

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken/proposed to be taken for the implementation of above proposals?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c). Do not arise.

[Translation]

#### Branch Post Offices in Bihar

221. SHRI LALIT ORAON : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government propose to open branch post offices in rural areas of Bihar;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether any target have been fixed in this regard;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the steps taken by the Government to provide postal facilities to rural population?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA) : (a) and (b). Yes, Sir. It is the policy of the Government to open Branch Post Offices in rural areas progressively under the Annual Plans subject to norm based justification and availability of resources;

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) There is a target to open 10 Post Offices in rural areas of Bihar during the year 1996-97.

(e) The Government have so far sanctioned 176 Extra-Departmental Branch Post Offices in Bihar under the 8th Five Year Plan (i.e. 1992-93 to 1996-97).

#### Refund and Compensation to Consumers

222. SHRIMATI SHEELA GAUTAM :  
SHRI RAMESHWAR PATIDAR :

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of occasions during the last two years, till 31.10.96 when consumer courts directed the Railways to refund the money of consumers and to compensate them;

(b) the loss of revenue suffered by the railways as a result thereof;

(c) whether the reasons for the above losses have been analysed;

(d) if so, the outcome thereof; and

(e) the steps being taken to bring down the number of such cases?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) 235.

(b) Rs. 3,51,787/-.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) and (e). Deficiency in services such as non-functioning of Aircondition and mechanical failure-of coach, system failure of computer-reservation, lack of response by front line staff and the delay on the part of staff working in the refund offices. Guidelines have been issued from time to time to ensure public awareness for timely preferment of their claims for refund to the concerned authority with requisite documents. Concerned staff are educated through seminars and various meetings to give customer satisfactory service.

#### Sponsored Programmes on Doordarshan

223. SHRIMATI CHHABILA ARVIND NETAM : Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state :

(a) the time limit within which sponsored programmes are sanctioned by Doordarshan;

(b) whether any discrimination is being make in sanctioning the programmes; and

(c) if not, the reasons for providing benefit to a few producers only?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM) : (a) The approval of sponsored programmes depends upon the programme requirement of Doordarshan and the completion of all formalities by the applicant. Doordarshan normally takes 90 days to approve the programme after all the formalities are completed by the applicant.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

#### Liberalisation/Rehabilitation of Bonded Labourers

224. SHRI N.J. RATHWA :  
SHRI JAI PRAKASH (HARDOI) :  
SHRI VIJAY GOEL :

Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state :

(a) the estimated number of bonded labourers, particularly in the tribal, backward and hilly areas, State-wise;

(b) whether any action plan has been formulated/proposed to be formulated for their liberalisation and rehabilitation;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) the number of bonded labourers liberated/rehabilitated so far, State-wise, and particularly in Gujarat;

(e) whether any assistance has been provided for the purpose during the last three years to each State and particularly to Gujarat;

(f) if so, the details thereof and particularly in regard to the tribal, backward and hilly areas:

(g) whether any Committee has been constituted for identification, liberation and rehabilitation of bonded labourers; and

(h) if so, the details thereof and achievements made so far by the said Committee?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (SHRI M. ARUNACHALAM) : (a) to (d). The State Governments have reported identification of 2,51,424 bonded labourers out of which 2,30,915 bonded labourers have been rehabilitated under Centrally Sponsored Scheme for rehabilitation of bonded labour which envisage rehabilitation assistance upto the ceiling limit of Rs. 10,000/- per bonded labour. The expenditure is equally shared by Centre and State Governments on (50:50) basis. The State-wise details of bonded labourers identified/released and rehabilitated are given in the enclosed Statement

(e) and (f) The details of funds released during last three years to the States are given below. No funds were sought by the State Government of Gujarat during the last three years. The area-wise details are not maintained

(Rs. in lakhs)

State	Amount released under Centrally Sponsored Scheme for rehabilitation of Bonded Labour		
	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96
Andhra Pradesh	101.41	31.25	79.37
Bihar	6.18	6.61	-
Karnataka	171.50	42.66	2.84
Kerala	6.03	-	-
Orissa	5.75	0.39	1.63
Rajasthan	1.69	3.28	5.70
Tamil Nadu	1.59	1.12	-
Total	294.15	85.31	89.54

(g) No, Sir.

(h) Question does not arise.

#### STATEMENT

##### State-wise Details of Bonded Labourers

Name of the State	Number of Bonded Labourers	
	Identified & Released	Rehabilitated
1	2	3
Andhra Pradesh	36,289	29,553
Bihar	12,986	12,270

1	2	3
Karnataka	62,708	55,231
Madhya Pradesh	12,804	11,897
Orissa	49,971	46,808
Rajasthan	7,478	6,217
Tamil Nadu	38,886	39,375
Maharashtra	1,382	1,300
Uttar Pradesh	27,489	27,469
Kerala	823	710
Haryana	544	21
Gujarat	64	64
Total	2,51,424	2,30,915

[English]

#### Decrease in the Arrivals of Foreign Tourists

225. SHRI BIR SINGH MAHATO : Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state :

(a) whether there has been any decrease in the number of foreign tourists during the first six months of 1996-97 in comparison with the same period during 1995-96;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the extent of loss of foreign exchange suffered due to such decrease?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRI SRIKANTA JENA) : (a) there was no decline in the foreign tourist arrivals during the first six months of 1996-97 as compared to the same period of 1995-96. The comparative figures are as given below.

Period	Tourist Arrivals		
	1995	1996	% Change
April-Sept.	879381	929944	5.7

(b) and (c). Does not arise.

#### Privatisation of Various Jobs

226. SHRI ANNASAHIB M.K. PATIL : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have identified areas in Telecommunication and postal service for involvement of private sector in carrying out various jobs operations;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the steps taken/proposed by the Government for modernisation of postal services and aggressive marketing in profitable areas for earning more revenues; and