

[English]

### Functioning of Telephone Exchanges

795. SHRI AMAR ROYPRADHAN :  
SHRIMATI GEETA MUKHERJEE :

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the telephone exchanges situated in North Bengal areas of West Bengal have not been functioning satisfactorily;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) the efforts being made by the Government to remove the deficiencies;

(d) the number of exchanges working with STD facilities out of total exchanges in West Bengal;

(e) whether any scheme to expand and modernise these telephone exchanges and to link more and more telephone exchanges with STD service is under consideration of the Government;

(f) if so, the details thereof; and

(g) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI KABINDRA PURKAYASTHA) : (a) and (b) The performance of telephone exchanges situated in North Bengal is generally satisfactory.

(c) Following steps are being taken by West Bengal Telecom. Circle for further improvement of the services :

(i) All exchanges have been converted into electronic exchanges.

(ii) Provision of STD connectivity to left out exchanges.

(iii) Replacement of fault prone underground cables by jelly filled cables.

(iv) Upgradation of the outdoor plant network by laying of cables in ducts.

(v) Introduction of modern tools and testing aids.

(vi) Training of operational staff in modern technology systems being inducted in the Deptt. of Telecom Network.

(vii) Opening of customer service centres in large number of places.

(d) The number of exchanges in West Bengal Telecom Circle provided with STD facilities is 556 out of 702 exchanges as on 31.03.1998.

(e) Yes Sir.

(f) (i) The West Bengal Telecom Circle has planned to provide STD facility to 100 more existing exchanges and to 70 new exchanges of 100 exchanges proposed to be set up during 1998-99.

(ii) 246 exchanges out of 727 exchanges as on 31.3.98 (This included 25 Nos. of exchanges of Sikkim also) are planned for capacity augmentation during the same period in West Bengal Telecom Circle subject to the availability of equipment and stores.

(g) Does not arise in view of (f) above.

### Review of Operation Black Board Programme

796. SHRI MADHAVRAO PATIL :  
SHRI SADASHIVRAO DADODA MANDLIK :  
SHRI ASHOK NAMDEORAO MOHOL :

Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have reviewed the operation Black Board Programme;

(b) if so, the details thereof for the last three years;

(c) whether the Government propose to bring about suitable restructuring of the programme; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and the targets fixed for this programme during the current years, State-wise?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT AND MINISTER OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI) : (a) and (b) Since its inception in 1987-88, the scheme of Operation Blackboard is being implemented through State Governments and UT Administration. Quarterly Progress Reports submitted by them are the basis for concurrent monitoring and review of the physical and financial progress of the scheme. Various aspects of Operation Blackboard were discussed and reviewed in Conference of Education Ministers and Education Secretaries of States in April, 1995 and August, 1996.

Four regional meetings were taken by Education Secretary with the officials of all States and UTs during 1997-98 in which the implementation of Operation Blackboard Scheme was reviewed in detail.

In the above mentioned reviews, it was noted with satisfaction that the scheme has contributed to conversion of about 1.50 lakh single teacher primary schools to dual teacher schools, construction of 1.77 lakh classrooms and provision of teaching learning material to 5.23 lakh primary schools. Issues on which

concern was expressed include delays in appointment of teachers; unsatisfactory pace of construction of school buildings and under-utilisation of teaching learning material by teachers.

(c) and (d) The Operation Blackboard Scheme was last revised in 1993-94 to extend it to upper primary schools and to provide for a third teacher and third class room in larger primary schools with more than 100 children. During the VIII Plan, the coverage of these components was limited to 10% and 30% of such schools respectively. A provision of Rs. 304 crores had been made in 1998-99 to fund these components of Expanded Operation Blackboard in uncovered schools.

[Translation]

#### Constitution of Judicial Commission for Judges

797. SHRI ANAND RATNA MAURYA : Will the Minister of LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether any proposal to constitute a high level judicial Commission to probe into the cases relating to misconduct of judges of Supreme Court of India and High Courts and to make recommendation to remove them is under consideration of Government;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the time by which a final decision is likely to be taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (DR. M. THAMBI DURAI) : (a) to (c) One of the items of the National Agenda for Governance is to set up a National Judicial Commission to make recommendations for Judicial appointments in the Supreme Court and the High Courts and draw up a code of ethics for the judiciary.

It is not possible to indicate the time by which the final decision in this regard would be taken.

[English]

#### Afforestation Programme

798. SHRI A. VENKATESH NAIK  
SHRI ASHOK NAMDEORAO MOHOL

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state :

(a) the details of targets fixed for afforestation and achievements made during each of the last three years, State-wise;

(b) the reasons for the shortfall, if any, in achieving the targets;

(c) the remedial steps being taken to achieve the targets; and

(d) the target fixed during 1998-99 for Karnataka?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABULAL MARANDI) : (a) The State-wise targets and achievements for afforestation in each of the last three years are given in the attached Statement.

(b) The shortfall in the achievements in each of the years for distribution of seedlings and the area brought under plantation is mainly because of lack of funds. Simultaneously, expenditure on wages for labour, which is a large component of afforestation work, has been rising.

(c) Efforts have been made to enhance the financial allocations for afforestation work in the various schemes of different Ministries in the Government of India and in States. State Governments have also been asked to ensure that all efforts are made to achieve targets using cost effective measures with peoples' participation.

(d) The targets fixed for Karnataka for 1998-99 are as under :

Seedlings Distribution	Area
(For planting on Private lands)	(Public lands including forest lands)
400 lakhs	68000 hectares.