent of landlords as they are not willing to pay for the renovation. While deposing about the timeline for completion of renovation activities in Postal buildings across the Country, the Department has informed that it plans to complete renovation and installation activities in postal buildings across the Country over the next 5 years. Moreover, with respect to estimated funds that would be needed to suitably upgrade and renovate existing Postal infrastructure, the Department has submitted that a Public Investment Board (PIB) Memorandum for the Estates Management Scheme for the next 5 years is under preparation and the NITI Aayog has been approached for Third Party Evaluation of the performance of the Scheme for the period from FYs 2021-22 to 2025-26, as this is a requirement for continuation of the Scheme beyond 2025-26. While acknowledging the

accomplishment of physical targets in renovation of Postal buildings from FYs 2021-22 to 2024-25, the Committee are concerned about the difficulties faced by the Department in renovation of rented postal buildings. The Committee, therefore, call upon the Department to focus on assessing whether rented postal infrastructure can be suitably renovated and upgraded within the given expenditure limit of Rs. 50,000 over the next 5 years, as planned; and accordingly prepare the PIB Memorandum containing the total estimate of funds required for renovating country-wide postal infrastructure under the Estates Management Scheme and expeditiously take up the matter to enhance the expenditure limit of Rs. 50,000 to an appropriate level. The Committee desire to be apprised of the time frame for completion of this exercise and submission of the PIB Memo along with details.

4. According to the Circle-wise data furnished by the Department regarding building renovations from Financial Years 2020-21 to 2024-25, the Committee note that a total of 397 Postal buildings were renovated with the maximum number of building renovations being 36 in the Circle of Assam followed by 29 in the Circle of Uttar Pradesh and the third highest number of 28 building renovations being carried out in the Circle of Karnataka. In the same duration, only 4 buildings each were renovated in the respective Circles of Jammu & Kashmir and Uttarakhand and only 8 buildings were renovated in the Postal Circle of Chhattisgarh. Taking note of the lopsided pattern of building renovations among Postal Circles, the Committee would urge the Department to undertake an exercise to determine Circle-wise data for renovation of Postal infrastructure and draw up separate figures for the number of Departmental buildings and rented buildings, respectively, that are in need of repair, restoration and reconstruction so that fund allocation and renovation activities can be accordingly apportioned judiciously and legitimately to suit the needs of individual Circles. The Committee would like to be apprised of the Circle-wise details in this regard.

RENOVATION AND CONSTRUCTION OF STAFF QUARTERS

5. While tendering evidence before the Committee, the representative of the Department voiced concern about the dilapidated condition of staff quarters especially in the States of Himachal Pradesh and in the North-East and informed that out of a total of 820 Postal colonies, 793 are in need of major renovations and some of them need to be demolished and reconstructed. The Committee while reviewing the details of the Scheme on Estates Management note that infrastructure development, included provision of residences for employees of the Department of Posts and that due to scarcity of funds only Rs. 19.37 crores have been spent from FYs 2021-22 to 2024-25 for renovation of 54 Postal colonies. Further, two of the key objectives under the Scheme on Estates Management envisage 'development of appropriate infrastructure' and 'providing congenial work environment' which remain unachieved in the absence of decent livable staff quarters. Taking a serious view of the precarious condition of staff quarters, the Committee urge the Department of Posts to prioritize funds for renovation and construction of staff quarters to cater to the needs of its employees and also to set up a dedicated unit / division to monitor renovation/reconstruction so as to ensure its completion within a given time frame. The Committee would like to be apprised of the timeline set for achievement of this objective along with year-wise details of physical targets set for renovation and construction of Staff quarters for each State and Union Territory.

PRESERVATION AND CONSERVATION OF HERITAGE BUILDINGS

6. During the course of examination, the Committee noted that some post offices are being operated from very old buildings of historical importance and 44 such buildings have been identified as heritage buildings. Further, as per the policy

for Conservation of Heritage Buildings framed in November 2023, the Postal Heritage Conservation Committee (PHCC) has recommended for inclusion of five new buildings in the list of heritage buildings, thus bringing the total to 49. The Department has informed that no heritage buildings have remained unfunded and uncategorized. Furthermore, for specialized work of restoration/preservation of heritage buildings, the Department is seeking assistance from Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), Central Public Works Department (CPWD), State Archaeological Departments and Indian National Trust for Arts and Cultural Heritage (INTACH), in addition to its own P&T Civil Wing. Rs. 51.73 crore have been spent on renovation work of heritage buildings from FYs 2021-22 to 2024-25. However, during the Sitting of the Committee, the Department of Posts informed that only four heritage buildings out of the 49 could be restored and the Department is in dire need of funds for taking up restoration activities in the remaining heritage Postal buildings.

While pursuing their earnest efforts for arranging funds for restoration works of heritage Postal buildings, it has been observed by the Committee that the Ministry of Culture was approached by the Department of Posts for providing funds through the National Culture Fund (NCF) in 2024. However, NCF denied the request on the ground that no separate fund was available with them for upkeep of heritage buildings and advised that funds be arranged from corporate entities under their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Programs. Regrettably, no donor (corporate entity) came forward to fund the upkeep of heritage postal buildings. The Committee further take note that the Department has approached Public Sector Banks and Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs) directly for support through their CSR funds and accordingly received two responses viz one from National Hydroelectric Power Corporation (NHPC), a PSU under the Ministry of Power and

another from Oil India Limited, a PSU under Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas. While Oil India Limited has also been requested and conveyed the details of the project as well as engagement modalities, final response from both PSUs are awaited.

While recognizing the importance of preservation and conservation of heritage Postal buildings, the Committee understand that this being a specialized activity which is not only time consuming but also cost as well as labour intensive. It involves specialized technical assistance from multiple agencies such as Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), Central Public Works Department (CPWD), State Archaeological Departments and Indian National Trust for Arts and Cultural Heritage (INTACH) under the overall supervision of P&T Civil Wing. It is beyond doubt about the need for preservation and protection of our grand old heritage buildings of Postal Department. Well preserved heritage Postal buildings not only help revenue generation through numerous ways but also augur well for the brand image of India Post. Regular structural audit of all heritage buildings is the need of the hour to assess the quality and strength of such buildings so that timely repair and renovation of the same can be undertaken. Therefore, while appreciating the earnest efforts made by the Department to seek external help for funding the renovation and restoration activities, the Committee recommend the Department to prepare a detailed report about the quantum of restoration work required for each heritage building. The Department may pursue vigorously approach the PSUs for procuring funds under CSR head. Committee urge upon the Department to draw up a realistic timeline for completing the restoration and preservation works in each of the heritage Postal building. The Committee recommend the Department to seek help from the Ministry of Culture to pursue the common agenda on heritage

preservation and conservation so that costs can be shared so that neither entity is overburdened in the long run.

WELFARE COMPONENTS IN BUILDING DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION – OBLIGATION TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Installation of Rooftop Solar Power Packs & Construction of Rain Water Harvesting Structures

7. The Committee observe that the Department of Posts addresses environmental concerns through energy conservation and waste management. Installations of Solar Power Packs for use of renewable energy in Postal buildings, construction of Rain water Harvesting System for conservation of ground water in their land and maintaining afforestation in open areas etc. are appreciable steps taken by the Department of Posts. The Department also apprised the Committee that newly constructed buildings are being equipped with Solar Power Packs and Rain water harvesting facilities. Accordingly, as on 31st March, 2025, 452 Solar Power Packs and a total of 662 rainwater harvesting structures were constructed by the Department. While explaining about adherence to designated standards for Postal buildings, the Department stated that it follows relevant guidelines of the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE), Central Public Works Department (CPWD) and other Government bodies for Solar Power Pack installation works. Rain water harvesting systems in postal buildings are provided as per norms and approval of local body/Municipal Corporations.

The Committee observe that till financial year 2024-25, 378 Solar Power Packs have been installed in Postal buildings and accordingly the total energy produced was 5.3 million units resulting in Rs. 3.00 crore estimated savings on electricity bills per year and in some cases, additional electricity produced was shared with the local power grids. While narrating details about Solar Projects being undertaken by the Department, the representative shared that after

completing assessment of solar projects, it has prepared a list of buildings for installation of solar power packs. They have further conveyed that all tasks related to planning of major solar projects and identification of clear sites for such installations have been completed. The Committee note that after completion of preparations for installations of energy efficient fittings in Postal buildings, the Department has sought funds for the same. The Committee note with concern that while replying to the question about the need for regular annual maintenance of the 653 rainwater harvesting structures, the Department gave a partial reply that some of the rainwater harvesting structures were being maintained regularly by the respective Circles to ensure optimum harvesting of rainwater. Keeping in view the steps taken for installation of energy efficient fittings in Postal buildings, the Committee feel that the work of the Department does not end with mere construction of rainwater harvesting structures and installation of solar power packs as it requires regular maintenance and upkeep. The Committee are of the opinion that besides equipping all new and existing post offices with Solar Power Packs and Rainwater harvesting structures, the Department should come up with a workable plan for its annual maintenance and upkeep. Funds may be sought accordingly and the obligation towards sustainable development may be fulfilled effectively. The Committee would like to be apprised of the action taken and progress made on each of these areas.

Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan – Installation of Braille Signages and Ramps & Rails

8. The Committee observe that under the welfare component of Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan, the Department is focusing on promoting inclusivity and making postal infrastructure more accessible for differently-abled and elderly customers by installing facilities such as ramps, rails, low height lifts and Braille Signages as envisaged under the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016. The Committee

have been apprised by the Department that up to FY 2024-25, Braille Signages have been provided in 1256 Post Offices and Ramps & rails have been retrofitted in 1617 post offices.

The Department informed that in order to promote inclusivity in terms of facilities in Post Offices for the differently-abled, construction of rail and ramps are mandatory for all new buildings. Old as well as new buildings are being retrofitted with such facilities and Braille signages are being installed. While noting the efforts made by the Department of Posts in improving consumer friendly accessibility of Postal buildings and promoting inclusivity through modified infrastructure, the Committee urge upon the Department to fix a timeframe within which these objectives are aimed to be achieved. They may work out the additional budgetary requirements for construction of the above facilities particularly in old and in rented Postal buildings. The Committee would like to be apprised of the details related to budgetary allocations, Physical targets set and achieved and also other steps being taken towards fulfilling the said objectives under Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan.

Addressing Gender concerns in Postal Offices and new building constructions

9. The Committee observe that keeping in view a large number of female employees in the Department of Posts, there is a need to address gender-sensitive concerns and provide appropriate facilities such as separate ladies' toilets, feeding rooms for lactating mothers and crèches in existing as well as new Postal buildings. Further, during the Sitting, when information was sought about setting a timeline for total coverage of gender sensitive infrastructure in Postal Buildings, the Department of Posts apprised the Committee that these were priority areas and should be possible within the normal five-year plan period.

The Committee note that whereas data for the total coverage of ladies' toilets and feeding rooms in Departmental buildings was provided by the Department, no data was furnished regarding the number of crèches presently functional or those being proposed to be built in Departmental buildings in future. Circle-wise data regarding gender-sensitive infrastructure in Postal buildings, as provided by the Department, shows that as on 31st March, 2025, the Circle of Rajasthan had a total of 206 buildings where not even a single separate ladies' toilet was available. Similarly, 183 buildings in the Circle of Bihar and 156 buildings in the Circle of Gujarat remained devoid of the facility of separate ladies' toilets. Further, in the Jammu Kashmir and North East Circles, the provision of separate ladies' toilets was available only in 8 buildings respectively.

The Committee are disheartened to note that within the Circles of Punjab, Haryana and Karnataka there were absolutely no Postal buildings where feeding rooms were available for the use of lactating mothers among employees and customers alike. Furthermore, as on 31st March, 2025, there exist a total number of 1,804 Postal buildings across Circles with no facility for separate ladies' toilets and a total number of 2,368 buildings country-wide across Circles where there are no provisions for feeding rooms for lactating mothers. Dismayed with the present precarious status of gender-sensitive infrastructure in Postal buildings across the Country, the Committee recommend the Department to draw up accurate data showing latest Circle-wise position of gender-sensitive infrastructure in Postal buildings including ladies' toilets, feeding rooms and crèches while also ascertaining the budgetary support required for setting up the same. The Department may also provide a timeline to bridge the gap between demand and availability of gender-sensitive Postal infrastructure in all Postal buildings of the

Country. The Committee would like to be apprised of the details of action taken and progress made in this regard.

TOTAL ASSET BASE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF POSTS & MONETIZATION OF ASSETS

10. The Committee understand that the total asset base of the Department stands at 120.9 lakh square meters which amounts to about 0.57% of the assets held by the Railways and consists of 1,460 vacant plots amounting to 22 lakh square meters. The Committee also note that according to the Circle-wise data of Postal assets furnished by the Department, the Circle of Maharashtra stands with the highest amount of asset base of 12.85 lakh sq. meters followed by Karnataka at 12.79 lakh sq. meters and Gujarat with 11.37 lakh sq. meters. The Department of Posts has apprised the Committee that, so far, no exercise has been carried out for determining the market capitalization of Postal assets across the Country. So far as valuation and disposal of obsolete/old and dilapidated buildings and non-performing postal estates/buildings are concerned, the Department stated that Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) are being followed wherein when a building is proposed to be dismantled, a survey report is prepared and submitted for approval of the Competent Authority. Upon the sanction of such a survey report, a reserve price is determined and approved followed by an online invitation of bids through an open tender where the best offered bid is accepted by the Competent Authority as per provisions of Delegation of Financial Power.

Considering the total asset base held by the Department of Posts having huge potential for monetisation, the Committee are disappointed to note that so far, no exercise has been carried out for determining the market capitalization potential of Postal assets across the Country. Similarly, no information has been

furnished about initiation of any exercise for valuation and disposal of obsolete/old and dilapidated buildings/materials and non-performing postal estates/buildings. The Committee, therefore, earnestly recommend the Department to take up focused and time bound exercise for determining market capitalization of Postal assets; and for valuation of obsolete and non-performing Postal estates/materials across the Country. In this regard, the Department may also explore the feasibility of seeking the help of experts in the field for an efficient, time bound and scientific market-based assessment of Postal assets and evolve an effective monetisation strategy. The Committee would like to be apprised of the time frame defined for the exercise along with the details of action taken and outcome achieved in this regard.

11. The Committee observe that so as to ensure record-keeping and management of land records for monetization of assets, the Department has undertaken an exercise to obtain mutation records of postal estates and to assess the Floor Area Ratio (FAR). In order, to achieve financial viability through monetization of postal assets an 'Expression of Interest' (EOI) had been submitted in February, 2025, for hiring consultants to develop a monetization strategy for maximizing revenue potential through development / redevelopment of real estate postal assets. However, this EOI had failed due to inability of applicants to meet prescribed criteria and hence a Revised Expression of Interest (REOI) was floated by the Department in April, 2025 calling for interested participants to submit their EOI till 26th May, 2025. The Committee may be apprised of the outcome in this regard.

Further, the Committee note that while an exercise for obtaining mutation records for postal estates and assessing Floor Area Ratios (FAR) for the purpose of monetization has been undertaken, no timeframe has been set for conclusion of the same. The Committee firmly believe that monetization of real estate postal

assets is one of the most effective approaches towards solving the long-standing financial distress being faced by the Department of Posts. Therefore, while considering the efforts of the Department of Posts in the direction of hiring professional consultants for developing a monetization strategy to maximize revenue potential of real estate postal assets, the Committee recommend the Department to conduct a focused and time bound exercise for obtaining mutation records for postal estates, as early as possible, from respective authorities while also assessing Floor Area Ratios (FAR) for the purpose of monetization. The Committee would like to be apprised of the time frame defined and action taken in this regard. The final outcome about development of a monetization strategy by the Department of Posts for boosting its revenue generation to minimize the income and expenditure gap may be furnished at the earliest.

VACANT PLOTS OF LAND, POSTAL BUILDINGS AND ISSUES RELATED TO THEIR PROTECTION AND ENCROACHMENT

13. The Committee note that land records of 1,460 vacant plots of the Department of Posts are being maintained at Circle / Regional level. Further, according to the Circle-wise details of vacant plots submitted by the Department, the Committee note that Karnataka Circle holds the maximum number of vacant plots of land i.e. 308, followed by 140 vacant plots held by the Tamil Nadu Circle and 134 by the Kerala Circle, respectively. Conversely, the Circles of Chhattisgarh and Jammu Kashmir hold the least number of vacant plots, i.e. 5 each.

The Committee understand that even though the Department possesses digital address codes of vacant plots, no exercise for mapping of vacant plots has been undertaken by the Department till date. The Department submitted that in order to safeguard vacant plots it constructs boundary walls and small post

offices. The Department further stated that construction activity, however, is subject to availability of funds, benefit to cost ratio of the preferred post office, building, priority, public demand as taken up by public representatives, threat of encroachment, issues of accessibility, etc. Taking note of the fact that the Department not only holds 1460 vacant plots currently but is also in possession of its digital address codes, the Committee, call upon the Department to undertake GIS-based mapping and monitoring of these valuable plots and postal buildings in a time bound manner. Further, the Committee desire that after seeking inputs from respective Postal Circles, the Department also propose practical and sustainable solutions for safeguarding these vacant plots and buildings bearing in mind the geographical location, needs of the local population and financially viable option. Circle-wise deployment of sufficient staff may be ensured for regular inspections of vacant plots and postal buildings; field surveys; and checking and prevention of encroachment activities. Boundary walls, barbed wire fencing should be erected to ward off encroachments in Postal properties. The Committee would like to be apprised of Circle-wise details of the action taken and outcome achieved in this regard. Similarly, details of pending court cases on encroachment of Postal properties and its outcome may also be furnished to the Committee.

The Committee observe that disaster management provisions are a very essential part of preservation and protection of the huge assets of postal buildings across the Country. The Committee, therefore, urge upon the Department of Posts to take urgent necessary steps/measures to ensure regular Fire drills as well as Earthquake drills in its buildings periodically as per SOPs in this regard to avert any probable fire/earthquake disasters in the postal buildings thereby avoiding any loss to lives and properties.

13. The Committee observe that presently, out of the total number of 1,460 vacant plots of Postal land, 209 plots hold land area of a considerable size which is more than 2000 sq. meters. Further, presently the total number of encroached vacant land and buildings of the Department of Posts stands at 278, of which, dispute is sub-judice in 82 cases which are managed by hired lawyers and through participation in Lok Adalats. Regarding proactive measures taken to check illegal encroachments and unauthorized use of postal land/estates, the Department of Posts informed that apart from constructing boundary walls on vacant lands, it approaches concerned revenue authorities, public representatives and local administration while also resorting to judicial remedies available for eviction of encroachment. The Department also submitted that illegal encroachment is checked by Estate Officers nominated in each Postal Circle to deal with cases related to unauthorized occupation of departmental lands and buildings. While replying about the role of local administration in mitigating conflicts arising out of illegal encroachments, the Department has informed that the local administration is the custodian of land records and ensures proper land monitoring including maintaining accurate and accessible land records while also working as a law enforcing agency. Local bodies facilitate dispute resolution through mediation and community engagement and their intervention is sought for removing illegal encroachments.

The Committee also note that in order to prevent encroachments on vacant lands, the Department has been constructing boundary walls and postal buildings in a phased manner on its vacant plots thereby reducing expenditure on rent. Further, during the Sitting, the Committee were apprised of innovative ways being adopted by the Department to curtail encroachments which included collaborating with State Governments to invite for constructive usage of vacant plots. The

Department also informed that mapping of vacant plots was being contemplated to ascertain viability of plots and vacant plots were being considered for letting out to respective State Governments for undertaking activities such as rearing nurseries or horticultural produce, temporary constructions etc. The Committee note with concern that the Department failed to undertake mapping of its vacant plots as well as other plots during this digital era.

Taking cognizance of the efforts made by the Department towards curbing and removing illegal encroachments on vacant plots of Postal lands, the Committee feel that encroachments not only lead to excessive loss of limited valuable land resources but also obscure losses of potent revenue channels such as rented incomes. Therefore, taking a serious view of the situation, the Committee recommend the Department to prioritize checking and prevention of illegal encroachments of vacant plots with respect to their respective resolutions in terms of legal recourse; intervention from local representatives; mitigation through local administration and Police authorities; collaboration with State Governments for constructive usage of vacant lands; and cost effective construction of boundaries/barbed wire fencing and small buildings; and work towards targeted solutions to prevent encroachments on its vacant plots within a specified time span. Besides these, initiatives for creating public awareness, reviewing and updating property records ensuring accurate documentation and mapping of postal properties to prevent further encroachment may also be taken up with the concerned agency/Departments. The Committee desire to be apprised of the steps taken by the Department of Posts and outcomes achieved in this regard within six months of laying of this report in Parliament.

REVENUE GENERATION THROUGH COMMERCIAL UTILIZATION OF VACANT PLOTS OF LAND / BUILDINGS AND INCREASING ACCESSIBILITY OF POST OFFICES

14. The Committee are given to understand that the Department is working on renting out extra space in its buildings for earning extra revenue and is in the process of hiring a Consultant to aid and advise for development/redevelopment of real estate assets for revenue generation through measures such as using postal buildings as well as vacant plots of land as co-working spaces for entrepreneurs etc. The Committee also note the plans of the Department about using vacant plots and vast real estate for public value creation in partnership with State Governments for building State Infrastructure like PHCs, Schools, Horticulture hubs, nurseries etc. The Department of Posts, however, have intimated that no proposal has been received in this regard from any State Government so far. During the Sitting, the Committee were apprised that the Department was in the process of signing an MoU (Memorandum of Understanding) with the National Buildings Construction Corporation (NBCC) under the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) for the development of 22 vacant plots which have been found viable in Tier-I cities, and that a development plan for every individual plot would be shared.

While responding to a question about revenue generation from renting out or leasing surplus postal land or buildings, the Department informed that a leasing and licensing policy to lease out surplus space to earn extra revenue has been implemented with the head of the Postal Circles being the competent authority for renting / leasing of surplus spaces. So far as the due process followed in this respect, the Department submitted that after examination and certification of an identified space as surplus by the Head of the Postal Division, an Internal

Committee reviews and recommends whether the surplus space can be offered on a license basis while also proposing the minimum license fee based on prevailing market rates. Based on Internal Committee's recommendation, final allotment of the surplus space is done through a transparent Open Tendering process. The Department further informed that revenue generation was also augmented by effective service delivery through prompt redressal of grievances and concerns. The Department has also submitted that out of Rs. 479 crores allotted towards the Estates Management Scheme for the current Financial Year, it was left with only Rs. 123 crore which would be completely utilized during this Financial Year and thus the Department was in dire need of funds to carry out planned activities towards the objective of revenue generation. The Committee appreciate that the Department is striving towards revenue generation through steps such as partnering with State Governments for gainful utilization of vacant plots of land; attempts to hire consultants for advising on redevelopment of assets; developing viable vacant plots in Tier-I cities through partnering with the NBCC; and generating revenue through renting surplus spaces and qualitative service delivery. The Committee, however, feel that, the planning of the Department for augmenting revenue generation still remains at a nascent stage in paper only and hence a significant outcome / achievement is yet to be seen. Similarly, the Committee are surprised to note that the Department could not find consultants for advising on redevelopment of its assets. Therefore, the Committee would like to impress upon the Department to expedite processes through regular monitoring and follow up actions and set attainable goals with respect to each of these initiatives in the upcoming five-years of the Estates Management Scheme. The Committee also urge the Department to factor in these ideas in totality while drafting the PIB Memo for this Scheme for the next five years. The Committee would

like to be apprised of the steps taken and progress made with respect to achievement of set targets in this regard.

The Committee observe that the monetization of the heritage buildings/properties of the Department of Posts is a grey area which requires immediate drastic attention and concern. The Heritage buildings of the Department hold a great potential for monetization through proper publicity and creating a better public visibility and awareness. In order to generate revenue, the Department , while preserving the heritage buildings may also consider the feasibility of monetization of their heritage properties by initiating several cultural and merchandising activities like Digital Exhibitions, Guided tours, Light and Sound shows, promoting Films shootings and Photography shoots, leasing out heritage buildings for promoting and advertising various Government flagship programmes/schemes and for various socio-cultural events like holding philately exhibitions, art and crafts shows, paintings and music shows etc. Besides, the Committee urge upon the Department of Posts to make a provision for a separate budgetary head for Heritage Maintenance and ensure sufficient fund allocation for the same. The Committee would like to be apprised of the action taken and progress made in this regard.

15. The Committee note that viability-based rationalization and relocation of Post Offices along with improving their accessibility for general public are important aspects to consider in view of augmenting revenue generation of the Department of Posts. The Department has apprised the Committee about work being done to increase Postal network in rural areas and a resultant addition of 11,000 offices, while also working towards improving the viability of the Postal network in urban areas through the process of rationalization which entails merging of Post Offices based on its viability. With respect to mandate for presence

of Post Offices in rural areas, the Department of Posts informed that a rural Post Office is supposed to be present within 5 km distance from every village and that a Country-wide household survey is being conducted to assess the needs of citizens regarding Postal services. So far as problems being faced in relocating post offices are concerned, the Department informed about the difficulties in finding suitable buildings of the desired dimensions on the ground floor for running post offices and other postal offices at a fair rent.

Regarding steps taken to increase accessibility of post offices, the Department submitted that it is working towards increasing physical accessibility of post offices for the differently-abled and the elderly while also working towards increasing access in terms of marketability through efforts such as improving service delivery, building infrastructure, visibility through signages and improved branding etc. The Committee are of the view that revenue generation of the Department can be boosted through measures such as rationalization and relocation aimed at improving viability of the Postal network and increasing accessibility of Post Offices for consumers. While taking note of the efforts of the Department in these areas, the Committee would like the Department to fix a timeline and work on undertaking a Circle-wise study to ascertain the needs and viability of Post offices in rural as well as urban areas, improving physical accessibility through upgradation of Postal infrastructure with installations of ramps, rails, low-height lifts, wheelchairs, Braille signages etc., and improving marketability of Postal services through visibility, branding, efficient delivery, customer friendly approach, customer satisfaction etc. The Committee desire to be apprised of the action taken and progress made in these aspects. The Committee also desire to be apprised of the outcome of the Country-wide household survey

being conducted by the Department to assess the needs of citizens regarding Postal services.

[Narration Paras 3.35 to 3.40]

CURBING RENTAL EXPENDITURE & REDUCING DEPENDENCE ON HIRED / RENTED POSTAL BUILDINGS

16. The Committee observe that due to non-availability of land at the appropriate location and insufficiency of funds for construction of new buildings, many Post Offices and its other offices are housed in rented buildings. While answering about steps taken for systematically reducing dependency on rented buildings for running postal operations, the Department informed that a policy has been formulated for utilizing vacant plots of land for constructing small post office buildings through budgetary support and such buildings range in area from 50.37 sq. metres to 81.04 sq. metres with basic facilities like Counters, toilets, Ramps and rail but without staff quarters, inspection quarters etc. The Department submitted that every year 40 to 45 small posts offices are being constructed and post offices functioning from rented premises are being shifted there to reduce rental liability. On being asked about there being a fixed timeline for reducing usage of rented properties in a phased manner, the Department informed that since budgetary support to construct new post office buildings could be expected after extension of the Estates Management Scheme, the usage of rented properties was expected to be reduced over the next 5 years. Regarding post offices in rural areas the Department informed that some offices are running in Panchayat Bhawans or free spaces provided by the village. The Department also informed about written communications between the Minister of Communications and Chief Ministers of respective State Governments seeking Panchayat Bhawans and other available free spaces for the use of the Department. The Department also stated that Brach

Offices are housed in Panchayat Bhawans and other local buildings where space is available at a low cost.

While replying to a question about creating sustainable low cost infrastructure in rural areas, the Department informed that after the revision of guidelines of MPLADS (Members of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme) by Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation w.e.f. 01.04.2023, "*Post Offices and related utilities/ facilities*" has been included in the list of work permissible under MPLADS and therefore, in November, 2023 the Department has framed a guideline for availing funds under MPLADS for constructing post offices. Acknowledging the impediments faced by the Department in reducing dependence on rented premises, the Committee note with concern that the quantum of rental expenditure incurred by the Department from Financial Years 2020-21 to FY 2024-25 amounts to Rs. 976.29 crore which is more than double the amount of funds allocated towards the Estates Management Scheme during the five-year period (FYs 2021-22 to 2025-26) of its implementation, i.e. Rs. 479 crores. Therefore, taking a prudent view of the situation, the Committee recommend the Department to focus on preparing a Circle-wise data regarding rental expenditure during the last 5 financial years as well as availability of vacant plots within each Postal Circle. After performing a cost benefit analysis, the Department may make all out efforts towards construction of low-cost postal infrastructure wherever suitable, while simultaneously pursue with respective State Governments to provide space in Panchayat Bhawans and wherever possible, to provide space/vacant lands to the Department free of cost. Action taken and outcome achieved in this regard may be submitted to the Committee at the earliest.

MANAGEMENT OF POSTAL ESTATES HELD BY THE DEPARTMENT

17. The Committee observe that steps being taken for Real Estate Management in the Department of Posts include utilization of vacant land for construction of small post office buildings for reducing dependence on rented premises, preservation and conservation of heritage Postal infrastructure, construction of Postal buildings such as Post Offices, Staff quarters, efforts towards valuation of Postal assets for monetization and addressing problems of encroachment with the help of local authorities and courts. The Committee also note the involvement of other allied Government agencies such as CPWD, Local bodies, Municipal authorities, State Archaeological Departments, NBCC etc. in the management of estates / land, buildings and vacant plots of Postal lands. Regarding the role of technology in effective management of real estate properties, the Department has informed that it has geo-tagged its own buildings in Government Land Information System (GLIS Portal). The Department has also submitted that under its project on Digital Address Code, it has initiated the task of GIS mapping of every single location and this will not only help in mapping the vacant plots of postal lands but will also prove helpful in Disaster Management. Elaborating on disaster proofing of Postal infrastructure, the Department submitted that regular drills are being undertaken to aid efforts towards disaster management. The Committee feel that real estate management is a mixed bag of challenges and opportunities as it is plagued with multifarious issues, especially the financial crunch, and yet it holds immense potential for drastically improving the trajectory of growth for the Postal sector. Therefore, taking a holistic view of the situation, the Committee recommend the Department to explore the possibility of developing a 'Real Estate Management Information System' (RE-MIS) for effectively preserving, protecting and managing the most valuable Postal estates and also for ensuring that all activities related to

this aspect are listed and effectively monitored along with their individual outcomes in a time bound manner. The Committee would like to be apprised of the steps taken for the development of RE-MIS and the timelines envisaged for making it operational for the use of the Department.

New Delhi;
11 August, 2025
20 Sravana, 1947 (Saka)

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

List of Heritage Buildings of Department of Posts

S No.	Name of Building	Name of District	Name of Circle/State
1.	Patna GPO	Patna	Bihar
2.	Bhagalpur HO	Bhagalpur	
3.	PTC Darbhanga	Darbhanga	
4.	New Delhi GPO	New Delhi	Delhi
5.	Delhi GPO	Central Delhi	
6.	Ahmedabad GPO	Ahmedabad	Gujarat
7.	Ambedkar Chowk PO	Shimla	Himachal Pradesh
8.	Chhotta Shimla PO	Shimla	
9.	Kasauli PO	Solan	
10.	Mandi HO	Mandi	
11.	Shimla GPO	Shimla	
12.	Summer Hill Post Office	Shimla	
13.	Circle Office, Bangalore	Bengaluru	Karnataka
14.	Division Office, Bellary	Bellary	
15.	PTC, Mysuru	Mysuru	
16.	Circle Office, Trivandrum	Thiruvananthapuram	Kerala
17.	Kochi Head Post Office	Ernakulam	
18.	Thiruvananthapuram Fort Post Office	Thiruvananthapuram	
19.	Udayamperoor (Old) Post Office	Ernakulam	
20.	Laskar Head Post Office	Gwalior	Madhya Pradesh
21.	DAP, Nagpur	Nagpur	Maharashtra
22.	Mumbai GPO	Mumbai	
23.	Matheran PO	Raigarh	
24.	Nagpur GPO	Nagpur	
25.	Panji HPO	North Goa	
26.	Pune GPO	Pune	

27.	Solapur HPO	Solapur	
28.	Tlabung Post Office	Lunglei, Mizoram	North East
29.	Jharsuguda (Old) Head Post Office	Jharsuguda	Odisha
30.	Sambalpur Head Post Office	Sambalpur	
31.	Amritsar HO	Amritsar	Punjab
32.	Ajmer HO	Ajmer	Rajasthan
33.	Chennai GPO	Chennai	Tamil Nadu
34.	Nagapattinam HO	Nagapattinam	
35.	Philatelic Bureau, Anna Road HO	Chennai	
36.	Red Building, Chennai	Chennai	
37.	Udhagamandalam HO	Nilgiris	
38.	Agra HO	Agra	Uttar Pradesh
39.	Circle Office, Lucknow	Lucknow	
40.	Lucknow GPO	Lucknow	
41.	Prayagraj HO	Varanasi	
42.	Varanasi City PO	Varanasi	
43.	Varanasi HO	Varanasi	
44.	Alipore HO	Kolkata	West Bengal
45.	Behrampur HO	Murshidabad	
46.	Cooch Behar PO	Cooch Behar	
47.	Darjeeling HO	Darjeeling	
48.	Kolkata GPO	Kolkata	
49.	RLO Kolkata	Kolkata	

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

MINUTES OF THE EIGHTEENTH SITTING OF THE COMMITTEE

The Committee sat on Thursday, the 24th April, 2025 from 1100 hours to 1250 hours in Committee Room no. '2', EPHA, Block A, New Delhi.

PRESENT

Dr. Nishikant Dubey - Chairperson

MEMBERS

Lok Sabha

2. Shri Anil Baluni
3. Dr. Rabindra Narayan Behera
4. Shri Gurmeet Singh Meet Hayer
5. Shri S. Supongmeren Jamir
6. Shri Appalanaidu Kalisetti
7. Shri G. Kumar Naik
8. Dr. M.K. Vishnu Prasad
9. Ms. Kangna Ranaut
10. Shri Arun Kumar Sagar
11. Shri Devesh Shakya

Rajya Sabha

12. Shri Amar Pal Maurya
13. Dr. Sasmit Patra
14. Shri V. Vijayendra Prasad
15. Shri S. Niranjana Reddy
16. Shri Lahar Singh Siroya

SECRETARIAT

- | | | | |
|----|---------------------|---|------------------|
| 1. | Smt. A. Jyothirmayi | - | Director |
| 2. | Shri Amrith Kumar | - | Deputy Secretary |
| 3. | Shri Rajesh Mohan | - | Deputy Secretary |

LIST OF WITNESSES

DEPARTMENT OF POSTS (MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS)

Sl. No.	Name	Designation
	Ms. Vandita Kaul	Secretary
	Shri Jitendra Gupta	DG (Postal Services)
	Shri Partha S. Das	AS & FA
	Ms. Veena Ramakrishna Srinivas	Member (Infrastructure)
	Dr. Sachin Mittal	DDG (Corporate Planning)
	Shri Sushil Kumar Narnauli	Chief Engineer - I
	Shri Siddharth Buchchan	Director (Estates & MM)
	Dr. Saurabh M. Deshmukh	Director (Budget / LO)

(After the witnesses were called in)

2. At the outset, the Chairperson welcomed the Secretary, Department of Posts and other officials accompanying her to the Sitting of the Committee convened to examine the Subject 'Real Estates Management in the Department of Posts' relating to the Department of Posts (Ministry of Communications). Before the commencement of the Sitting, the Chairperson called upon all to observe two minutes' silence as a mark of respect to the victims of the terror attack that had taken place on 22nd April, 2025, at Pahalgam in Kashmir. Thereafter, the Chairperson took up for discussion the Scheme of the Department on Estates Management. He outlined the budgetary allocations, aims and objectives envisaged and physical and financial performance achieved under this Scheme so far. While raising issues regarding renovation of heritage postal buildings; steps being taken to adequately utilize vacant plots of land under the Department of Posts; encroachment of vacant plots; increasing rental expenditure and the need to improve quality, efficiency and accessibility of services being rendered by the Department, the Chairperson also sought information regarding difficulties being faced by the Department in providing services with sound business principles and prudent commercial practices aimed at attaining financial viability.

3. Subsequently, the representatives of the Department of Posts (DoP) made a power point presentation providing an overview of the spectrum of functions performed by the Department under the Scheme on Estates Management. The power point presentation, while highlighting the performance of the Department under the Estates Management Scheme till date, *inter-alia* included :

- i. Postal infrastructure including total number of Postal Circles; Post Offices; Departmental Post Offices; Head, Sub and Branch Post Offices; Rural and Urban Post Offices; total Departmental employees as well as total Gramin Dak Sewaks; total Departmental Post Offices functioning in departmental building and those in rented buildings and total number of vacant plots under the Department;
- ii. Estate Management Scheme including its duration, financial allocation and expenditure, objectives under the Scheme and components of the Scheme;

- iii. Detailed presentation on components of the Estate Management Scheme – construction and renovation of buildings; renovation of Postal Colonies; preservation of heritage buildings; installation of solar panels and rain water harvesting structures; rail, ramps and Braille signages; addressing gender concerns of employees and customers through the Scheme on Estates Management; improving look and feel of rented post offices;
- iv. Year-wise financial allocation and expenditure of the Scheme on Estates Management; and
- v. Work to be taken up during the current financial year.

4. The Secretary also gave an overview of the physical and financial performance of this Scheme of the Department through budgetary allocations and expenditure along with achievement of physical targets and also apprised the Committee about the plans of the Department regarding utilization of assets as well as work being done regarding vacant plots of land.

5. Thereafter, the Members sought clarifications on various issues which, *inter-alia*, included : (i) Shutting down or shifting of post offices and postal buildings; (ii) Steps taken and plans formulated for real estate management; (iii) Exploring the possibility of having a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model for managing estates; (iv) Using vacant plots and estates for public value creation such as partnering with State Governments to rent out vacant plots for building State infrastructure like PHCs, Schools, Horticulture hubs, nurseries etc.; (v) Steps taken to counter activities related to encroachment of vacant plots of lands during the last five years; (vi) Status of the 'Expression of Interest' (EOI) submitted by the Department for hiring Consultants to develop a monetization strategy; (vii) Timeline envisaged for retrofitting of all postal buildings with solar panels and rain water harvesting infrastructure; (viii) GIS based strategy for tracking & monitoring encroachments on vacant plots, lands and buildings; (ix) Bringing more clarity in SOPs regarding valuation and disposal of dilapidated assets using third party experts; (x) Single window clearance for requests regarding repair and construction works done by CPWD and Municipal bodies; (xi) Reducing rental expenditure of Postal buildings; (xii) Shifting rental Post Offices in rural areas from private spaces to Panchayat Bhawans; (xiii) Improving revenue generation by way of innovative measures; (xiv) Ensuring basic amenities such as seating arrangements, ceiling fans etc. in all Post Offices; (xv) Collaborating with the Ministry of Culture for upkeep and maintenance of heritage postal buildings; (xvi) Providing a single point of contact for elected representatives in their constituencies so as to enable speedy redressal of grievances and concerns; (xvii) Working towards reducing rental expenditure by seeking vacant lands, wherever possible, from the State Governments at no cost; and (xviii) Assessing the value of assets currently held by the Department of Posts.

6. The representatives of the Department of Posts responded to most of the queries raised by Chairperson as well as the Members. The Chairperson, then, directed that

written replies to points on which information was not readily available may be furnished to the Committee within ten days.

7. Thereafter, the Chairperson thanked the representatives of the Department for deposing before the Committee.

The Committee then adjourned.

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

MINUTES OF THE TWENTY- FIRST SITTING OF THE COMMITTEE

The Committee sat on Monday, the 11th August, 2025 from 1530 hours to 1550 hours in Committee Room No. 'B, Parliament House Annexe, New Delhi.

PRESENT

DR. NISHIKANT DUBEY- Chairperson

MEMBERS

Lok Sabha

2. Shri C.N. Annadurai
3. Shri Anup Sanjay Dhotre
4. Shri S. Supongmeren Jamir
5. Shri Appalanaidu Kalisetti
6. Smt. Poonamben Hematbhai Maadam
7. Shri G. Kumar Naik
8. Dr. M.K. Vishnu Prasad
9. Ms. Kangna Ranaut
10. Shri Ramasahayam Raghuram Reddy
11. Shri Arun Kumar Sagar
12. Shri Devesh Shakya

Rajya Sabha

13. Smt. Priyanka Chaturvedi
14. Shri Amar Pal Maurya
15. Dr. Sasmit Patra
16. Shri V. Vijayendra Prasad
17. Shri Kartikeya Sharma
18. Shri Lahar Singh Siroya

SECRETARIAT

- | | | | |
|----|---------------------|---|----------------------|
| 1. | Shri Y.M. Kandpal | - | Additional Secretary |
| 2. | Smt. A. Jyothirmayi | - | Director |
| 3. | Shri Amrish Kumar | - | Deputy Secretary |

2. At the outset, the Chairperson welcomed the Members to the Sitting of the Committee convened to consider and adopt one draft Subject Report relating to Ministry of Communications (Department of Posts) and four draft Action Taken Reports on Demands for Grants (2025-26) relating to the Ministries/Departments under the jurisdiction of the Committee.

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

*(i) XXXX XXXX XXXX XXXX XXXX

*(ii) XXXX XXXX XXXX XXXX XXXX

*(iii) XXXX XXXX XXXX XXXX XXXX

*(iv) XXXX XXXX XXXX XXXX XXXX

(v) Draft Report on the Subject 'Real Estate Management in the Department of Posts' relating to the Ministry of Communications (Department of Posts).

4. The Committee adopted the Reports without modifications.

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

The Committee, then, adjourned.

***Matter not related to this Report**