

Opening of Telegraph and Post Offices in Maharashtra

*145. SHRI ASHOK ANAND RAO DESHMUKH: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) the target fixed for opening of Telegraph and Post Offices in Parvani, Manmad, Nanded and Aurangabad districts of Maharashtra during 1990-91;

(b) whether the target has been fully achieved and if not, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the number of Telegraph and Post Offices likely to be opened during 1991-92?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI P.V. RANGAYYA NAIDU: (a) During the year 1990-91, the following targets were fixed for opening of Post Offices:

District	Number of Post Offices
Parbhani	6
Nanded	14
Nasik District including Manmad	7
Aurangabad	9

Telegraph facility on Phonocom basis is progressively introduced in Post Offices where Long Distance Public Telephones are installed. During 1990-91, this facility was extended to 3 Post Offices in Aurangabad District.

(b) Yes. Sir.

(c) For the year 1991-92 the following targets have been fixed for opening Post Offices:

District	Number of Post Offices
Parbhani	4
Nanded	5
Nasik District including Manmad	4
Aurangabad	3

It has been planned to provide Telegraph services in 20 Post Offices in these Districts during 1991-92 at the rate of five in each district.

[Translation]

SHRI ASHOK ANANDRAO DESHMUKH: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the statement which has been laid on the table of the House shows that in 1990-91 a target was fixed for opening 26 post offices whereas it is only 16 for 1991-92. I would, therefore, like to know from the hon. Minister as to why the target for opening post offices has been lowered for the year 1992. I would like to submit here that in rural areas post offices are the only medium of communication. Sometimes the people receive marriage invitation after ten days. There is a need for opening more post offices and more facilities should be provided there. Why you have lowered the target?

[English]

SHRI P. V. RANGAYYA NAIDU: Mr. Speaker, Sir, for opening post offices, we have certain parameters, and if those parameters are satisfied, we open new post offices. If there is demand for opening more post offices, we will certainly consider it either for opening them in this year or in the next year.

[Translation]

SHRI ASHOK ANANDRAO DESHMUKH: Is population one of the parameters for opening new post offices? If it is so, then what should

be the population of a rural area for opening a post office or a telegraph office and similarly what should be the population of an Adivasi area in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI RAJESH PILOT):

I fully agree with the hon. Member that we should open more and more post offices and telegraph offices. But we have to bear in mind two things. One is that there should be a minimum traffic i.e. of at least 10 telegrams per day. If it is so we link it with the nearest telegraph office by providing a telephone through which telegrams are forwarded. The telegraph office is updated as the traffic i.e. the work load increases. Traffic is a must. If we go on opening new post offices or telegraph offices without caring for revenue I think our department will not be able to cope-up with the losses and we will not be able to provide additional facilities. When I took over the charge of this Ministry I had said that we would try our level best to provide this facility to every nook and corner of the country and bring it within the reach of masses. That is one of the reasons why we have reduced the average area of a post office from the existing twenty kilometres to only three kilometres so that no citizen has to tread more than three kilometres to have access to postal facility. Similarly, we have taken steps to improve telegraph facility. It will take sometime before the results are known.

SHRI VILASRAO NAGNATH-RAO GUNDEWAR: What are the arrangement for Speed Post in Mahathwada region? If Speed Post is available in all post offices, what is their number and where are they located? Marathwada Division has two districts viz., Parbhani and Nanded. How many new Post Offices will be opened there. The Postal system is very unsatisfactory there and it needs improvements. I would like to know

the time when we can expect these improvements?

SHRI RAJESH PILOT: The scope of the question has been enlarged. The hon. Member wants to know the improvements being made in telegraph facility. I admit that telegrams are received late. We are trying our level best and you must have observed that about four-five days back we launched the Remote Area Business Network and we are going to extend this facility to telegrams also.

SHRI VILASRAO NAGNATH-RAO GUNDEWAR: What about Speed Post facility?

SHRI RAJESH PILOT: We are making all possible efforts to link different stations through Speed Post.

[English]

SHRI UDAISINGHRAO GAIKWAD: Mr. Speaker, Sir, this question is confined to only four districts of Maharashtra. Even then I would like to ask some more information from the Hon'ble Minister about post offices. I had asked one question in the last Lok Sabha and the answer was given that all the panchayats would be provided with post offices. A supplementary was asked by me asking for clarification if one panchayat consisted of three to four villages, in the hilly track, whether they would also be considered. So, I would now like to know whether the Government is thinking on the same lines?

[Translation]

SHRI RAJESH PILOT: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the criteria for hilly areas and plains are different. We have relaxed the criteria for hilly areas. So far as giving an assurance during the last Lok Sabha is concerned, I think when we implement the scheme of having a post office within a radius of three kilometres all these difficulties would be removed.....(Interruptions)