

REVIEW ON WORKING OF
CALCUTTA TELEPHONES

MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS

DEPARTMENT OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS

HUNDRED AND EIGHTY-THIRD
REPORT



LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI

HUNDRED AND EIGHTY-THIRD REPORT

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE (1989-90)

(EIGHTH LOK SABHA)

REVIEW ON WORKING OF CALCUTTA TELEPHONES

[Action Taken on the 100th Report (8th Lok Sabha)]

MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS
(DEPARTMENT OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS)



*Presented to Lok Sabha on 11 August, 1989
Laid in Rajya Sabha on 11 August, 1989*

LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI

August, 1989/Sravana, 1911 (Saka)

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PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE
(1989-90)

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* Elected w.e.f. 3-8-1989 *vice* Sarvashri Bh. Vijay kumar Raju, S Jaipal Reddy and Saifuddin Chowdhary resigned from the Committee w.e.f. 10-5-1989, 12-5-1989 and 5-6-1989 respectively.

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17. Shri Jagesh Desai
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19. Shri P. N. Sukul
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22. Vacant£

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2. Shri K. K. Sharma—*Director*
3. Shri N. M. Jain—*Under Secretary*

**Due to resignation by Shri Parvathaneni Upendra from membership of the Committee w.e.f. 12.5.89.

£ Due to resignation by Sarvashri Jaswant Singh and Virendra Verma from membership of the Committee. w.e.f. 15-5-1989.

INTRODUCTION

1, the Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee as authorised by the Committee do present on their behalf this Hundred and Eighty-Third Report on action taken by Government on the recommendations of the Public Accounts Committee contained in their Hundredth Report (Eighth Lok Sabha) on 'Review of the Working of Calcutta Telephones'.

2. In the Hundredth Report the Committee had taken note of the long waiting list of 35,629 Registrants for new telephone connections in Calcutta as on 1-1-1987 and of the fact that perspective plan for the year 2000 envisaged provision of telephone connections practically on demand which would require expansion of telephone connections in the country from 32 lakhs at present to 2 crores by the year 2000 and an investment of the order of Rs. 45,000 to Rs. 50,000 crores upto the year 2000. The Committee had recommended that if the target was to be achieved, it would be necessary to have a reasonable commitment of funds to establish the necessary indigenous production of the required equipment cables, etc. The DOT in their Action Taken Note have stated that in the mid-term appraisal of the VII Plan, the Department had explained that year to year commitment of funds causes sub-optimal utilisation of funds and an investment of Rs. 50,000 crores upto the year 2000 at 1984 price level was necessary for developmental activities of the DOT. The Department have accordingly requested the Planning Commission to agree to this in principle so that advance action could be taken and that the Planning Commission have agreed to examine this request favourably and that the matter is being pursued with the Commission. The Committee have, therefore, recommended that the matter should be pursued vigorously with the Planning Commission to obtain a definite commitment for allocation of adequate funds or to agree at least in principle to meet demand for necessary developmental activities of the DOT.

3. In their earlier report the Committee had expressed its concern on the cases of theft and damages to equipment and recommended that adequate steps should be taken to see that loss to Government property is scrupulously avoided. The DOT in their action taken note stated that a number of steps have been taken to prevent loss to Government properties such as regular inspection and vigilance of theft prone areas with the assistance of police. In this report, the Committee have observed that the steps that have been taken to prevent loss to Government properties consist of only standard routine steps that are expected to be taken everywhere to prevent thefts and losses to Government properties and that the circumstances under which these measures

have failed to yield results in containing thefts, if not totally avoiding the same, have not been spelt out. The Committee felt that either the instructions were not strictly observed or special steps were not taken to provide extra vigil in the case of Calcutta telephones to cope with the peculiar situation prevailing there. The Committee have, therefore, reiterated their earlier recommendation and have desired that the Government should take adequate steps to ensure that loss to Government property is scrupulously avoided.

4. The Committee in their earlier Report had urged the Government to amend the rules authorised *suo motu* refund of rent to subscribers in case the Telephones remain out of order continuously for a week and more. In their Action Taken Note the Department of Telecommunication have stated that a circular has been issued to the Heads of Circles to grant rebate in rental if the telephone/telex leased lines remain out of order for 15 days or more. The Committee in this Report have observed that so far no action appears to have been taken on their recommendation to authorise *suo motu* refund of rent to subscribers if their telephones remain out of order continuously for a week and more. The Committee have therefore, reiterated their earlier recommendation for grant of refund in case a telephone remains out of order for a week or more.

5. The Committee considered and adopted this Report at their sitting held on 9 August, 1989. Minutes of the sitting form Part II of the Report.

6. For facility of reference and convenience the recommendations and conclusions of the Committee have been printed in thick type in the body of the Report and have also been reproduced in a consolidated form in the Appendix to the Report.

7. The Committee place on record their appreciation of the assistance rendered to them in matter by the office of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India.

NEW DELHI,
August 11, 1989

Sravana 20, 1911 (Saka)

P. KOLANDAIVELU,
Chairman
Public Accounts Committee.

REPORT

CHAPTER I

This Report of the Committee deals with the action taken by Government on the Committee's observations and recommendations contained in their Hundredth Report on 'Working of Calcutta Telephones'.

2. The Committee's Report contained 34 recommendations and observations. Action Taken Notes have been received from the Government in respect of all the observations and recommendations. These have broadly been divided into four categories as shown in Appendix I.

3. The Committee will now deal with action taken by Government on some of their recommendations and observations.

Need for a perspective plan to expand telephone facilities (Para Nos. 2.30 and 4.40 Sl. Nos. 5 & 31)

4. The Committee in their earlier Report (Paras 2.30 and 4.40) had expressed its concern on the cases of theft and damages to equipment and had recommended that adequate steps should be taken to ensure that loss to Government property is scrupulously avoided. The Committee also took note of the long waiting list of 35,629 registrants for new telephone connections as on 1-1-1987 and also of the fact that perspective plan for the year 2000 envisaged provision of telephone connections practically on demand. The Committee had recommended that if this target should be achieved, it would be necessary to have a reasonable commitment for the required funds to establish the necessary indigenous production of the required equipment, cables etc. In regard to the proposed expansion of telephone connections in the country from 32 lakhs at present to 2 crores by the year 2000, as envisaged in the perspective plan, the Committee had observed that the expansion of this magnitude would mean stepping up the rate of growth from 7-8 per cent exponential to about 15-16 per cent per annum exponential and would necessitate investment of about Rs. 45,000 to Rs. 50,000 crores upto the year 2000. While it might be possible to generate fifty per cent of this investment internally, the remaining fifty per cent, the Committee were informed, will have to be mobilised from public. In this context, the Committee had desired that it would be necessary to have a reasonable commitment of required funds to establish, indigenous production facilities of required equipment, cables etc.

5. The Department of Telecommunications have in their Action Taken Notes, stated that the following steps have been taken to prevent loss to Government properties :

- (i) All the areas prone to cable thefts are regularly inspected by the External Maintenance staff.
- (ii) Cabinets and pillars have been locked both internally and externally in order to ensure breaking open these cabinets and pillars become difficult.
- (iii) Close liaison is maintained with West Bengal Police and Calcutta police at various levels. The problem has also been brought to the notice of the State Government.
- (iv) Police Authorities were approached and they intensified patrolling in certain theft-prone areas. Special police patrollings were also arranged for sometime on Saturdays and Sundays in BBD Bag and Maidan areas where few people are seen during the holidays.
- (v) Police authorities are intensifying drive against Receivers of Stolen Telephone properties.
- (vi) There has been a down-ward trend in the frequency of theft during the last three years.
- (vii) Suitable steps have been taken to prevent damages to equipments during loading and un-loading operations as well as during installation.

6. In regard to the perspective plan for 2000, the Department of Telecommunications have stated that in the mid-term appraisal of the VII Plan, the DOT have put forth that year to year commitment of funds caused sub-optimal utilisation of funds and an investment of Rs. 50,000 crores upto 2000 AD at 1984 price level was necessary for developmental activities of the DOT. The Department have also stated that the Planning Commission was requested to agree to this in principle so that advance action could be taken. It was further stated that the Planning Commission has agreed to examine this request favourably and that the matter is being further pursued.

7. As regards the steps that have been taken to prevent loss to Government properties the Committee note from the measures reported that they consist of only the standard routine steps that are expected to be taken everywhere to prevent theft and loss to Government properties. The Committee note in this connection that the circumstances under which these measures have failed to yield results in containing thefts, if not totally

avoiding the same, has not been spelt out. Evidently the Committee feel that either the instructions are not strictly observed or no special steps have been taken to provide extra vigil in the case of Calcutta Telephones to cope with the peculiar situation prevailing there. The Committee, therefore, reiterate their earlier recommendation and urge the Government to take adequate steps to ensure that loss to Government property which also results in avoidable inconvenience to telephone users is scrupulously avoided.

8. In regard to the clearance of the long waiting list and achievement of the targets programmed in the prospective plan for 2000, the Committee would like the matter to be pursued vigorously with the Planning Commission to obtain a definite commitment for allocation of adequate funds or to agree at least in principle to meet necessary developmental activities of the DOT and they would like to be apprised of the latest developments in this regard.

Measures to improve service demand satisfaction (Para 3.52, S. No. 13)

9. In their earlier Report (Para 3.52) the Committee had expressed their dissatisfaction with the working of Calcutta Telephones for poor service demand satisfaction of 2.2 per cent in 1984-85 which was lowest among all the metropolitan cities of India and had desired that urgent steps be taken to improve this dismal state of affairs.

10. In their action taken note the Department of Telecommunications have detailed a number of steps taken by them to improve the position of telephone connections quickly after work orders are released and also effecting the shifts quickly. These *inter alia* include a special drive launched to execute the old work orders. On account of this special drive, it was expected that backlog of earlier orders would be completed by 31 March, 1988. The Planning Section has also been asked to update the cable records to help assess the additional requirement of cable pairs.

11. The Committee note that Department of Telecommunication have initiated some steps for improving the positioning of telephone connections quickly, after work orders are released and also effecting the shifts quickly. They would like to be apprised of the progress made in that direction as a result of these steps and other measures taken to step up the service demand satisfaction rate.

Special Rebate (Para 3.56, Sl. No. 17)

12. The Committee were earlier informed that Department of Telecommunications had issued an order on experimental basis to allow rebate

in case a telephone in Calcutta remains out of order for 15 days or more. The Secretary Telecommunication had further informed the Committee that they were even considering to reduce it to a week and it required amendment of the India Telegraph Rules. In view of the inefficient working of the Calcutta Telephones, the Committee in their earlier Report (Para 3.56) had urged the Government to amend the rules authorising *suo moto* refund of rent to subscribers in case the Telephones remain out of order continuously for a week and more and had desired to be apprised of the further developments in this regard.

13. In their Action Taken Note the Department of Telecommunication have stated that a circular has been issued to the Heads of circles to grant rebate in rental if the telephone/telex leased lines remain out of order for 15 days or more. It is also stated that the rebate will be granted by the Heads of Circles. The Department of Telecommunication have also furnished a copy of the circular issued by them on 13 April 1987 in this regard.

14 The Committee are distressed to note that so far no action appears to have been taken on their recommendation that rules should be amended to authorise *suo moto* refund of rent to subscribers if their telephones remain out of order continuously for a week and more. The instruction issued by the Department on 13 April, 1987 are those which were applied in the case of Calcutta Telephone much earlier and this fact was taken note of by the Committee in their earlier Report. The Committee therefore, reiterate their earlier recommendation for grant of refund in case a telephone remains out of order for a week or more and expect an early action.

CHAPTER II

RECOMMENDATIONS AND OBSERVATIONS WHICH HAVE BEEN ACCEPTED AND NOTED BY THE GOVERNMENT

Action taken note on para 7.26 of the recommendation of 100th report of PAC (VIII Lok Sabha) on para 21 of C&AG of India P&T report 1984-85

Recommendation of P.A.C. para 2.26

The Committee find that the Calcutta Telephones had an equipped capacity of 2.01 lakh telephone lines as on 1 April, 1980 and the Department targetted a further addition of 0.41 lakh line during 1980-85 against which only 32,100 lines could be installed showing an overall shortfall of 22 per cent in achieving the target.

(S. No. 1)

Action taken by the Department

To avoid short-fall in achieving the installation targets advance action is taken to ensure that all the stores required for the various projects are received in time. Periodical co-ordination meetings are held to review the progress of the various projects. As a consequence during the subsequent years substantial improvement has been made in achieving the targets as given below:

Year	Target programme for installing the equipments	Achievements
1985-86	16,700 lines	16,700 lines
1986-87	33,600 ..	33,600 ..
1987-88	10,800 ..	8,300 .. (commissioned up to the end of Feb. 88)

(Deptt. of Telecom. V.D. No. 27-12/86-B dated 13-4-1988)

Action taken note on para 2.27 of the recommendation of 100th report of PAC (VIII Lok Sabha) on para 21 of the C&AG of India, J&T report 1984-85

Recommendation of P.A.C.

2.27. Explaining the reasons for this huge shortfall in achieving the targets, the Department of Telecommunications stated that "equipment and cables could not become available in time. To some extent this has been inherent in the system of planning adopted where establishment of indigenous production of equipment and cables etc., is dependent on the allocation from the Department of Telecommunications in each successive Five Year Plan. Besides, there were other reasons like general demoralisation of staff in Calcutta. In one specific case commissioning of a 3000 lines exchange was delayed due to damages to equipment in transit and consequent time taken on obtaining replacement of equipment."

(S. No. 2, Para 2.27)

Action taken by the Department

Allocations from Deptt. of Telecommunications to M/s. ITI HCL etc., for indigenous production of equipments and cables has been considerably enhanced, in the plan subsequent to the Five Year Plan referred i.e. in the 7th Five Year Plan. For achieving improvement in supply of equipments and cables and reduce delivery spread, so as to avoid any shortfall against the target, greater co-ordination between the Department and manufacturers of equipments and cables is carried out through periodical meetings. Effective monitoring of implementation of the project at various stages, such as approval of EFC memo, acquisition of land, construction of building, procurement and installation of equipments, construction of outdoor plants and commissioning of exchanges so as to eliminate avoidable time has between various activities are being followed. However, occasional difficulties in getting supply of particular items, out of many, which are to be integrated into complex system of Telephone exchange, may arise in view of problems faced by the suppliers, due to frequent power failure, occasional trade union problems beyond their control, problems of quality in regard to raw materials, acute shortages of selected items etc. A part of gap in requirement of equipments and cable is also filled through import funded by foreign loans and aids.

As regards commissioning of additional lines, the co-ordination between various wings of the Department and the manufacturers of equip-

ment has been improved. This can be seen from the performance during 1985-86, 1986-87 and 1987-88, details of which are given below:

Year	Target for commissioning.	Achievement
1985-86	16,700 lines	Completed.
1986-87	33,600 lines	Completed.
1987-88	10,800 lines	8,300 lines have already been commissioned. Balance of 2,500 lines are under installation, and will be completed before March 1988

(Deptt. of Telecom. U.O. No. 27-17/86-B dated 13-4-1988)

Recommendation of PAC para 2.28

The Department of Telecommunications also stated that the cable requirements and availability indicate that there have been persistent shortages and, in a situation where the requirements are continuously expanding, the only way to ensure that there are no shortages will be to establish adequate indigenous production in the light of long term perspective plan rather than on the basis of actual allocations in each Five Years Plan.

(S. No. 3, para 2.28)

Action taken by the Department

The Government has taken steps to establish cable factories in the private sector apart from the ones working in the public sector. Expansion of the existing public sector factories has also been taken up. It is hoped with these steps the long term targets will be met fully during the next Five-Year Plan.

U.O. No. RRII/2(d) 2517/Vol. V|2355 dated 5-2-88.

(Deptt. of Telecom. U.O. No. 27-17|86-B dated 13-4-1988)

Revised Action taken note on para 2.29 of the recommendation of the 100th Report of PAC (VIII Lok Sabha) on para 21 of C&AG of India P&T report 1984-85

Recommendation of PAC para 2.29

The shortfall of 22 per cent in providing new telephone lines only indicates that the project planning and implementation machinery remains as weak as before. There is no logic behind laying down the schedule which cannot be scrupulously adhered to. The Committee also felt that if the Department had monitored the implementation of the project closely, identified areas of slippage and had taken timely corrective measures the targets could have been achieved. The Secretary, Department of Telecommunications stated during evidence that "during the Sixth Plan period, the slippage in our overall target was about 30 per cent or something like that. It was also brought out that there were other reasons like general demoralisation of staff in Calcutta for non-achieving of the targets. The committee cannot but view with concern this disquieting situation and would urge the Government to take urgent and effective steps to revamp the administrative machinery, by motivating staff by taking appropriate steps and ensuring deterrent action against defaulting officials.

(Sl. No. 4 of App-2 of 100th report 1986-87)

Action taken by the Department

The performance is continuously monitored. The results are discussed during periodical meetings with the officers highlighting the areas requiring additional attention. Meetings held at various levels of officers with an approach to introduce management by objectives are yielding some results. To sort out impediments in efficient working, the staff have been encouraged to form quality circles and discuss during the meetings various aspects that could lead to added efficiency. New connection targets during the current year have been kept up.

The periodicity of the various review meetings is as follows:—

- (a) Management meeting held by the G.M. with the Addl. G.Ms and the Headquarters DGMs-weekly.
- (b) The MIS meeting held by the G.M. with the Addl. G.Ms. Area Managers and DGMs fortnightly.
- (c) Quality Circle meeting held by the Gr. A and Gr. B officers with their staff. . . . monthly.

In addition to the above, meetings as and when required are held by the General Manager with the Divl. Engineers, and Assistant Engineers.

In order to revamp the administrative machinery so that the short-fall in new connections does not occur, during the meetings the upto date position of disposal of work orders is reviewed, the various items of stores necessary for the works as well as the other activities like laying of cables diversion, re-distribution of man power etc. are discussed in detail and decision are taken without delay.

The new connection achievements are as follows:

Year	Target	Gross Achievement	Net Achievement
1986-87	6,000	8,860	5,756
1987-88	8,000	8,902	6,356
(upto Feb '88)			

It is further clarified and added that during 1986-87 33,600 lines were installed out of which 30,000 were for replacing the life expired strowger exchanges which were scrapped subsequently. So, only 3600 lines were added and the remaining were provided from the residual capacity of the scrapped exchanges.

(Deptt. of Telecom. U.O. No. 27-17/86-B dated 1-3-1989)

Recommendation of PAC para 2.31

In view of the dismal state of affairs of Calcutta Telephone and the fact that the performance of Calcutta Telephones has been the lowest in giving new connections among the metropolitan cities, the Committee feel that it is imperative to have an integrated perspective plan for overall improvement on the existing lines and installation of new lines by providing concentration of resources and production, modernisation and indigenisation of equipment. The whole effort should be planned with

care and executed within a time frame systematically. The Committee will like to be apprised of developments in this regards.

(S. No. 6)

Action taken by the Department

A perspective plan for Calcutta called, 'Project Calcutta' had been drawn up by Calcutta Telephones to improve the service in Calcutta. Most of the items of this project have been included in the proposed 6000 crores (1984 prices) plan of DOT for 1985—90 for which formal clearance from the Planning Commission has not been received so far.

Briefly the Project Calcutta includes the following plans to improve the working of Calcutta Telephone System:

- Installation of 1,17,500 exchange lines. This will replace 64,800 lines completing 25 years as on 1-10-85 and another 32,900 lines completing service between 20 and 25 years.
- Installation of reliable media like Microwave, PCM to provide 50,000 additional junctions in the network.
- Construction of 60 Kms of cable ducts.
- Replacement of 1,00,000 instruments.
- Total overall requirement of funds on this account is Rs. 246.9 crores.

In addition to increase the availability of telephones to the public 60,500 additional lines (all electronic exchanges) have been allotted during the years 1985-86 to 1989-90. Against these proposals, the achievements upto Dec. 1987 are as under:

The Telecom Board has already approved the replacement of 63,900 lines consisting of Cent. I(35) 9,900 lines, Circus (44) 9,900, Alipore (45) 9,000, Russa-I (46) 9,900, Kalighat (47) 10,000, Baghbazar (55) 9,900, and Dum Dum (57) 4,500 lines. The allotments of electronic equipment against the above have been made.

15,000 lines of E-10B electronic exchange is under installation at Kalighat which will replace 10,000 lines of existing 47 and an additional 5000 lines meant for giving new connections.

29,000 junctions in digital microwave and PCM systems have been added to the network. Projects for the remaining additional junctions mainly with PCM system and optical fibre systems have been prepared. PCM equipment is awaited from imports and indigenous suppliers. The optical fibre project which is aided by the World Bank is in the final stages of approval and placement of orders.

14.8 kms. of cable ducts have been constructed.

20,000 old telephone instruments have been replaced.

(Deptt. of Telecom. U.O. No. 27-17/86-B dated 13-4-1988)

Recommendation of PAC para 2.32

The Committee would like to point out that the demand on date indicating that there was awaiting list of 35629 as on 1-1-87 may not be a realistic assessment. This is another area where demand is generated by supplies. While considering the future expansion facilities the Government should take into account constraints like inefficient service, abnormal delay in getting new connection and corruption etc. due to which people may be reluctant to register for new connections. Thus improvement and efficiency in service is bound to generate more demand for new lines.

(S. No. 7)

Action taken by the Department

Noted by the Department.

(Deptt. of Telecom. U.O. No. 27-17/86-B dated 13-4-1988)

Recommendation of PAC para 3.48 & 3.49

The Committee are pained to find that while on the one hand the waiting list for new connections had been getting longer each year on the other hand the spare unutilised capacity had also been increasing. This led to loss of potential revenue. The Department has stated that due to the shortage of cables and other associated material, there was under utilisation of capacity. This leads to the inevitable conclusion that planning and monitoring of the scheme was faulty and tardy. The Committee would urge the Government to see that there are shortages in the execution of work and stores requirement are planned in advance so that work orders are executed efficiently within the prescribed time schedule resulting in optimum utilisation of capacity.

3.49. The Committee, however, note that as on 31-5-86, 2,05,386 telephones were working as against the installed capacity of 2,39,900. The utilisation, thus, works out to 85 per cent.

(S. Nos. 9 and 10)

Action taken by the Department

The capacity utilisation has increased to 86.81 per cent which is comparable with the average capacity utilisation of 87.24 per cent in the Metro-Districts as on 31-3-87. The total equipped capacity and working connections are 2,42,500 and 2,10,508 respectively as on 31-3-87. The unutilised capacity has decreased by 1.31 per cent during 86-87. Efforts are in hand to improve utilisation further.

(Deptt. of Telecom. U.O. No. 27-17|86-B dated 13-4-1988)

Recommendation of PAC

The Committee also find that the percentage of fulfilment of service demands for providing new telephone connections dwindled from 63.8 per cent to nil in 1981-82 and to 2.2 per cent in 1984-85. The Department of Telecommunications have stated that "the basic norm for providing a new telephone connection, once an advice note is issued, is 15 days. The percentage of telephone connections that could be provided with this norm in Calcutta came down steadily." This, according to the Department, occurred due to rather steep increase in damages to the cables and consequential difficulties in maintaining the records of spare pairs available. Deficiencies in providing cabinets and pillars had not been attended to. The Department of Telecommunications have admitted that "there has been a planning deficiency. . . . A lesson has been learnt and it is the intention to ensure all steps necessary for quality and reliability of service".

(S. No. 11, Para 3.50)

Action taken by the Department

To guard against cable damages a coordination committee comprising members for all utility services like PWD, Water Supply, Electricity Department, Metro Rlys etc., has been formed.

Cabinets and pillars are being added in the Cable Network to provide flexibility and making spares pairs available.

The No. of Cabinets & Pillars as on 31-3-87	=	593
Total No. of Cabinets & Pillars as on 31-3-87	=	1403
Added during the period	=	805

(Deptt. of Telecom. U.O. No. 27-17|86-B dated 13-4-1988)

Recommendation of PAC para 3.51

The Committee desire that the planning and monitoring process should be refined so that the prescribed norm of 15 days for providing a new telephone connection is scrupulously adhered to.

(S. No. 12)

Action taken by the Department

The following steps have been taken to re-define the planning and monitoring process in order to implement the norms for providing new connections:

- (i) The progress of all planning and development activities including releasing of new connections is being reviewed by the General Manager during the fortnightly meetings with all the Area Managers.
- (ii) A special drive has been launched to execute the old work orders and it is expected that all the backlog of earlier orders will be completed by 31-3-88.
- (iii) Simultaneously the Planning Organisation is asked to take up the analysis of pending demands for new connections as well as the demand forecast for the next 9 years in order to plan cable laying.
- (iv) The Planning section has also been asked to up-date the cable records to help assess the additional requirement of cable pairs.
- (v) Ducting and cable pressurisation and the use of jelly filled cables is being undertaken to prevent cable breakdowns in the new networks.
- (vi) Cabinets and pillars are being introduced in the sections of the old cable network for increasing the flexibility.
- (vii) Extensive pre-monsoon precautions are being implemented to avoid large scale breakdowns during the monsoon.

(Deptt. of Telecom. U.O. No. 27-17/86-B dated 13-4-1988)

Recommendation of PAC para 3.54

The Department of Telecommunications stated that, "the number of complaints and faults are not unduly large considering the inadequacies of the external plant of the Calcutta Telephones. It is, however, true that rectification of faults takes long time". The Department have since taken steps to bring down the number of complaints. As a result of these steps the number of complaints has come down from 44.6/100 stations in 1981-82 to 37.6/100 stations in 1985-86 and faults have also come down from 26.5/100 stations in 1981-82 to 20.1/100 stations in 1985-86 and the duration of faults have come down from 67.4 hrs. in 1981-82 to 33.9 hrs. in 1985-86.

(S. No. 15)

Action taken by the Department

The Deptt. confirms this statement.

This has been vetted by Director of Audit, P&T, Delhi vide their U.O. No. RRII/2(d) 2517/Vol. V/2355 dated 5-2-88.

(Deptt. of Telecom U.O. No. 27-17/86-B dated 13-4-88)

Recommendation of PAC para 3.55

The Committee note that as on 25-2-87, on an average, 40 per cent of faults get cleared within a day and 75 per cent are cleared within 7 days. More than one week pending faults have also been brought down from 8000 three months ago to about 700 now". A special programme has been mounted to significantly "bring down the duration of faults. Special parties are pressed into service to see that long pending faults are removed on priority. There is also significant improvement in the morale of the staff and it is hoped that this will be maintained. One of the reasons given for unsatisfactory functioning of telephones and a large number of complaint in Calcutta as compared to other Metropolitan cities is the difference in External Plant due to narrow road surface, damages to cable old cable network, lack of cabinets and pillars etc. The Committee urge, the Government to look into these problems with due promptitude and take effective remedial steps to plug these loopholes. The Committee would be interested so know further developments in this regard.

(S. No. 16)

Action taken by the Department

To reduce damages to Telephone cables a high level coordination committee has already been formed taking representatives from different public utility concerns and holding of regular meetings to discuss and avoid difficulties in this regard.

Also, to reduce theft cases of Telephone cables and associate equipments, regular meetings are arranged with the police Authority in the level of D.I.G. and CTD.

Programme has also been made to install more cabinets and pillars. It is also proposed to lay the local cables in ducts.

The programme for installing Cabinets & Pillars:

(A) Year	No. of cabinets & Pillars planned
1987-88	265
1988-89	250
1989-90	235

(B) Construction of Duct routes :

The total duct routes as on 31-3-87=62.32 km. During the subsequent years the following programme has been taken up :

Year	Length
1987-88	13 km.
1988-89	13 km
1989-90	12 km

(C) As on 31-3-87 the cables laid on ducts were 28,000 CKM.

The programme for the next 3 years is as follows:

Year	Cables in ducts
1987-88	16,340 Km
1988-89	17,500 ..
1989-90	17,500 ..

(Deptt. of Telecom. U.O. No. 27-17/86-B dated 13-4-1988)

Recommendation of PAC para 3.57

Another disquieting feature noticed by the committee is the high rate of ineffective Trunk Calls. During the five year period ending 1985, the Department lost revenue of Rs. 5.85 crores. Even "in 1985-86 a group

target for effective Trunk calls for the Metropolitan Districts was 67.9, but for Calcutta it was 57.0. The actual achievement in Calcutta was still less—53.7". The ineffective Trunk Call not only results in loss of potential revenue but also causes nagging hardship to the public and discourage booking of more calls. The situation needs immediate attention and close monitoring measures in improving Trunk Call facilities to avoid loss of potential revenue to the exchange. The committee have also been informed that an incentive scheme has been introduced in July 1986 to reduce the number of ineffective Trunk Calls. While welcoming this step, the committee feel that it is essential to keep a close watch over the performance of Trunk call operators and all cases of procrastination should be dealt with firmly.

Action taken by the Department

Trunk Efficiency

Close watch is being kept and monitoring is done in respect of the performance of operators and action is taken to remedy the low out-turn. The effective trunk calls in recent months are as follows:

May '87.	. . .	—56.7%	
June '87.	. . .	—57.6%	The position has since shown some improvement due to sustained effort and constant monitoring.
July '87	. . .	—61.6%	

This has been vetted by Director of Audit, P&T, Delhi vide their U.O. No. 'RRII/2(d) 2517/Vol. V/2355 dated 5-2-88.

(Deptt. of Telecom. U.O. No. 27-17/86-B dated 13-4-1986)

Recommendation of PAC para 3.59

The Committee note that a crash programme of upgrading the performance of the existing Trunk Automatic Exchanges has been launched and it is proposed to install only digital Electronic Trunk Automatic Exchanges in future. The Committee hope that concerted efforts would be made to improve the percentage of effective STD calls and the Government would closely monitor the progress in the implementation of these schemes.

(S. No. 20)

Action taken by the Department

Concerted efforts are being made which have been shown significant improvement in STD throughout the country recently.

A technoeconomic study has been initiated to examine whether premature replacement of Penta Conta TAX's will not be more beneficial both from point of quality of service and revenue earning.

In case of Calcutta it has been decided to replace the existing Penta Conta Trunk Automatic Exchange by Digital Trunk Automatic Exchange during 1988-89.

The following measures have been taken and continued or improvement of call completion rate:

- Microprocessor based traffic recorders have been installed at MUX centres in Eastern Region for online monitoring of the performance and identifying killer trunks for speedy rectification.
- For improved junction availability, the outage of junctions is monitored and remedial action taken wherever necessary to put the faulty ccts into service.
- Service quality tests are conducted to assess the quality of service being imparted to the subscribers for long distance calls.
- A watch is kept on the adequacy of ccts and augmentation has been ordered from time to time in case of SPC TAX Calcutta.

(Deptt. of Telecom. U.O. No. 27-17/86-B dated 13-4-1988)

Recommendation of PAC para 3.63

While the Committee realise that it may "not be possible to completely eliminate the spurt" in meters, malfunctioning of equipment in the Exchange needs to be checked at regular intervals so that spurts in meters are avoided which would obviate loss of revenue due to low-metering, wrong punching, etc. Substantial reduction, if not total elimination of the wrong billing will improve the credibility of the Telephone Department.

(S. No. 24)

Action taken by the Department

Check of subscribers' meters is carried out at regular intervals with a view to minimise any wrong billing due to malfunctioning of the meters and associated equipment. To reconcile the excess billing cases and to observe spurt cases to avoid subs. annoyance and loss of revenue, use of Multi Line observation equipment has been envisaged. The objective of use of this equipment is:

- to preempt excess billing cases due to spurts.
- to keep records of STD calls particulars.

(Deptt. of Telecom. U.O. No 27-17/86-B dated 13-4-1988)

Recommendation of PAC para/ 4.44 to 4.46

In regard to the Penta Conta crossbar exchanges manufactured by a foreign firm of Belgium, which were added to the network, as per decision taken in 1962, the Committee find that their performance was found to be extremely poor and the percentage of call failure continued to be high even after their upgradation. The Department of Telecommunications have stated that the upgradation of the cross-bar exchanges mainly took care of the contact protection and minor circuit exchanges. The absence of air conditioning due to power shedding has had deleterious effect on their performance. As stated by the Department "candidly speaking, the selection of Panta Conta cross-bar system had been a mistake. Conceptually, the system was the most modern at the time it was selected. However, the system had not been fully field proven and, eventually, it proved to have certain weakness".

In this connection, the Committee note that "to guard against a similar error, it is now being insisted that by new technology adopted is fully proven before its large scale introduction in the network" and "in retrospect it is seen that there had been an error of judgement in placing too much store on attractive conceptual features against field proveness criteria".

The Committee hope that the Government would exercise due care and closely analyse all relevant factors before going in for new equipment so that mistakes of this nature are not repeated in future.

(S. Nos. 26, 27 and 28)

Action taken by the Department

To guard against similar errors it is now being insisted that any new technology is fully field proven before its large-scale introduction into the network.

(Deptt. of Telecom. U.O. No. 27-17/86-B dated 17-4-1988)

Recommendation of PAC

The Committee note that the Department of Telecommunications is contemplating a multi dimensional approach to boost the efficiency of the Calcutta Telephones. The main thrust towards improvement in telephone services is by way of introduction of modern technologies in both switching equipment and external plant. Parallel action is also being taken to make the monitoring of system performance more effective and meaningful through improved

management techniques and use of computers. Computerisation of various services/activities like Directory Enquiry, commercial records, billing, cable records, inventory control, etc. are at various stages of implementation.

(S. No. 29)

Action taken by the Department

The various improvement plans envisaged in Project Calcutta are being monitored by a high level committee and the progress of implementation is being reviewed in its meetings. The computerisation of various services, to improve management techniques, are at various stages of implementation.

(Deptt. of Telecom. U.O. No. 27-17/86-B dated 17-4-1988)

Recommendation of PAC

In addition to the above mentioned steps to give Calcutta the necessary inputs of modern equipment and technologies, special efforts are also being made to improve the morale of the staff. Selected staff is being posted to Calcutta. Frequent meetings are being held by senior officers from the directorate with the officers and staff in Calcutta and they are being encouraged to improve the performance; and their efforts are being watched and whenever they achieve success, suitable appreciation is given.

(S. No. 30)

Action taken by the Department

To give necessary inputs of modern equipment and technologies, a high level committee has been formed which is holding frequent meetings and reviewing the status of progress of supply and installation of equipment and stores to various modernisation schemes.

(Deptt. of Telecom. U.O. No. 27—17/86-B dated 17-6-88)

Recommendation of PAC

This is the first time that a full review of the Calcutta Telephones has been done. Earlier, performance of a telephone exchange of the Calcutta Telephones came to be reported upon by the Comptroller and Auditor General of India and examined by the Public Accounts Committee. The committee had also made their recommendations earlier in their 153rd and 229th reports (7th Lok Sabha). The recommendations made by them in their earlier reports were not implemented. There

has been a further deterioration in the performance of the Calcutta Telephones. This matter must, therefore, be taken up seriously by the Government.

(S. No. 54)

Action taken by the Department

The observation of the committee has been noted.*

(Deptt. of Telcom. U.O. No. 27—17/86-B dated 17-4-1988)

CHAPTER III

RECOMMENDATIONS AND OBSERVATIONS WHICH THE COMMITTEE DO NOT DESIRE TO PURSUE IN VIEW OF THE REPLIES RECEIVED FROM THE GOVERNMENT

Recommendation of PAC para 3.47

As per Audit Paragraph, even out of the installed capacity there was a shortfall in providing new connection to subscribers as per departmental standards, resulting in potential loss of Rs. 24.76 crores during the 5 years ending March, 1985. The under-utilisation has been attributed mainly to insufficiency of external network, difficulty in getting road cutting permission etc.

(S. No. 8)

Action taken by the Department

To overcome the difficulty in getting road cutting permission etc. public Utility Coordination Board has been formed in Calcutta Telephone to ensure close coordination and cooperation among various utility organisations.

Action is being taken to improve utilisation of the installed capacity for providing new connections by ensuring close interaction among Planning/Installation and Operation Wings in the Telephone District.

Laying of cable, construction of ducts, upgradation of external plants etc. are proposed to overcome insufficiency of external plant network.

(Deptt. of Telecom. U.O. No. 27—17/86-B dated 17-4-1988)

Recommendation of PAC para 3.53

The Audit para points out that in the past few years (1980—85) the number of telephones having complaints/faults has been unduly large, beyond the permissible limits. On an average 1,20,604 telephones were having complaints per month and 67,749 remained faulty per month. Even the duration of the faults has also been in excess of the prescribed limits of the Department, ranging from 129 per cent to 338 per cent during 1980-81 to 1984-85. It was the highest amongst the metropolitan cities.

(S. No. 14)

Action taken by the Department

Due to sustained effort and constant monitoring, the complaints and faults positions have since been improved which may be seen from the table shown below:

	Target for CTD for 1986-87	Actual 1986-87 performance 1985-86	
Complaints/100 stations	38.5	36.0	37.6
Faults/100 stations	22.0	19.5	20.1
Average duration/fault (in hours)	34 hrs.	39 hrs	23.9 hrs

So far as the permissible limit of the average duration per fault is concerned it may be noted that the no. of cable damages and cable thefts in Calcutta are many times more than those of other Metro Districts. The road surface in Calcutta is only 6 per cent as against about 25 per cent in Delhi and about 15 per cent in Bombay. As a result, all utility services with each other for existence in the limited space in the footpaths along the roads. Any digging activity by any of the utility services involves a high degree of risk to the telephone cables. Also the repair of any damage takes much longer time because of the constraints of space above ground as well as below the ground level.

The following short-term and long-term solutions to minimise the problem due to digging by other agencies causing damages to our cables and consequently reduce the incidence of faults are being adopted.

- (A) high level co-ordination committee has been formed taking representatives from different public utility concerns. Regular meetings are held to discuss and take suitable precautions to prevent damages to the cables.
- (B) To reduce theft of cables, regular meetings are arranged with the police authorities at the level of DIG and the CID.
- (C) New Cables are being laid in ducts specially built to house the telephone cables. This will avoid damages to the cables due to digging.

The following action has been taken to reduce the telephone complaints, faults and the duration of faults:

- (i) Fault prone telephone instruments are being phased out rapidly by new instruments.
- (ii) D.Ps are being dressed and locked to avoid unauthorised handling and consequent faults.
- (iii) Fault prone subscribers' house wiring is steadily getting replaced.
- (iv) Old and poor drop wires are being replaced.
- (v) Open wire lines subjected to frequent faults are replaced by underground cables.
- (vi) In the distribution network jelly filled cables are introduced extensively.
- (vii) Dry core cables are being pressurised.
- (viii) Extensive pre-monsoon precautions are being implemented.
- (ix) Fault control is steadily getting computerised.
- (x) Incentive scheme is introduced for quick disposal of faults.
- (xi) Locking and welding of cabinets and pillars has been introduced to prevent faults arising out of theft of cable termination boxes.
- (xii) Old stelpeth cables are being replaced.

The progress of above measures is being regularly reviewed. A comparison of the performance indicators shows that complaint per 100 stations has reduced from 38.2 to 26.2 in Dec. 87, from what it was in December, 1986. The corresponding figures of faults per 100 stations are 18.9 and 16.5.

(Deptt. of Telecom. U.O. No. 27-17/86-B dated 17-4-1988)

Recommendation of PAC para 3.58

The committee are also concerned at the high percentage of failure of STD calls, which is regrettably the highest amongst the metropolitan cities. It was an alarmingly high percentage of 91.6 in 1984-85. This high percentage of failure is symptomatic of the dismal state of affairs

of Calcutta Telephones. All out effort needs to be made to improve the transmission media, the intervening Trunk Automatic Exchanges and the distant network.

(S.No. 19)

Action taken by the Department

With the introduction of Electronic Trunk Automatic Exchange and closer attention to maintenance of transmission media. The STD performance is showing continuous improvement.

STD Failure %

April '87	. . .	60.8%
May '87.	. . .	45.6%
June '87.	. . .	51.4%
July '87	. . .	44.4%
Aug. '87	. . .	63.8%
Sept. 87	. . .	68.2%
Oct '87	58.67%
Nov. '87	58.3%
Dec. '87.	. . .	55.6%

(Deptt. of Telecom, U.O. No. 27-17/86-B dated 13-4-1988)

Recommendation of PAC and para 3.60 & 3.61

3.60 The committee find that the average earnings per Direct Exchange Line per month (Local ~~H~~ STD + Trunk Revenue) were far below the fixed targets and continued to be the lowest amongst the metropolitan telephone districts during the four years 1981-82 to 1984-85, resulting in shortfall of revenue of Rs. 35.04 crores. Among other reasons, for this shortfall in revenue, the Department have attributed this to "long duration interruption in service. Unsatisfactory performance of Calcutta Telephones network and the high call failure rates, naturally, discourage traffic. "The revenue earned in Calcutta Telephones has remained the "lowest compared to other metro districts because of lower business, trade and industrial activity. The percentage of subscribers making only the free

allowance calls has been the highest for several decades among the metro and major cities. In Calcutta about 66 per cent of the subscribers make local and STD calls within the free call limits, compared to 25 per cent only in other metropolitan cities”.

3.61 As stated by the Department themselves, the targets per DEL “will require to be re-examined and revised taking into account the situation”, and “measures for upgradation of switching system out of external plant are being taken”. The committee would like to be apprised in due course of the results of these measures. In this connection the committee note that the revenue per DEL has shown improvement from 1982-83 onwards (being: 1982-83 275, 1983-84 271, 1984-85 301, 1985-86 313).

(S. Nos. 21 and 22)

Action taken by the Department

The average revenue per DET in Calcutta Telephone District has been the lowest compared to other Metropolitan Telephone District. It has however been improving from 1982-83 onwards. While fixing the targets for per DEL revenue during 1987-88, the performance during the previous year, and the possible impact of the tariff revision have been taken into account and appropriate target has been fixed. For the year 1986-87, the actual average monthly revenue per DEL was Rs. 313.50 as against the target of Rs. 295.00. The result of measures taken to improve the switching system and external plant are showing visible improvement in per DEL revenue.

Recommendation of PAC para 3.62

The Committee are not happy at the high incidence of wrong billing of the telephone charges. The percentage of such wrong billing varied between 10.52 and 12.98 during the years 1980—84. These wrong billings occurred mainly due to spurt in metres, incorrect meter readings and wrong punching by the data processing section. The Calcutta Telephones have been paying rebate to the consumers on account of spurt in metres and sums of Rs. 13.35 lakhs 6.73 lakhs and Rs. 11.64 lakhs were paid, respectively, in the years 1983-84, 1984-85 and 1985-86.

(100th Report of PAC 1986-87 Sl. No. 23 of App.—II)

Action taken by the Department

para 1: The percentages prescribed in the report of the PAC (Para 3.62) are actually the percentages of cancelled amount of bills to the total amount billed for during the years 1980—84. In fact, the percentage of wrong billing to the number of bills issued during the year 1980—84,

in Calcutta Telephones has been quite low. It has varied between 0.37 per cent and 1.14 per cent. Cancellation of telephone bills does not necessarily mean that it is on account of the wrong billing.

Para 2: Cancellation of telephone bills takes place mainly due to the following factors:

- (i) Wrong meter reading,
- (ii) Splitting the bill in case of complaints of excess billing,
- (iii) rebate allowed in excess billing complaints,
- (iv) wrong feeding of date in computer, and
- (v) issuing of superfluous bills for non-service period.

Para 3: The steps taken by the Department to minimise cancellation of bills are indicated below:

- 3(i) Suitable instructions have been issued vide DOT letter No. 17/2/83-TR dated 19.11.83 to ensure correct meter readings and their recording in meter reading register. Several checks have also been prescribed to prevent wrong billing on account to incorrect meter readings;
- 3(ii) The G.M.T., Calcutta has in turn issued instructions to the concerned staff to ensure that meter readings are correctly entered in meter reading registers;
- 3(iii) In Calcutta Telephones, 5 Electronic Exchanges have been commissioned recently, where meter readings are obtained through magnetic tapes. The bills are prepared directly from these tapes and there has been no case of cancellation for wrong meter readings in respect of such exchanges.
- 4.(i) In the event of splitting a bill, following steps are taken which many a time lead to double cancellation:
 - (i) Original bill is cancelled (Detailed given below)
 - (ii) Provisional bill equal to the amount of the average of preceding six bi-monthly bills plus 10 per cent thereof is issued for immediate payment (Detailed given below)
 - (iii) Balance amount is kept in "Dispute" till investigation is finalised and decision is arrived at. Later-on, if rebate is

found justified, the disputed amount is also cancelled totally or partially according to quantum of rebate sanctioned. In fact, the first cancellation is only on accounting exercise and, therefore, it should be ignored. The second cancellation of the disputed amount on account of rebate is the actual cancellation.

4(ii) The rebate allowed by Calcutta Telephones does not seem to be on the high side. The amount of rebate sanctioned by Calcutta Telephone during 1980—84 works out between 0.1 per cent to 0.23 per cent to the amount billed for.

5.(i) In order to minimise the possibility of cancellation of bills due to wrong computations etc., several checks have been prescribed. Utmost care is being taken to verify the data before feeding it into the computer. The number of complaints of wrong billing on account of punching errors has been brought down considerably in Calcutta Telephones.

6.(i) Till a telephone is permanently recovered after disconnection for non-payment of a bill, rental bills are issued. As per the rules, a telephone disconnected for non-payment of bill can be ordered for permanent closure only after 6 months from the date of disconnection. This work was so far being done annually and there were some delays due to various reasons. The work has now been computerised w.e.f. 1-2-88. Consequently, there is no delay in ordering permanent closure of a telephone immediately after the expiry of 6 months. The changes of issue of bills after the permanent closure will be eliminated now thereby reducing cancellation of bills to a considerable extent.

Detailed regarding para 4(i)(i) & 4(i)(ii):—

Year	Amount billed (in lakhs)	Amount cancelled (in lakhs)	%age
85-86	6860.16	811.05	11.82
86-87	7810.90	807.16	10.33

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR GENERAL OF POST & TELEGRAPHS
 SANCHAR BHAWAN, 20 ASHOKA ROAD, NEW DELHI-110001

To

All Heads of Telecom. Circles/Telephone Districts.

No. 17-2/83-TR

Dated

Subject: Checks on Meter-readings to prevent under billing.

Sir,

Several instances of short-billing of local call charges have come to notice due to the following types of lapses:

- (i) Incorrect readings of meters;
- (ii) Omissions to record the number of revolutions of the meter readings in the Meter Reading Register;
- (iii) Incorrect computation of gross number of calls.

As you are aware meter readings reported by the Telephone exchanges from the basis for billing of local call charges which constitutes a substantial portion of telephone revenue. The importance of correct meter readings and computation of the charges, cannot, therefore, be over-emphasised. Various instructions have been issued from time to time to safeguard against the lapses of the kind mentioned above. Some of them are given below. If these instructions are not being followed by the Units, they may immediately be directed to do so.

1. Reading of the meter by one person and noting the readings in the register by another person and checking the readings by reverse process.

2. Test check of 10 per cent of the original work done by the Meter Reading Telephone Operators (vide DGP&T letter No. 19-4/71-TE, dated 24.1.74.)

3. Recording of revolutions of meter correctly as per instructions contained in DGP&T letter No. 5-63/70-PHB(i) dated 28-9-70.

4. Review of the meter reading register to find out the constant meters or less readings in respect of heavy callers and to verify monthly in the case of one third of the meters whether the meter has crossed the cycle.

5. Frequent recording of meter reading in STD stations.

6. Keeping the meter rooms under lock and guarding against entry of unauthorised persons into the meter rooms vide DGP&T letter No.5-1/80-PHB dated 13.5.80.

7. Surprise test checks of meter, meter rooms and recorded meter readings by Inspecting Officers.

8. Rotation of Telephone Operators employed for meter-readings every six months to prevent undesirable activities and fall in efficiency as prescribed in DGP&T letter No. 19-14/71-TE dated

9. Close supervision of the work done in connection with the meter readings, calculation of charges and verification of statements prepared by the supervisory staff.

10. Keeping a special watch over the meter readings in respect of heavy callers.

It may please be ensured that these instructions are followed by all concerned and any lapses noticed in the observance of these instructions in future, may be viewed and dealt with suitably.

Hindi version of these instructions is enclosed.

Please acknowledge receipt of this letter to DDG(TR).

Yours faithfully

Sd/-

(K. Thomas Kora)
Member (TO)

copy to:—

1. TE-II/PHB Sections of the P&T Directorate.
2. Director (IC)/Director (Inspn. Trng), P&T Directorate.
3. ADG (FC) for information with reference to his Memo No. 3-37/82-Fin. Coord., dated 3.1.83.
4. Guard File.
5. Spare

Sd/- K. L. Bhatia

Assistant Director General (TR)
Tele: 385341 & 380968

The reasons for cancellation of bills have already been intimated earlier as follows:—

1. Cancellation on account of wrong meter readings resulting in erroneous bills.
2. Cancellation of original bills on account of issue of provisional bills in case of EMR complaint.
3. Cancellation on account of rebate sanctioned.
4. Cancellation on account of non-service period bills (for permanent closure, shifting cases etc.)

Following steps have been taken to see that the cancellation is done as minimum as possible:—

Item No. 1:

For cases against item No. 1 above, instructions have been given to the exchanges to ensure that meter readings are correctly entered in the meter reading book and the same are duly checked before sending the same to the TRA section for preparation and issue of bills so that cancellation on account of wrong meter reading does not occur.

Incidentally, it may be mentioned that 5 electronic exchanges have been commissioned recently in this District where the meter readings are obtained through magnetic tape. The bills are prepared directly from the meter reading recorded in these tapes and as such there is no case of cancellation for wrong meter reading for such exchanges.

Item No. 2:

Whenever a provisional bill is issued for an E.M.R. complaint, original bill is cancelled as per the existing rules.

Item No. 3:

In respect of the disputed amount when rebate is sanctioned, the said disputed amount is again cancelled and a bill for the net amount payable by the subscriber is issued. This is also as per the existing rules.

Till a telephone is permanently recovered after temporary disconnection for non-payment of a bill, rental bills are issued. As per the rules a telephone disconnected for non-payment of bill can be ordered for permanent recovery only after 6 months from the date of disconnection. This work was so long being done manually and there were often some delay due to various reasons. We have now computerised the allied work from 1-2-1988. As a result, there is no delay in ordering permanent recovery of a telephone and such things are now being done just after the expiry of 6 months. As a result of this, the issue of unnecessary non-service period bills beyond 6 months will be avoided and accordingly the incidence of cancellation on this account will be minimised.

It may be mentioned here that the percentage of cancellation in the year 1986-87 was 10.33 per cent against 11.82 per cent in the year 1985-86.

(Deptt. of Telecom. U.O. No. 27-17/86-B dated 13-4-1988)

Recommendation of PAC para 4.43

The committee find that out of 27 strowger exchanges of the Calcutta Telephones, 14 exchanges have outlived their lives. The committee note that replacement equipments have been allotted for all the outlived equipments and would be commissioned during the seventh Five Year Plan. The

committee also note that as compared to other metro Telephone Districts, the extent of replacement required is the highest 39 per cent (Bombay: 4.1 per cent, Delhi 2.6 per cent, Madras 8.3 per cent). The implementation of these schemes need to be closely watched and the committee cannot but caution the Government to ensure that these are got executed within the time frame, settled well in advance. The committee need hardly emphasise that delay in implementation of schemes have grave financial implications.

(S. No. 25)

Action taken by the Department

A committee comprising DDG(MS), DDG(MM), DDG(TD), DDG(EF), has been constituted vide letter No. 3-43/85-PHM dated 20-1-87 to monitor the progress of supply of equipment and resources, installation and progress of the upgradation plan as envisaged in the "project Calcutta".

Three meetings of the Monitoring committee have been held. First on 20-3-87 in Delhi, second on 3-4-87 at Calcutta and third on 28.9.87 in New Delhi. The progress monitored is as follows:

Switching Project

(a) Four step by step exchanges have been replaced during this plan period. Three of them by E-10B exchanges and one by FETEX type. The exchanges replaced are 22, 23, 33 and 34.

(b) It is proposed to replace 9 step by step exchanges totalling 72,300 lines during the next two years. Allotments have already been made for these exchanges.

(c) In the project Calcutta about 60 route KMs length of cable duct construction is proposed during the next two years.

About 20 KMs of cable duct is in the various stages of construction.

About 12,000 junctions consisting of 700 systems are proposed to be commissioned on PCM by the year 1990. About 20,000 junctions on optical fibre consisting of 29 systems of 140 mv and 8 systems of 34 mv are proposed to be commissioned during the next two years for junction working.

15,000 junctions consisting of 70 systems are proposed to be commissioned on Digital M/W during the next two years.

(Deptt. of Telecom. U.O. No. 27-17/86-B dated 13-4-1988)

Recommendation of PAC para 4.50

The committee hope that the Department of Telecommunications will make all out efforts to implement their plans for rehabilitating the Calcutta Telephones.

(S. No. 32)

Action taken by the Department

Constant monitoring of various upgradation and modernisation plans is being done by a high level committee to ensure implementation.

(Deptt. of Telecom. U.O. No. 27-17/86-B dated 17-4-1988)

Recommendation of PAC para 4.51

The committee also note that to improve telecommunication facilities in metropolitan cities of Delhi and Bombay a corporation viz. Mahanagar Telephone Nigam has been established and seems to have improved the telecommunication facilities in these places. The desirability of converting the Calcutta Telephones into a corporation requires consideration by the Government.

(S. No. 53)

Action taken by the Department

The Mahanagar Nigam has been formed only about one year ago and it is too early to decide upon conversion of other telephone systems into corporations.

The observation of committee has been noted.

(Deptt. of Telecom. U.O. No. 27-17/86-B dated 17-4-88)

CHAPTER IV

RECOMMENDATIONS AND OBSERVATIONS REPLIES TO WHICH HAVE NOT BEEN ACCEPTED BY THE COMMITTEE AND WHICH REQUIRE REITERATION:

Recommendation of PAC para 2.30 and 4.45

The Committee also note that in Calcutta, as on 1-1-1987 a long waiting list of 35,629 registrants for new telephone connections is pending. It is also disquieting to note that there were cases of theft and damage to equipment. The Government should take adequate steps to ensure that loss to Government property is scrupulously avoided. The Department has proposed a "Perspective plan for the year 2000 so that telephone connections can be provided practically on demand". If this target has to be achieved it will be necessary to have a reasonable commitment of the required funds to establish the necessary indigenous production of the required equipment, cables etc.

The Committee further note that the Department of Telecommunications have proposed a perspective plan for the year 2000 so that telephone connections can be provided practically on demand. It will, therefore, be necessary to substantially expand the network using the modern technologies and practices which would ensure high quality and reliable services. This will call for expanding the number of telephone connections from the present 32 lakhs to about 2 crores by the year 2000, which will mean stepping up the rate of growth from 7 to 8 per cent p.a. exponential to about 15 to 16 per cent p.a. exponential. This will necessitate significantly higher resources and therefore higher borrowings. To meet these requirements, it will be necessary to invest about 45,000 to 50,000 crores of rupees upto the year 2000. As stated by the Department, with the continuously improving services, it should be possible to generate about 50 per cent of this investment internally, the remaining 50 per cent will have to be mobilised from public through suitable instruments.

[100th Report of PAC-86-87 Sl. No. 5 & 31 of APP-II]

Action taken by the Department

In the recent mid-term appraisal of the 7th Plan, the DOT has put forth that year to year commitment of funds causes sub-optimal utilisation of the funds and that an investment of the order of Rs. 50,000 crores, upto the year 2000 AD, at 1984 prices was necessary for developmental activities of the DOT. The Planning Commission was requested to agree to this in principle so that advance action could be taken. The proposals included setting up of additional production capacity etc. Even while no formal minutes were issued by the planning commission, in this regard, they have agreed to examine our request favourably. The matter is being further pursued with the Planning Commission.

The recommendations of the PAC in this regard are being sent to the Planning Commission and the Ministry of Finance in support of the Departments plan for greater investments in the 8th Plan and thereafter.

The following steps have been taken for preventing loss to the Government properties:

- (i) All the areas prone to cable thefts are regularly inspected by the External Maintenance staff.
- (ii) Cabinets and pillars have been locked both internally and externally in order to ensure breaking open these cabinets and pillars become difficult.
- (iii) Close liaison is maintained with West Bengal Police and Calcutta police at various levels. The problem has also been brought to the notice of the State Government.
- (iv) Police Authorities were approached and they intensified patrolling in certain theft-prone areas. Special police patrollings were also arranged for sometime on Saturdays and Sundays in BBD Bag and Maiden areas where few people are seen during the holidays.
- (v) Police authorities are intensifying drive against Receivers of Stolen Telephone properties.
- (vi) There has been a down-ward trend in the frequency of theft during the last three years.

- (vii) Suitable steps have been taken to prevent damages to equipments during loading and un-loading operations as well as during installation.

(Deptt. of Telecom, U.O. No. 27-17/86-B dated 13-4-1989)

Recommendation of PAC para 5.52

The fact that the percentage satisfaction for service demand was 2.2 per cent in Calcutta in 1984-85 as against 67.7 in Delhi and was the lowest among the metropolitan cities in India is indeed a sad commentary of the working of Calcutta Telephones. The Committee find it imperative that urgent steps are taken to improve the existing dismal state of affairs.

(S. No. 13)

Action taken by the Department

The poor performance of Calcutta Telephones in respect of completing service demands in comparison to other cities in India is due to the peculiar condition prevailing in Calcutta about which the PAC has itself commented in their recommendations. For improving the position of telephone connections quickly after work orders are released and also effecting the shifts quickly, the following steps have been taken:

- (i) A special drive has been launched to execute the old work orders and it is expected that the backlog of earlier orders will be completed by 31-3-88.
- (ii) The progress of all planning and development activities including releasing of new connection is being reviewed by the General Manager during the fortnightly meetings with all the Area Managers.
- (iii) Simultaneously the Planning Organisation is asked to take up the analysis of pending demands for new connections as well as the demand forecast for the next 9 years in order to plan cable laying.
- (iv) The planning section has also been asked to up-date the cable records to help assess the additional requirement of cable pairs.
- (v) Ducting and cable pressurisation and the use of jelly filled cables is being undertaken to prevent cable breakdowns in the new networks.
- (vi) Cabinets and pillars are being introduced in the sections of the old cable network for increasing the flexibility.

Recommendation of PAC para 3.56

The Committee were informed during evidence that "in the case of Calcutta, recently on experimental basis, we have issued an order that if a telephone is out of order for 15 days or more, we give a rebate. It is exclusively for Calcutta. It is not yet available to the rest of the country". Secretary, Telecommunications, further stated, "as a matter of fact, we are considering even reducing it to one week. It required amendment of the India Telegraph Rules". He further observed "as a matter of fact, I am pursuing through my General Manager that this refund should be automatic". The Committee is of the view that the public should not be forced to pay for the inefficiency of the Telephones Department and that the Government should amend the rules authorising *suo motu* refund of rent to subscribers in case of telephones remaining out of order continuously for a week and more. The Committee should be apprised of further developments in this regard.

(S. No. 17)

Action taken by the Department

A circular has been issued to the Heads of Circles to grant rebate in rental if the telephone/telex leased lines are out of order for 15 days or more. The rebate will be granted by the Heads of Circles.

(Deptt. of Telecom. U.O. No. 27-17/86-B dated 13-4-1989)

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
 MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS
 DEPARTMENT OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS
 (TELECOMMUNICATIONS BOARD)

No. 3—6/80-R

New Delhi-110001,
 13th April, 1987.

To

All General Managers Telecom.

All General Managers Telephones

All General Managers (Maintenance)

All District Managers Telephones

The Managing Director, Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Limited,
 New Delhi.

The General Managers Telephones, Mahanagar Telephone Nigam
 Limited, New Delhi/Bombay.

Subject : Rebate in rental for prolonged interruption in local telephone ser-
 vice, leased lines and telex services.

Instructions were issued vide this office letter of even number dated 31-10-85 for grant of rebate in rental when the telephone, telex, services and leased lines and junction lines in case of PABX/PBX of a subscriber remain interrupted continuously for 30 days or more. The matter has been reviewed.

2. It has been decided that rebate in rental for telephones, telex, services, leased lines and junction lines in use of a PABX/PBX may be permitted when these services of the subscriber remains interrupted continuously for 15 days or more due to departmental reasons. Rebate in rental in such cases should be granted on Department's initiative **without waiting for a representation from subscribers.**

3. In order to prevent any abuse of this concession or difficulties to the subscribers, General Managers/District Managers should ensure that fault cards and fault registers showing the nature of fault, the time of reporting and restoration of the fault, are properly maintained. Attention is particularly invited to instructions contained in Directortae letters No. 7-6/82-PHM dated 16-9-82 and 23-4-83 on prompt clearance of faults and fixing of responsibility for delay in clearance. These instructions, *inter alia*, enjoin that the Junior Engineer incharge of an outdoor section

should enter all faults pending for more than six hours in a register and take necessary action to rectify the faults in the shortest possible time. In case the fault persists for more than 24 hours, the concerned Assistant Engineer-in-Charge should be informed, apart from continuing his efforts for fault rectification. The Assistant Engineer should keep a watch on all such cases and would be responsible to get the faults cleared with due promptitude. If the fault is not cleared within 48 hours, the concerned Divisional Engineer should take necessary action for rectifying the fault. All long-pending faults beyond 3 days should be monitored by the General Manager/District Manager through weekly retruns from Divisional Engineers. Responsibility has to be fixed by the General Managers in all cases of negligence. In case a fault has continued for 30 days or more, an Officer of the rank of Director or above should decide on the basis of available information whether this has been due to negligence or genuine reasons beyond control.

3.1 Similar procedure for fault-recording and monitoring of fault clearance would be followed for leased circuits. That schedules for regular testing of long-distance leased circuits would be followed by General Managers Maintenance and for 'local' leased circuits by the General Managers Telecom/Telephones.

3.2 The fault cards are the primary records for recording/deciding rebates. These must be preserved (like trunk call tickets) for one year after the last entry has been made.

4. The grant of rebate in individual cases should be approved by an officer not below the rank of Divisional Engineer. All such cases or group of cases where such rebate is granted should be brought to the personal notice of the General Manager/District Manager indicating whether there was any avoidable delay in restoring the service. The General Managers will critically analyse such cases and the reasons for the service remaining interrupted for as long as 15 days or more and take such action as may be necessary.

5. In all cases where rebate is granted, Accounts Officer (TR) of the unit will send a monthly statement to the T.R. Section of his circle office indicating the number of telephones and the amount. The circle office shall consolidate the information and incorporate it in the monthly statement of Work Report being submitted to TR Section of Telecommunications Directorate.

6. This decision will come into effect from 1-3-87. The cases of rebate relating to the period from 31-10-86 upto 28-2-87 may be decided in accordance with the earlier instructions.

7. A Gazette Notification incorporating the necessary provisions in the relevant ITRs is being issued and a copy of the same will be sent in due course.

8. Receipt of this letter may kindly be acknowledged.

(Pradeep Kumar)

Director Phones (E)

Copy to:

1. P.S. to M(C)/MS(C).
2. Secretary (T).
3. Additional Secretary (T).
4. Members, Telecom Board.
5. All Deputy Directors General Telecom/Finance.
6. Secretary, Telecom Board.
7. General Managers, ALTTC, Ghaziabad/TTC, Jabalpur.
8. Director, TRC/General Manager, T&D Circle, Jabalpur.
9. Director of Audit P&T, Delhi.
10. Director (TR)/Costing.
11. All Internal Financial Advisers in Telecom Circles/Telephone Districts and other Administrative offices.
12. PHA/PHB/PHM/Rates/TR/DNW/MIS/Finance (Coordination) Section in the Directorate.
13. P.I.O.(C).

(Pradeep Kumar)

Director Phones (E)

CHAPTER V
RECOMMENDATIONS AND OBSERVATIONS IN RESPECT OF
WHICH GOVERNMENT HAVE FURNISHED INTERIM REPLIES

NIL

NEW DELHI,
The 11 August, 1989
20 Sravana, 1911 (S)

P. KOLANDAIVELU.
Chairman,
Public Accounts Committee,

PART II

MINUTES OF THE 8TH SITTING OF THE PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE HELD ON 9-8-1989

The Committee sat from 1500 hrs. to 1545 hrs.

PRESENT

1. Maj. Gen. R. S. Sparrow—*In the Chair*
2. Shri M. Y. Ghorpade
3. Shri Mohd. Ayub Khan
4. Shri Y. S. Mahajan
5. Shrimati Usha Rani Tomar
6. Dr. Chandra Shekhar Tripathi
7. Shri Rameshwar Thakur

SECRETARIAT

1. Shri G. L. Batra—Joint Secretary
2. Shri K. K. Sharma—Director
3. Shri A. Subramanian—Sr. Financial Committee Officer

REPRESENTATIVES OF AUDIT

1. Shri R. Parmeshwar—ADAI—CAG
2. Shri D. S. Iyer—Director of Audit, CW&M-I
3. Shri V. Srikantan—Director of Audit (P&T)
4. Shri Ved Prakash—Dy. Director (P&T)

2. In the absence of Chairman, the Committee chose Maj. Gen. R. S. Sparrow to act as Chairman for the sitting.

3. The Committee considered and adopted the following draft Action Taken Reports subject to modifications indicated in Annexure I.

(i) XXX XXX XXX

(ii) On the recommendations contained in 100th Report of PAC (Eighth Lok Sabha) regarding Review of Working of Calcutta Telephones.

(iii)	XXX	XXX	XXX
4.	XXX	XXX	XXX
5.	XXX	XXX	XXX

6. The Committee authorised the Chairman to finalise the draft Report in the light of verbal and consequential changes arising out of factual verification by audit and present the same to the House.

Action taken by the Department

APPENDIX I

- I. Recommendations and observations which have been accepted and noted by the Government:
1—4, 6—7, 9—12, 15—16, 18, 20, 24, 26—30 and 34.
- II. Recommendations and observations which the Committee do not desire to pursue in view of the replies received from the Government:
8, 14, 19, 21—23, 25, 32 and 33.
- III. Recommendations and observations replies to which have not been accepted by the Committee and which require reiteration:
5, 13, 17 and 31.
- IV. Recommendations and observations in respect of which Government have furnished interim replies:

—Nil—

APPENDIX II

STATEMENT OF OBSERVATIONS|RECOMMENDATIONS

Sl. No.	Para No.	Ministry/Department Concerned	Observations Recommendations
1	2	3	4
1	7-8	Deptt. of Telecom.	<p>As regards the steps that have been taken to prevent loss to Government properties the Committee note from the measures reported that they consist of only the standard routine steps that are expected to be taken everywhere to prevent theft and loss to Government properties. The Committee note in this connection that the circumstances under which these measures have failed to yield results in containing thefts, if not totally avoiding the same has not been spelt out. Evidently the Committee feel that either the instructions are not strictly observed or no special steps have been taken to provide extra vigil in the case of Calcutta Telephones to cope with the peculiar situation prevailing there. The Committee, therefore, reiterate their earlier recommendation and urge the Government to take adequate steps to ensure that loss to Government property which also results in avoidable inconvenience to telephone users is scrupulously avoided.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">4</p> <p>8. In regard to the clearance of the long waiting list and achievement of the targets programmed in the perspective plan for 2000, the Committee</p>

would like the matter to be pursued vigorously with the Planning Commission to obtain a definite commitment for allocation of adequate funds or to agree at least in principle to meet necessary developmental activities of the DOT and they would like to be apprised of the latest developments in this regard.

2 11 Deptt. of Telecom.

The Committee note that Department of Telecommunication have initiated some steps for improving the positioning of telephone connections quickly, after work orders are released and also effecting the shifts quickly. They would like to be apprised of the progress made in that direction as a result of these steps and other measures taken to step up the service demand satisfaction rate.

3 14 -do-

The Committee are distressed to note that so far no action appears to have been taken on their recommendation that rules should be amended to authorise *suo moto* refund of rent to subscribers if their telephones remain out of order continuously for a week and more. The instruction issued by the Department on 13 April, 1987 are those which were applied in the case of Calcutta Telephones much earlier and this fact was taken note of by the Committee in their earlier Report. The Committee therefore, reiterate their earlier recommendation for grant of refund in case a telephone remains out of order for a week or more and expect an early action.

