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Title : Need to set up a full-fledged passport office at Madurai, Tamil Nadu.

SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN (PALANI): Sir, every year from Tamil Nadu thousands of skilled and semi-skilled labourers go to various countries for employment and send huge amount of foreign exchange to the country. Likewise, businessmen have to visit various countries in connection with their business. Similarly, IT professionals and students are going abroad every year for the purpose of job and education. The people of Tamil Nadu particularly from southern districts are facing lot of difficulties in getting their passports due to lack of adequate number of passport offices.

There are only two passport offices functioning in the State – one at Chennai and the other at Tiruchirappalli. Tiruchy Passport Office is served with 16 districts with bulk volume in issue and renewal of passports whereas in the neighbouring State of Kerala, there are three passport offices to serve its 14 districts.

Though passport applications are submitted through District Collection Centres which are manned by State Government employees, they are not able to do their job effectively. In the year 2002, the number of applications received by Tiruchirapalli passport office was 1,94,282 out of which 1,02,413 were from southern districts. In the year 2003 the proportion was 2,52,210 and 1,25,428 and in the year 2004 it was 2,42,506 and 1,24,419 and in the year 2005 upto July it was 1,53,100 and 78,663. There is a constant increase for issue of passport over the years and there is much delay in the issue of passports. This delay may be avoided by upgrading the existing Passport Collection Centre at Madurai into a full-fledged passport office.

Hence, I urge upon the Central Government to take immediate necessary action for opening up of the Passport Office at Madurai.