

Production in SAIL

5458. SHRI RAVINDER KUMAR PANDEY :
SHRI DHIRENDRA AGARWAL :

Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Salem Steel Plant has taken steps to substantially increase its production and sales during the years 1996-97; and

(b) if so, the details in this regard ?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA) : (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. With the commissioning of the Hot Rolling Steckel Mill at Salem Steel Plant in November, 1995, production and sales are expected to increase in 1996-97.

The saleable steel production target during 1996-97 has been fixed at 80,000 T, envisaging a growth of 66.6% over actuals of 1995-96. Saleable steel production at Salem Steel Plant during April-August, 1996 has been 130% higher than the corresponding period last year. Sales during the same period have been higher by 232%.

[*Translation*]

Expansion of Postal and Telecom Services

5459. SHRI ASHOK ARGAL :
SHRI NAMDEO DIWATHE :
SHRIMATI BHAVNABEN DEVRAJ BHAI
CHIKHALIA :
SHRI ILIYAS AZAMI :

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government are aware that there is lack of telecom/post and telegraph facilities in the rural areas of the country;

(b) the number of villages without such facilities, State-wise, district-wise;

(c) the number of villages proposed to be provided such facilities during 1996-97 and 1997-98, State-wise, district-wise;

(d) the allocation made/utilised for the said facilities during 1996-97; and

(e) whether the Government have formulated any Plan for expansion/upgradation/improvement/modernisation of Telecom/Post and Telegraph ?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA) : (a) The Government is aware that there is scope to improve the Telecom Facilities in rural areas.

Postal : Out of a total network of 1,52,792 Post Offices in the country, 1,36,082 Post Offices are

functioning in the rural areas which constitutes 89% of total Post Offices in the country. Augmentation and improvement of postal facilities is a continuous process. Post Offices are opened progressively under Plan scheme subject to fulfilment of norms, availability of resources and allocation of targets.

(b) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

(c) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

(d) *Telecom* : Rs. 600 crores have been allocated as per the plan for Village Public Telephones for 1996-97.

Postal : An amount of Rs. 5 crores have been allocated for Postal development for 1996-97.

(e) *Telecom* : Yes, Sir. The Government have formulated a comprehensive plan for the expansion, upgradation of Telecom facilities and modernisation of overall networks by the induction of new technologies in Telephone Exchanges and Transmission systems. It is planned to cover all the villages with the Village Public Telephone (VPT).

Time bound plan for modernisation of Telegraph Services have been formulated for the entire country and the implementation has already started and is in an advanced state for completion. So far under the programme,

128-lines Stores and Forward Message Switching System (SFMS) (10 numbers)

64-lines SFMS Systems (12 numbers)

32-lines SFMS Systems (20 numbers) and a good number of 16-line Systems are already working at nodal centre. 9 more 32-lines systems are under supply and 1 is under installation. Apart from this, 1850 Electronic key Boards and 190 Electronic Key Board Concentrators to replace the age old morse system were also commissioned. In addition 2092 EKBs and 209 EKBCs are under supply & installation.

Postal : The Eighth Plan of the Department of Post being implemented through the successive Annual Plans includes schemes for expansion/upgradation/improvement/modernisation of Postal Services. These schemes include the following :-

(i) Expansion of Postal network by opening of Extra Departmental Branch Offices (EDBOs), Departmental Sub Offices (DSOs). An innovative scheme with lesser cost, Panchayat Sanchar Sewa Yojana has also been evolved for this purpose.

(ii) Upgradation of Technology through supply of multipurpose counter machines, computerisation of Savings Bank work and Savings Bank Control Organisation, PLI work, Track and Trace System for speed post, modernisation of materials