

being considered by the Government and a final decision in this regard has not yet been taken.

[Translation]

Telephone Towers in Madhya Pradesh

5472. SHRI SHIVRAJ SINGH : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether a large number of telephone towers in Madhya Pradesh are out of order for the last two years;

(b) if so, the number thereof and the reasons therefor, district-wise; and

(c) the remedial steps being taken/proposed to be taken to rectify these telephone towers ?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) In view of (a) above, question does not arise.

[English]

Consumer Protection Act

5473. PROF P.J. KURIEN : Will the Minister of CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state

(a) whether any lacunae in the Consumer Protection Act have come to the notice of the Government during its period of operation;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken to remove the lacunae ?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV) : (a) to (c) The Government reviews on regular basis the progress of the operation of the Consumer Protection Act and makes amendments as and when necessary for improving the functioning of the Act. On the recommendation of the Central Consumer Protection Council, Central Government had constituted a Working Group to suggest suitable amendments to the Consumer Protection Act, 1986 and the Rules framed thereunder. The Working Group has submitted its report suggesting certain amendments to the Act to enlarge its scope and to make it more effective and purposeful. As the recommendations pertain to various Ministries/Departments, discussions/consultations with them are in progress so as to finalise the amendments of the Consumer Protection Act, 1986.

Tourist Circuit in the Country

5474. SHRI P.S. GADHAVI :
SHRI VISHVESHWAR BHAGAT :

Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state :

(a) the details of tourist circuit at present in the country alongwith the Plan for creating more tourist circuits in the country, State/UT-wise;

(b) the amount allocated to Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat during 1996-97 for the development of these tourist circuits and whether any other tourist circuits has been created in these States;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) the amount to be provided to Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat out of this provision;

(e) whether the Government propose to extend the Indore-Ujjain-Maheshwar-Omkareshwar-Mandu circuit upto Ratlam; and

(f) if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRI SRIKANTA JENA) : (a) The Department of Tourism has identified 12 circuits and destinations for intensive and integrated development of Tourism in the country. These are :—

Travel Circuits

1. Kulu-Manali-Leh.
2. Gwalior-Shivpuri-Orchha-Khajuraho.
3. Bagdogra-Sikkim-Darjeeling-Kalimpong.
4. Bhubaneshwar-Puri-Konark.
5. Hyderabad-Nagarjunasagar-Tirupati.
6. Madras-Mamallapuram-Pondicherry.
7. Rishikesh-Narender Nagar-Gangotri-Badrinath.
8. Indore-Ujjain-Maheshwar-Omkareshwar-Mandu.
9. Jaisalmer-Jodhpur-Bikaner-Barmer.
10. Bangalore-Mysore-Hassan.
11. Sindhudurg-Vijayanagara.
12. Bhubaneshwar-Chandikole-Mohavinayak-Udaigiri-Lalitgiri-Ratnagiri-Kendrapara-Chandabali-Bhitar-Kanika-Akhanda-Bhadrak-Biraja-Khetra.

Destinations

1. Lakshadweep Islands.
2. Andaman Islands.
3. Manali (Solang-Nalah).
4. Bekal Beach.
5. Muttukadu Beach.
6. Kangra (Pong Dam).

(b) to (d) The Department of Tourism every year prioritises tourism project in consultation with the State Government for providing financial assistance. For the year 1996-97 five projects for the development of tourism in Gujarat have been prioritised, however, the State Government of Madhya Pradesh has not identified any project for Central Financial Assistance. The projects identified in Gujarat for financial assistance during 1996-97 are :

- (1) Flood lighting of Dwarkadhish Temple at Dwarka;
- (2) Re-furbishment of monuments, Sun temple at Modhera;
- (3) Re-furbishment of monument-Step well at Modhera;
- (4) Public Convenience at Ambaji; and (5) Flood lighting of Lakhota Place, Jamnagar.

(e) and (f) No Sir. Does not arise.

[Translation]

Kurmi Caste

5475. SHRI THOMAS HANSDA : Will the Minister of WELFARE be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that the people belonging to Kurmi caste of Jharkhand area of Bihar State were under the Scheduled Tribe category prior to 1993;

(b) if so, whether it is also a fact that the style of living, traditions and worship of the Kurmis are similar to that of the other tribes of the above area;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether there has been no social, economic and educational development of the Kurmi caste there;

(e) if so, the reasons therefor;

(f) whether the Union Government propose to include the Kurmis of Jharkhand area in the list of Scheduled Tribes;

(g) if so, the time by which they are likely to be included in the ST List; and

(h) if not, the reasons therefor ?

THE MINISTER OF WELFARE (SHRI BALWANT SINGH RAMOOWALIA) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) to (e) The information is being collected.

(f) to (h) The matter is under the consideration of the Government.

[English]

PCOs in Madhya Pradesh

5476. SHRI VISHVESHWAR BHAGAT : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) the number of PCOs functioning in Madhya Pradesh;

(b) the number of PCOs have been closed during each of the last two years; and

(c) the reasons for their closure ?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA) : (a) The total number of local and STD PCOs working in Madhya Pradesh as on 31st July, 1996 is 18185.

(b) Number of PCOs closed during 1994-95 and 1995-96 are 213 and 303 respectively.

(c) 221 PCOs were closed on request from franchisees, 293 due to non-payment and 2 PCOs were closed due to misuse.

Marathi Channel

5477. SHRI MOHAN RAWALE : Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state :

(a) whether the State Government of Maharashtra has submitted a proposal to the Union Government to start a Marathi channel 'MAI MARATHI' on Doordarshan;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the reaction of the Government thereto; and

(d) the time by which it is likely to be started ?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM) : (a) and (b) Chief Minister, Maharashtra wrote on 6th April, 1995 requesting Doordarshan to start "Mai Marathi Channel".

(c) and (d) It is the endeavour of Doordarshan to accommodate, as far as possible, the demands of all the language groups. At present, regional programmes in Marathi are telecast by Doordarshan on DD-I from 1630 to 2030 hours (Monday to Friday) and 1630 to 1930 hours on Sundays. In addition, Marathi programmes are also telecast on regional language satellite channel (DD-10), which can be seen in any part of the country through an appropriate dish antenna.

Allotment of STD/PCO Booths to Women

5478. SHRI DILEEP SANGHANI : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) the norms for allotment of STD/PCO booths;

(b) the number of STD/PCO booth allotted in Gujarat during each of the last three years, district-wise;

(c) the number out of these allotted to women;

(d) whether there is no provision for allotment of such booths to women; and

(e) if so, the reasons therefor and whether the Government propose to include women in the norms/criteria ?