

# **ESTIMATES COMMITTEE**

## **(1981-82)**

**(SEVENTH LOK SABHA)**

**TWENTY-SIXTH REPORT**

**MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS**

**Action Taken by Government on the recommendations contained in the Eleventh Report of Estimates Committee (Seventh Lok Sabha) on the Ministry of Communications—Telephones.**



*Presented to Lok Sabha on* 26 APR 1982

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NEW DELHI**

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## CORRIGENDUM

TO

THE TWENTY-SIXTH REPORT OF ESTIMATES COMMITTEE ON  
MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS - TELEPHONES.

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1	1.5	Heading	Upgradation of Trans- mission Systems	Upgradation of Telephone Systems.
3	1.13	1	in	In
3	1.14	9	upto late date	upto date data
4	1.18	10	realised	relied
4	1.21	2	came	come
5	1.22	1 on page 5	relate	rebate
8	1.42	2	in	on
35	6	3	of	or

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(1981-82)

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\*Shri Janardhana Poojary ceased to be member of the Estimates Committee w.e.f. 15-1-1982 consequent on his appointment as Deputy Minister.

**COMPOSITION OF STUDY GROUP 'T'  
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## INTRODUCTION

I, the Chairman of the Estimates Committee, having been authorised by the Committee to submit the Report on their behalf, present this Twenty-sixth Report on action taken by Government on the recommendations contained in the Eleventh Report of the Estimates Committee (Seventh Lok Sabha) on the Ministry of Communications—Telephones.

2. The Eleventh Report was presented to Lok Sabha on 20 April, 1981. Government furnished their replies indicating action taken on the recommendations contained in that Report by 13 November, 1981. The replies were examined by Study Group 'I' of Estimates Committee (1981-82) at their sitting held on 31 March, 1982. The draft Report was adopted by the Estimates Committee (1981-82) on 8 April, 1982.

3. The Report has been divided into following Chapters :—

I. Report.

II. Recommendations/Observations that have been accepted by Government.

III. Recommendations/Observations which the Committee do not desire to pursue in view of Government's replies.

IV. Recommendations/Observations in respect of which replies of Government have not been accepted by the Committee.

V. Recommendations/Observations in respect of which final replies of Government are still awaited.

4. An analysis of action taken by Government on the recommendations contained in the Eleventh Report of Estimates Committee (Seventh Lok Sabha) is given in Appendix. It would be observed that out of 115 recommendations made in the Report, 84 recommendations i.e. 73 per cent have been accepted by Government, and the Committee do not desire to pursue 5 recommendations i.e. 4.3 per cent in view of Government replies. Replies have not been accepted in respect of 13 recommendations i.e. 11.3 per cent. Final replies of Government in respect of 13 recommendations i.e. 11.3 per cent are still awaited.

NEW DELHI

April 8, 1982

Chaitra 18, 1904 (Saka)

S. B. P. PATTABHI RAMA RAO

*Chairman*

*Estimates Committee*

## CHAPTER I

### REPORT

1.1 This Report of the Estimates Committee deals with the action taken by Government on the recommendations contained in the Eleventh Report (Seventh Lok Sabha) on the Ministry of Communications—Telephones, which was presented to Lok Sabha on 20 April, 1981.

1.2 Action taken Notes have been received from Government in respect of all the 115 recommendations contained in the Report.

1.3 Action Taken Notes on the recommendations of the Committee have been categorised as follows :—

- (i) Recommendation/Observations that have been accepted by Government :

Sl. Nos. : 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 16, 18, 20, 22, 24, 25, 26, 28, 29, 31, 32, 33, 35, 37, 38, 39, 41, 42, 43, 45, 47, 50, 51, 52, 54, 55, 57, 61, 62, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 70, 71, 72, 74, 76, 77, 78, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 114, 115,

(Total 84—Chapter II).

- (ii) Recommendations/Observations which the Committee do not desire to pursue in view of Government's replies :—

Sl. Nos. 27, 63, 69, 73 & 91

(Total 5—Chapter III).

- (iii) Recommendations/Observations in respect of which Government replies have not been accepted by the Committee :—

Sl. Nos. 8, 14, 15, 17, 19, 23, 53, 56, 59, 60, 75, 80 & 112.

(Total 13—Chapter IV).

- (iv) Recommendations Observations in respect of which final replies of Government are still awaited :

Sl. Nos. 13, 21, 30, 34, 36, 40, 44, 46, 48, 49, 58, 79 & 113.

(Total 13—Chapter V).

1.4 The Committee will now deal with the action taken by Government on some of their recommendations.

#### *Upgradation of Transmission Systems*

#### **Recommendation Sl. No. 8 (Para No. 2.67)**

1.5 The Committee had noted with concern that in metropolitan cities and State capitals where cable and other transmission systems were in the process of upgradation, it would take at least four years to improve the telephone service. For the entire country, even if substantial investments



were forthcoming, the Department would take about 10 years to provide a reasonably satisfactory service throughout. This was too disappointing a picture. The Committee had felt that it would be too much to expect the subscribers to wait patiently for ten long years before getting a reasonably efficient service in the country. The Committee strongly urged that the position must be re-appraised and all resources mobilised on a high priority basis to put the telephone system in the entire country back on the rails in the shortest possible time. The Committee desired to be appraised of the programme evolved by the Department in this regard.

1.6 In its reply Ministry has stated (November, 1981) that "at present there is no comprehensive programme for upgradation of telephone net-work throughout the country. Programmes have been drawn up for Calcutta and Delhi to improve the outdoor (cable) net-work in about 3 years. Task Forces are being set-up for Srinagar, Patna and Ahmedabad to identify reasons for unsatisfactory service and take corrective actions. Net-work upgradation programme will be drawn up where required, for State Capitals and other important cities without any avoidable delay."

**1.7 The Committee are not satisfied with the reply furnished by the Ministry of Communications. The Ministry does not seem to be viewing and attending to the problem with a sense of urgency; nor does it appear to have re-appraised the position and drawn up or embarked upon any programme of putting the telephone system in the entire country back on the rails in the shortest possible time. This is unfortunate.**

**1.8 The Committee would like the Ministry to realise the seriousness and urgency of the problem and formulate comprehensive and time bound programmes to make telephone services all over the country efficient and trouble-free with utmost expedition.**

*Service Nos. 198 & 199*

**Recommendation : Sl. No. 12 (Para 2.71 and 2.72)**

1.9 There had been widespread dissatisfaction with the functioning of service telephone numbers 198 and 199. Department had refuted complaints against 198 and 199 and had tried to explain delays in rectifying faults due to congestion on these service telephones.

1.10 The Committee had observed that in 1978-79 for every 100 telephones, there were 139 complaints per month registered on 198 in Gauhati, 118 in Chandigarh, 115 in Trivandrum, 79 in Bombay, 73 in Ahmedabad and 77 in Delhi. The Committee had also found that while at places like Calcutta and Delhi a subscriber had to make on an average one call per complaint to telephone number 198, at Hyderabad, he had to make 5 calls per complaint and at Srinagar, Bhopal, Jaipur, Madras and Lucknow two calls per complaint. Wherever a subscriber had to make more than one call per complaint the inference was obvious that the complaint service (198) was not working satisfactorily. The Committee desired that the Department should evaluate the complaint service (198) at each place from this angle and take remedial measures to tone up the efficiency of the service.

1.11 The Ministry has stated in reply that the Department will study the response time of '198' and fault repair service in greater depth. The study will be made in Bombay, Hyderabad and Indore telephone districts.

steps, based on the results of this study, will be taken to improve '198' and fault repair service in all the places."

*Service Nos. 198, 199 & wrong calls*

**Recommendations : Sl. No. 14 & 15 (Para No. 2.74 & 2.75)**

1.12 The Committee were informed that 25 per cent of the calls made to No. 198 were expected to be and were actually replied to within 10 seconds. This seemed to be too optimistic to be true. The Committee had desired the Department to test the efficiency of those services through outside agencies and not only through departmental officers.

1.13 in reply the Ministry has stated that, "the percentage of calls on special services answered within 10 seconds at various places in the country ranges from 41% to 96%. It is to be noted that generally the group which makes test calls and collects the data is not connected with operations and directly reports to the General Manager or Additional General Manager. As these figures were observed and recorded by the departmental agencies which are not connected with day-to-day operation, there is no ground for suspecting their veracity. The Department, therefore, is of the opinion that it is not necessary to involve outside agencies in the matter. In addition the observation unit from P&T Directorate periodically study the different telephone systems particularly in the cities to check up performance of 198 service."

1.14 According to a sample survey made by the Department in 1975, 30 per cent of the calls were made to Assistance No. 199 by subscribers who did not wait to dial the required number again if that number was found busy; instead they dialled 199. The Committee wondered whether such a large number of subscribers did not wait to dial the desired number again and instead dialled 199 when it was well known how difficult it was to get 199. The Committee had desired an independent survey in this regard to be conducted again so that the Department might have at their command accurate and upto late date without which it would be difficult for them to appreciate the magnitude of the problem.

1.15 In its reply the Ministry has stated that, "the Department will conduct survey of calls received on (199) service in Bombay, Hyderabad and Indore telephone districts. This job will be entrusted to the Efficiency Cells which directly report to G.Ms/D.Ms in these districts."

**Recommendation : Sl. No. 17 (Para No. 2.79)**

1.16 The Committee had felt that the present system to make surveys of failure rate and wrong call rate through Departmental units could not inspire confidence as the tendency on the part of departmental officers to under play these phenomena could not be ruled out. The Committee had desired that sample survey in these matters should also be carried out through outside officers and officers not in active service of the Department and the data received through them should be given due weight.

1.17 The Ministry has stated that, "the Department is of the view that there is no need for sample surveys to be conducted by outside agencies. The figures obtained by departmental surveys show good as well as bad performances and as such there is no ground to suspect that the departmental officers suppress failure rates and wrong-call data."

1.18 The Committee note that the Ministry has agreed to study the response, time of '198' and '199' services through departmental agencies in greater depth and take remedial measures in the light of these studies. But the Committee are surprised at the refusal of the Ministry to involve outside agencies or even its own officers not in active service in making sample surveys of the efficiency of these services (198 and 199) or of the failure and wrong call rates in the telephone system. However efficient the departmental agencies may be, their observations cannot inspire confidence unless these are supported by the reports of independent observers from outside the telephone Deptt. In the past too, the Deptt. had realised totally on Departmental agencies' reports and that was why it had not been able to gauge correctly the public dissatisfaction with the telephone system. The Committee would, therefore, like to reiterate their earlier recommendation and advise the Ministry to involve outside agencies also in surveying the efficiency of various telephone services as only after seeing them from the users, and can the Ministry have a true picture of these services and decide about remedial action.

#### *Signatures of Subscribers on Fault Cards*

##### **Recommendation : Sl. No. 19 (Para No. 2.85 and 2.86)**

1.19 The Committee had recommended that signatures of subscriber should also be taken on the Fault Card, which is kept to record dates and particulars of faults in respect of each telephone, in token of their satisfaction after each fault is repaired.

1.20 In its reply the Ministry has stated that, the fault card is a technical document and should be kept as an exchange record. The Department, is therefore, of the view that obtaining signature of the subscriber on the fault card is neither necessary nor practicable.

1.21 It was only after going into the system of receiving and attending to complaints that the Committee had come to the conclusion that after a defect is rectified signature of subscriber should be obtained on the fault card in token of his satisfaction. The Committee do not agree with the Department's view and they reiterate that their recommendation should be implemented without delay.

#### *Rebate in rentals*

##### **Recommendation : Sl. No. 21 (Para No. 2.105)**

1.22 There has been a general feeling that the Department should not charge rental for the period during which telephones remain out of order. The Committee had noted that Government had decided that, in Ahmedabad Telephone District on an experimental basis, a prorata reduction in rental would be allowed for the actual period of interruption, if telephone service was interrupted for an aggregate period of 45 days or more in a quarter due to reasons other than natural calamities. Welcoming this decision, the Committee had felt that prorata rebate should be granted even if the period of interruption was 21 days in a quarter and even if the interruption in service was due to natural calamities since the Committee saw no moral justification for the Department to charge rental for the period when the telephone service was not available for no fault of the subscriber. The Committee had desired that a final view should be taken in the matter without delay in the light of

Ahmedabad experiment and the system of prorata relate extended to all the Districts/Circles after taking safeguards against malpractices.

1.23 The Ministry has stated that, "the recommendation is under examination. After receipt of final report from Ahmedabad Telephones where the system is still on trial the matter will be examined further by the P&T Board."

**1.24 The trial has been going on for nearly a year now. It is high time that a final decision is taken in the matter and the system of pro-rata reduction in rental for the period for which a telephone remains out of order is introduced all over the country, without any more delay.**

*Delay in Trunk Calls*

**Recommendation : Sl. No. 23 (Para No. 3.44)**

1.25 Though the Department had laid down that in case of ordinary/urgent/priority calls being delayed by three hours, two hours and one hour respectively, the subscribers concerned should be rung back and informed of the likely delays in their trunk calls. According to the reports reaching the Committee this was not being done. The Department had also admitted that in many stations the procedure of keeping the subscribers informed of the period of delay in trunk calls was not being followed because of high rate of staff absenteeism. This in the Committee's view was unfortunate. The Committee had asked the Department to enforce their instructions and ensure that the subscribers were kept informed of the likely delays in their trunk calls.

1.26 In its reply the Ministry has stated that, "this recommendation has been examined but has not been found practicable for introduction in large telephone systems. It is, however, being tried at a few selected stations."

**1.27 The position taken by the Ministry is wholly untenable and is not acceptable. The Committee reiterate that the Department should strictly enforce the instructions which they themselves have laid down in this regard, and ensure that in the event of long delays in putting through trunk calls, the subscribers concerned are kept informed of the situation.**

*Rental charges for telephones in rural areas*

**Recommendation : Sl. No. 53 (Para No. 5.43)**

1.28 The Committee had felt that since telephone services in the rural areas were proposed to be extended at an accelerated pace, it was necessary that these services in rural areas were not made unreasonably expensive. It was brought to the Committee's notice that rental and other charges for telephones beyond a range of 5-7 Kilometers from an exchange in rural areas were fixed at a higher rate than that applicable to telephones within this range. The Committee had desired that the rental and other charges upto a range of 15 Kilometers from an exchange in rural areas should be at the same level and higher charges levied only in respect of telephones beyond 15 kilometers or so.

1.29 The Ministry has not accepted the recommendation and has stated that "Subscribers situated at distances more than 5-6 kilometers require higher gauge of cable or of open-wire line with thicker gauge wire, making the cost of construction very high."

1.30 The Committee are not satisfied with the Ministry's reply. They reiterate their earlier recommendation and desire that telephone services in rural areas within a range of 15 kilometers from an exchange should not be made unreasonably expensive; otherwise it is not in conformity with the new 20 point programme enunciated by the Prime Minister in solving the needs of the rural areas.

*Facility of Telephones to self-employed Handicapped*

**Recommendation : Sl. No. 56 (Para No. 5.49)**

1.31 The Committee had recommended that self-employed handicapped persons should be given priority in the matter of sanctioning of telephones as they need telephone facility more than others to carry on their business activities. The Ministry too agreed that the handicapped deserve special consideration. The Committee had desired that an early decision should be taken in this regard and implemented.

1.32 In reply the Ministry has stated that :

“Recommendation not accepted as there is possibility of large-scale misuse of the concession proposed for the physically handicapped. Individual cases will be considered sympathetically.”

1.33 It is surprising that having agreed to the proposition that the handicapped self-employed persons deserved special consideration in the matter of allotment of telephone connections, the Ministry should have gone back on the position at the action taking stage. The Committee would like to reiterate that a decision to show consideration to such handicapped persons with suitable safeguards against misuse of the concession should be taken and implemented as a matter of policy without delay.

*P. C. Os.*

**Recommendations : Sl. Nos. 59 and 60 (Para Nos. 6.19 and 6.20)**

1.34 The Committee had observed that there were 10,883 Public Call Offices (PCOs) installed in the State Capitals in the country but this number, it was represented, was not adequate. The Committee did not think the number of PCOs in each state capital had any relationship to the size of population of the city as otherwise Calcutta would not be having only 892 PCOs as against 2450 in Madras and 3197 in Bombay. The Committee had recommended that more PCOs should be opened at premises easily accessible to the general public and in locating new PCOs the areas not having PCOs or not adequately served by private telephones should be given priority.

1.35 The Committee had desired that the number of PCOs in places other than state capitals should also be reviewed and facility extended to all those areas where such telephones were needed but were not in existence in adequate number.

1.36 In reply the Ministry has stated that “Instructions already exist on the line indicated by the Committee.”

1.37 The Ministry's reply reveals insensitivity to the telephone needs of cities and areas where the PCO facilities are not adequate at present and its reluctance to take a fresh look at the problem, which is unfortunate. The

**Committee would reiterate that PCO facilities in State Capitals and other places require to be reviewed and augmented suitably and selectively.**

*Complaints of Faulty & Inflated bills*

**Recommendation : Sl. No. 75 (Para 8.16 and 8.17)**

1.38 The Committee had observed in their 11th Report that even though various steps for streamlining the billing work and minimising wrong billing such as periodical tests of meters and circuits of subscribers' telephones, observations of subscribers' telephones, meters and equipments taking of fortnightly meter reading, sealing of individual meters etc. were reported to have been taken by the Telephone Department. Complaints of faulty and inflated billing had been received by the Committee from a large number of subscribers and non-official organisation from all parts of the country.

1.39 The Committee had desired the Department to evolve a suitable mechanism to make a critical study of the phenomenon of wrong billings with a view to plugging loopholes in working procedures and metering equipment and thus bringing about a qualitative improvement in the billing system as a whole.

1.40 In reply the Ministry has stated that :—

“To avoid mistakes in billing computerised billing system introduced in the four Metropolitan Districts. In addition the bills where abnormal calls are observed in these four Metropolitan Districts, are rechecked before issue. In places where bills are prepared manually necessary instructions have been reiterated for preparation of bills correctly and to observe the existing checks scrupulously with a view to reduce the incidence of wrong billing due to human failure. As regards metering mechanism and equipment faults which may lead to excess billing, the following provisions exist :—

1. Meters are kept locked and access to the meter room is restricted.
2. Vigilance squads have been set up to detect unauthorised connection, diversion etc., by surprise checks.
3. Orders have been placed for supply of “charge analysers”. These can give separately the details of STD calls made by subscribers who complain of excess billing.
4. New metering circuits have been introduced to eliminate metering faults.
5. Locking of distribution points and cabinets.
6. Testing of meters and STD barring facility.
7. Creation of awareness among the subscribers about the proper use of STD facility by publishing suitable captions in the telephone directories. The instructions are being issued to the Units to enforce the measures prescribed above more rigidly to avoid abnormal calls due to diversion of lines, faulty equipment etc.”

**1.41 The steps mentioned in the Ministry's reply are not new. These were there already. And it is after reviewing these steps that the Committee**

had felt the need for a suitable mechanism to make a critical study of the phenomenon of wrong billings with a view to plugging loopholes in working procedures and metering equipments and bringing about a qualitative improvement in the billing system as a whole. The Committee regret that the Ministry has not taken this recommendation seriously. They would like to reiterate their earlier recommendation and like the Department to evolve a suitable mechanism to make a critical study of the phenomenon of wrong billing.

*Disconnection of Telephones owing to non-payment of Bills.*

**Recommendation : Sl. No. 80 (Para No. 8.22)**

1.42 The Committee had observed that Telephones had been disconnected in the ground of alleged non-payment of bills even when the relevant bills had already been paid. A case study made by the Committee revealed that as many as 4783 telephones were wrongly disconnected on this ground in Delhi alone during the three years (1978-80). From such a large number of telephones wrongly disconnected in Delhi alone, the Committee could not but conclude that the present procedure of giving "telephonic" notice to a subscriber before disconnecting this telephone for non-payment of outstanding bills was highly unfair, irrational and indefensible. The Committee recommended that in order to avoid harassment and inconvenience to subscribers in future, notices of disconnection of telephones on the ground of non-payment of outstanding bills should be sent by registered post at the subscriber's cost in all cases and no telephone should be disconnected before the lapse of a reasonable time after the service of such notice.

1.43 In reply the Ministry has stated as follows :—

"The recommendation of the Committee asking notices to be issued by Regd. Post to all the defaulting subscribers for non-payment of bills has been very carefully examined. A study of the paying habits of the subscribers reveals that hardly 30 to 40 per cent subscribers pay within the due date, viz. 15 days. After reminder on telephone regarding pending bills, about 20 to 30 per cent of the subscribers settle the bills. We have nearly 24 lakh subscribers and issue about 2 crore bills in a year. It will virtually be an impossible task to attempt to issue registered reminders for 70% of 24 lakhs subscribers. This will not only dislocate the working in all T.R.A. offices but also will result in considerable work load at the post offices. We have the following safeguards to prevent irregular disconnection of telephones despite payment of bills :—

- (i) The subscribers have the option to register themselves for issue of Regd. reminders for outstanding bills at the cost of Rs. 3/- for each notice. A number of subscribers have been availing of this facility. The existence of this facility has also been directed to be widely publicised in the Information pages of Telephone Directories.
- (ii) We have recently opened late payment counters at the various Area Manager's offices at Delhi for receiving payment of bills after the due date. The payments received at this counter are being relayed to the A.Os.T.R. concerned on the same day so that they take care that the telephones for which payments have been received are not

disconnected. A report received from Delhi Telephone Dist. shows that after introduction of this procedure, there has practically been no instance of disconnection after payment of dues.

- (iii) Again we have amended the procedure for recovery of reconnection charges for telephones disconnected for non-payment with a view to see that subscribers are not put to unnecessary expenditure due to accidental disconnection of telephones for non-payment. Under this procedure telephones disconnected for non-payment of dues will be reconnected without levy of any reconnection charges if the dues are cleared within 10 days from the date of disconnection. Reconnection charges will be collected only in cases where the dues are paid after the tenth day of disconnection.

1.44 To safeguard subscribers' interest, instructions have been issued that written intimation about disconnection for non-payment should be sent to each subscriber by 15th day of disconnection.

1.45 We are not able to accept the recommendation of the Estimates Committee for issue of Regd. notices to all defaulters due to the following reasons :—

- (i) The subscribers have already the option to register themselves for issue of Regd. Reminders at the cost of Rs. 3/- per notice. Those who desire to avail of this facility may do so. Many subscribers may not like compulsorily to have a registered notice at their cost. It is also observed that most of the defaulters respond to the telephonic reminder and arrange payment.
- (ii) We have nearly 24 lakh subscribers. Regd. reminders to 60 to 70 per cent of the billed subscribers would be an uphill task.
- (iii) The enforcement of issue of Regd. notices may lead to a tendency to delay the payment till Regd. notices are received which will result in increase in the outstandings. The Estimates Committee also have been highly critical of the increasing trend in the outstandings.
- (iv) Cases of wrong disconnection are generally those where payments are made much after the due date and just a day or two before disconnection which is normally done between 30 to 35 days from the date of issue of bills.

1.46 Instructions have already been issued to all the units to reduce the time gap between the date of payment and actual note in records to the minimum possible extent. In Delhi Telephones, special late payment counters have been opened to overcome this problem and the result has been quite encouraging. This coupled with free restoration of telephones upto ten days from the date of disconnection will mitigate the difficulties of the subscribers to a great extent.

1.47 In view of the facts explained above, it is requested that the recommendation may not be insisted upon. This has been seen and approved by Minister (C)".



1.48 The Ministry's insistence on disconnecting telephones by telephonic notice on the ground of alleged non-payment of bills is wholly indefensible and highly unfair. The fact that in 1978-80, as many as 4783 telephones had been wrongly disconnected on this ground even when the relevant bills had already been paid shows how faulty is the system of disconnection of telephone by giving telephonic notice. The Ministry's arguments against giving registered notice to defaulting subscribers before disconnection do not carry conviction with the Committee. Telephonic notice is in fact no notice as the person receiving the call may not be the correct person or may not be responsible or mature enough to understand details of unpaid bills or its implications. The Committee, therefore, strongly reiterate that, whatever else the Department may like to do to effect recovery of unpaid bills, when the final stage to disconnect a telephone on the ground of alleged non-payment of bills is reached, the disconnection should not be ordered unless a written notice is sent to the subscriber at the latter's cost, by registered post, acknowledgement due.

*Telephone Directory*

**Recommendation—Sl. No. 112 (Para No. 9.74)**

1.49 Where telephone directories of various Divisions in a State are published at different points of time, the bound volume of such directories loses all utility. The Department should ensure that the telephone directories of various Divisions in a State are published at the same time.

1.50 In reply the Ministry has stated that, "the period of supply of paper for directories is spread round the year. Hence it is not possible to print all the Divisional directories at the same time."

1.51 The Committee are not satisfied with the Ministry's reply. Given proper planning and coordination the difficulty regarding availability of adequate quantity of paper cannot be said to be insuperable. The Committee would like that the directories of various divisions in a state should be published at the same time if they have to be of practical utility.

**Implementation of Recommendations :**

1.52 The Committee would like to emphasise that they attach the greatest importance to the implementing of the recommendations accepted by Government. They would, therefore, urge that Government should ensure expeditious implementation of recommendations accepted by them. In case where it is not possible to implement the recommendations in letter and spirit for any reason, the matter should be reported to the Committee in time with reasons for non-implementation.

1.53 The Committee also desire that final replies in respect of the recommendations contained in Chapter V of this Report may be furnished to the Committee expeditiously.

## CHAPTER II

### RECOMMENDATIONS/OBSERVATIONS THAT HAVE BEEN ACCEPTED BY GOVERNMENT

#### **Recommendation : Sr. No. 1 (Para Nos. 1·8 to 1·10)**

The Committee take note of the big stride made by telephone net-work since independence. From 321 telephone exchanges with 82,000 telephone connections in April 1948, the number has increased to 7430 telephone exchanges with over 20 lakh telephone connections, as in April 1980. Though, quantitatively the telephone net-work has shown an impressive growth rate of about 10 per cent per annum, this growth has not been able to keep pace with the demand which has been growing at the rate of 11 to 12 per cent per annum. The failure to meet the demand, it is stated, has led to more intensive use of existing telephones and over-loading to the telephone net-work which, in turn have resulted in poor quality of service.

The Committee have received numerous reports from almost all parts of the country of unsatisfactory working of telephone services. Complaints of wrong connections, over billing, lack of prompt attendance to faults, delays in trunk calls, poor functioning of STD System etc. etc., have also been persistently voiced in the press and discussed, off and on, in both the Houses of Parliament.

The Committee have in this report examined the working of the telephone system in the country and made suggestions to improve its efficiency. The Committee feel confident, that if the conclusions reached by them are taken serious note of and the suggestions made by them are implemented in letter and spirit, they will go a long way in toning up the efficiency of telephone system and giving satisfaction to subscribers.

#### **Reply of the Government**

The observations of the Committee have been noted. The suggestions made by the Committee in its report in regard to the poor efficiency will be given high priority. Serious consideration will be given towards implementation of the steps to tone up the efficiency of the telephone system adequately to satisfy the subscribers.

[Ministry of Communications O.M. No. 14-91/81-PHM dated  
13 November 1981.]

#### **Recommendation : Sr. No. 2 (Para No. 2.61)**

Local telephone services in metropolitan cities have come in for severe criticism in a large number of memoranda received by the Committee. The Committee are informed that Task Forces appointed (1980) to study the working of Calcutta and Delhi telephone systems have recommended gas pressurisation of telephone cables, construction of ducts for underground cables, replacement of badly damaged cables and certain other measures to be executed accordingly to a time bound programme in order to improve the efficiency of the Calcutta and Delhi systems. Certain works are stated to have been started already pending final decisions on their reports. Now

when the ills of Calcutta and Delhi telephones have been identified and remedial measures determined by expert bodies, the Committee expect that the Department will not lose any time to embark upon an implementation programme with a sense of urgency. It will be unfortunate if after all these exercises the story of 1980 monsoons is repeated in 1981. The Committee would like to know the precise progress made in implementation of the remedial measures suggested by these Task Forces and the time by which they will be fully executed.

### Reply of the Government

Task Forces to carry out external plant upgradation work in Calcutta and Delhi have been set up. Works have been taken up and would be executed with utmost expedition. Implementation of complete upgradation programme would, however, take about three years. The overall experience of Delhi Telephones during 1981 monsoon was better than during 1980. In Delhi under the Task Force programme, 4100 D.P's and subscribers fittings have been rehabilitated, jumpering of 39 cabinets and pillars have been re-arranged, works on 3 ducting schemes have been started and 685 Kms of underground cable have been pressurised with dry air. In Calcutta under Task Force programme 647 Kms of underground cable has been pressurised with dry air and 12.1 K.M. of Duct has been constructed.

[Ministry of Communications O.M. No. 14-91/81-PHM dated 13 November 1981.]

### Recommendation : Sr. No. 3 (Para No. 2.62)

The Committee feel that, in view of widespread criticism of telephone system in the country, the working of telephones in the country, especially in State capitals, should be studied critically by departmental task forces with a view to identifying the reasons for unsatisfactory services and launching organised programmes on the lines of Delhi and Calcutta to bring about abiding solution to the frequently occurring dislocations in the telephone network at a various places every now and then. The Committee would like the Department to make a beginning in this direction without delay.

### Reply of the Government

The reasons for unsatisfactory services are identified and remedial measures taken as a continuous process. The "Operations Planning Cells" in certain telephone districts and the "observation team" of the P&T Directorate identify from time to time the weak areas in the network. The MIS reports are analysed in depth to identify deterioration in performance levels and suitable remedial measures are taken.

In order to have regular watch, Operations Planning Cells are proposed to be set up in due course in all metropolitan and major telephone districts and also in atleast some Telecommunication Circles.

The Department proposes to set up Task Forces on the Delhi pattern in Patna, Srinagar and Ahmedabad, three of the important cities where the service is below par, to identify the reasons for unsatisfactory service and suggest suitable remedial measures.

[Ministry of Communications O.M. No. 14-91/81-PHM dated 13 November 1981.]

**Recommendation : Sr. No. 4 (Para No. 2-63)**

From Secretary (Communications) evidence before the Committee it appears that instructions issued in regard to the laying of under-ground cables were not observed in all respects by field staff. This is a serious reflection on the performance of field units, especially the supervisory officers at all levels. That explains to an extent the frequent faults developing in cable network. The Committee would like that the Department take serious notice of such cases of blatant disregard of departmental instructions in executing works and tighten measures to prevent their recurrence.

**Reply of the Government**

In order to avoid defects in laying of cables, the practice of acceptance-testing of cable construction work was introduced in 1979 in telephone districts. It will be ensured that this practice is actually followed in these districts. In addition, acceptance testing unit will be asked to report directly to the Additional General Manager or the General Manager. It will also be made obligatory on the part of the junior engineer who accepts the cable to sign a certificate to that effect.

The Department will study and work out a suitable procedure to ensure cable construction as per standards.

[Ministry of Communications O.M. No. 14-91/81-PHM dated  
13 November 1981.]

**Recommendation : Sr. No. 5 (Para No. 2.64)**

The Committee note that in Calcutta certain exchanges have outlived their normal life and are proposed to be replaced. The Committee would expect that a similar exercise of identifying exchanges in these cities also which might have outlived their normal life should be made and such exchanges as are found to have aged beyond economical repairs are replaced according to a phased programme to be drawn up by the Department keeping in view the inter se priority and availability of equipment.

**Reply of the Government**

The Department has a well laid procedure for retiring telephone exchange equipment that has outlived its normal life. The standing committee entrusted with the work has already approved retirement of about 80,000 lines of Strowger exchange equipment in different places. The actual programme of replacement has, however, been impeded by shortage of indigenous telephone exchange equipment. The situation is expected to improve by increased indigenous production and to some extent by imports.

[Ministry of Communications O.M. No. 14-91/81-PHM dated  
13 November 1981.]

**Recommendation : (Sr. No. 6 (Para No. 2.65)**

The Committee are informed that as part of the drive to minimise power failures because of which the exchanges cannot be kept at proper temperature and dust-free, direct feeder lines have been provided to some of the exchanges in Calcutta in cooperation with the local electricity authorities. Even though this is no guarantee against power interruptions, it will certainly minimise their number. This is a step in the right direc-

tion. The Committee would suggest that wherever efficiency of exchanges is found seriously affected by frequent power failures, the possibility of having direct feeder lines should be explored in consultation with the local electricity authorities and direct feeder lines provided wherever it is so possible.

#### **Reply of the Government**

Action has already been taken to provide alternate feeders for a few telephone exchanges in Calcutta. The General Managers will be instructed to take up with the electric supply authorities for provision of direct feeders/connections from emergency points depending on need and availability.

[Ministry of Communications O.M. No. 14-91/81-PHM dated 13 November 1981.]

#### **Recommendation : Sr. No. 7 (Para No. 2-66)**

The Committee are informed that wrong number faults, cross connections, disconnections in the midst of talk and engaged tone faults etc. can be minimised by a systematic inspection and maintenance of exchange equipment and channels and replacement of worn out parts. The Committee are concerned to note that the Department have not always found it possible to carry out routine maintenance of exchange equipment at periodical intervals. What has pained the Committee is that the Department have been aware of the unsatisfactory position regarding maintenance of exchanges and still have not been able to do much in the matter. The neglect of maintenance of exchanges is inexcusable. The Committee would like the Department to give highest importance to the maintenance schedules and periodical overhauling of exchange equipment, channels, circuits etc. and ensure through a regular feed-back that the maintenance and overhauling schedules are adhere to scrupulously, failing which the head of the exchanges should be held accountable.

#### **Reply of the Government**

Comprehensive maintenance schedules have been prescribed and the various inspecting officers check the records to see whether these are being followed.

Instructions to General/District Managers will be issued to ensure adherence to test schedules and devise methods so that fixing of responsibility is possible in case of any non-compliance/slackness.

[Ministry of Communications O.M. No. 14-91/81-PHM dated 13 November 1981.]

#### **Recommendation : Sr. No. 9 (Para No. 2-68)**

The Committee find that as against the national average of 54 complaints per 100 telephones per month in 1978-79 and 56 complaints in 1979-80, the incidence of complaints was much higher than the national average in Gauhati, Chandigarh, Ahmedabad, Trivandrum, Srinagar, Bombay, Patna, Lucknow and Delhi. The Ministry have stated that they have taken up a number of improvement programmes like pressurisation of cables, replacement of over-head lines, rehabilitation of external plants, use of jelly-filled cables for distribution network, etc. etc. The Committee

would suggest that all those places where the complaint rate is significantly higher than the national average should receive specific attention of the Department and the measures considered necessary to improve the telephone service, there should be taken according to a time-bound programme and its implementation monitored with a view to providing corrective whenever and wherever it is found necessary.

### Reply of the Government

A control limit of 40—45 complaints per 100 telephones has been fixed. The field units are required to take action when, during any period, the performance deteriorates below the control limits.

The places where the complaint rate is more than the respective group average, have been identified and the General Managers will be asked to work-out and implement time-bound programme to improve performance by atleast 10% over the performance in the preceding year. The progress of the programme will be monitored on quarterly basis by the P&T Directorate.

[Ministry of Communications O.M. No. 14-91/81-PHM dated  
13 November 1981.]

### Recommendation : Sr. No. 10 (Para No. 2. 69)

The Committee are pained to note the inordinately long time taken to rectify a telephone defect in Ahmedabad, Bombay and Calcutta. In 1979-80 the average time taken to rectify a fault was 12 hours in Ahmedabad, 14 hours in Bombay and 16.9 hours in Calcutta, as compared to the national average of 5.4 hours. In the first six months of 1980, the position further deteriorated at these places and the average time went up to 16.2 hours, 20.9 hours and 19.4 hours respectively. The Committee also find that at many places like Ahmedabad, Trivandrum, Bombay, Delhi, Bhubaneswar, Lucknow, Calcutta, Gangtok and Shillong the actual time taken in removing faults was much more than the targets fixed by the Department. According to the Department the targets were fixed on the high side and they were still trying to achieve them. The Committee agree that targets should be fixed at a higher level to serve as a challenge to the staff but the targets should be such as can with a little extra effort to be reached and for that extra effort the Department on their part should create a proper atmosphere to inspire the staff to rise to the occasion. The Committee would like to judge the Department's efficiency not merely by the measures taken but by actual reduction brought about in the number of complaints and the average time taken to repair a fault.

### Reply of the Government

The suggestion of the Committee that targets should be fixed in such a way that while they serve as a challenge to the staff, they are capable of being reached by inspiring staff to rise to the occasion, noted. The Department proposes to set a target, for improvement, of 10 to 15% over the performance of the preceding year in respect of complaints and fault repair.

[Ministry of Communications, O.M. No. 14-91/81-PHM dated  
13 November 1981.]

**Recommendation : Sr. No. 11 (Para No. 2.70)**

The Committee would suggest that at places like Ahmedabad, Bombay, Calcutta where the high fault duration is attributed to damage caused by developmental activities undertaken by the civic bodies an arrangement may be evolved in cooperation with the civic bodies and local administrations to regulate the road diggings so as to minimise the possibilities of damage to underground cables and their theft. Timely preventive measures would not only minimise faults but also save precious time and money of the Department which are spent on detection and repairs of faults and which could then be utilised more fruitfully elsewhere.

**Reply of the Government**

At present in most places, coordination is done directly with each concerned organisation.

An inter-utility organisation has been formed in Bombay to coordinate excavation works of various agencies and follow a set code of conduct. The other field units specially where the city has a very large population have been advised to form similar organisations wherever considered possible.

[Ministry of Communications O.M. No. 14-91/81-PHM dated 13 November 1981.]

**Recommendation : Sr. No. 12 (Para Nos. 2.71 and 2.72)**

There has been widespread dissatisfaction with the functioning of service telephone numbers 198 and 199. It is reported that first of all 198 and 199 are difficult to get at. If after many efforts a subscriber succeeds to register his complaint on 198, prompt action is not taken to repair the fault. Assistance from 199 is stated to be almost illusory as this number is either mostly engaged or takes a long time to respond. The Department have refuted complaints against 198 and 199 and have tried to explain delays in rectifying faults due to congestion on these service telephones.

The Committee find that in 1978-79 for every 100 telephones, there were 139 complaints per month registered on 198 in Gauhati, 118 in Chandigarh, 115 in Trivandrum, 79 in Bombay, 73 in Ahmedabad and 77 in Delhi. The Committee also find that while at places like Calcutta and Delhi a subscriber has to make on an average one call per complaint to telephone number 198, at Hyderabad, he has to make 5 calls per complaint and at Srinagar, Bhopal, Jaipur, Madras and Lucknow two calls per complaint. Wherever a subscriber has to make more than one call per complaint the inference is obvious that the complaint service (198) is not working satisfactorily. The Committee would like the Department to evaluate the complaint service (198) at each place from this angle and take remedial measures to tone up the efficiency of the service.

**Reply of the Government**

The Department will study the response time of '198' and fault repair service in greater depth. The study will be made in Bombay, Hyderabad and Indore telephone districts. Steps, based on the results of this study, will be taken to improve '198' and fault repair service in all the places.

[Ministry of Communications O.M. No. 14-91/81-PHM dated 13 November 1981.]

**Comments of the Committee**

Please see Para 1.18 of the Report.

**Recommendation : Sr. No. 16 (Para Nos. 2.76 to 2.78)**

The Committee are shocked to find that the failure rate of calls in local network in Calcutta has been as high as 32 per cent in 1978-79 and 1979-80. With 18 per cent failure rate, the position in Delhi is not good either. As compared to 1978-79 there has been significant deterioration in performance level of local service in 1979-80 in Ahmedabad (failure rate 12.2 per cent), Hyderabad (6.3 per cent), Bangalore (7.7 per cent), Bombay (9.6 per cent), Chandigarh (5.9 per cent) Madras (5.1 per cent) and Lucknow (7.4 per cent).

The wrong call phenomenon is no less irritating than the high failure rate. In a way it is more hurting to the subscribers in-as-much-as they have to pay for every wrong call. According to approximate calculations, a sum of about Rs. 25 lakhs was wrongly derived by the Department in 1979-80 on account of wrong calls. That wrong call rate was less than 0.8 per cent of the total calls gives no consolation to the subscribers who actually get wrong calls and have to pay for them.

The Committee view both these phenomena failure of calls and wrong calls with concern. They expect the Department also to view them seriously and spare no effort to keep them under control.

**Reply of the Government**

The 'wrong number' cases due to subscribers dialling errors form a large proportion. The delay in publishing Directories also contributes to this factor.

The Department has already formed Operation Planning Cells in Major and Metro Telephone Districts, to monitor the performance of telephone exchange equipment. Establishment of similar Operations Planning Cells in Telecom. circles is under consideration.

The Department is also taking steps to ensure publication of telephone directories in all the metropolitan and major telephone districts regularly in the fourth quarter of each calendar year.

[Ministry of Communications O.M. No. 14-91/81-PHM dated 13 November 1981.]

**Recommendation : Sr. No. 18 (Para No. 2.80)**

The Committee are informed that telephone officers of various level at certain selected places have been instructed to be available in their offices between fixed hours to meet the subscribers without prior appointment and redress their grievances. This is a welcome arrangement. The Committee would like similar arrangement to be made in all places in India and due publicity given to it for general information.

**Reply of the Government**

Instructions have been issued to all places, that officers should be available in their offices between fixed hours to meet the subscribers without prior appointment and redress their grievances. The General Managers will be asked to send a report of compliance.



Instructions have been issued to open Customer Service Centres in all metropolitan and major telephone districts. Several such Centres have already started functioning. Adequate publicity is being given to these Centres and their performance is being watched.

[Ministry of Communications O.M. No. 14-91/81-PHM dated 13 November 1981.]

**Recommendation : Sr. No. 20 (Para No. 2.96)**

All the telephone fitting—external and internal at subscribers premises are required to be inspected by Telephone Inspectors every six months and supervisory officers according to a prescribed schedule. The Ministry have stated that in Delhi, normally subscribers' signatures are taken after inspection but not so in Madras, Bombay and Calcutta where record is kept by Inspectors in their diaries and there is no cross-check. As against the claim of the Department that telephone instruments at the subscribers premises are checked by officials at various levels, representatives of non-official organisations who appeared before the Committee stated that they were not aware of any such inspections. This is rather intriguing. In the circumstances, the Committee cannot but urge that a uniform system of inspections with subscribers' signatures and cross-checks at supervisory levels is what is needed in all Districts/Circles and the Department should introduce it without delay.

**Reply of the Government**

Orders will be re-iterated for strict enforcement of the existing instructions on the subject of inspections of subscribers premises by Phone Inspectors, percentage checks by Junior Engineer, SDO and Divisional Engineer. The General Managers will be asked to ensure that the system has been introduced at all levels and that subscribers' signatures are being obtained invariably on the inspection cards.

[Ministry of Communications O.M. No. 14-91/81-PHM dated 13 November 1981.]

**Recommendation : Sr. No. 22 (Para Nos. 3.41 to 3.43)**

Subscribers in various parts of the country have brought to the Committee's notice that they find it very difficult to get trunk number 180 for booking a trunk call, though according to the Departmental standards 90 per cent of the incoming calls on 180 are to be answered within 10 seconds. The Department have, however, admitted that during peak hours the answer to calls on trunk booking number 180 is not so prompt as it should be.

The Committee note from the information furnished by the Ministry that there is no uniform pattern about the number of operators on duty each day or the number of circuits on trunk service numbers 180 and 181. For example in 1979-80, at Bombay 100 operators managed 60 circuits on No. 180; at Calcutta 85 operators handled 81 circuits and at Delhi 103 operators managed 80 circuits. The position on No. 181 was also similar. The Ministry have stated that there is no uniform proportion of telephone operators and circuits available at each service at each station due to the fact that the "day-to-busy hour" ratio of calls varies from place to place.

The Committee feel that inadequate number of circuits and operators with reference to density of traffic could be one of the reasons why subscribers might be finding it difficult to get through to Trunk Service Nos. 180 & 181. They recommend that as agreed to by the Ministry a review may be made of the number of circuits and operators on trunk service Nos. 180 & 181 in each city and additional circuits and operators provided wherever their number is found to be inadequate.

#### **Reply of the Government**

Recommendation accepted; in fact, this is a continuing process in the Department.

Special traffic measurements are being taken and circuits and operators will be provided as per the requirement of traffic.

[Ministry of Communications O.M. No. 14-91/81-PHM dated 13 November 1981.]

#### **Recommendation : Sr. No. 24 (Para No. 3-45)**

The Departmental instructions provide for automatic re-booking of a trunk call at midnight if the trunk call earlier booked has not been put through unless the subscriber cancels the call. In actual practice, however, this procedure is not followed and the trunk calls are cancelled at midnight unless subscribers themselves exercise their option for rebooking the call at midnight. The reason given by the Department that shortage of staff during night makes it difficult to automatically rebook all calls pending at midnight is untenable. The Committee suggest that telephone operators should enquire from the subscribers at the time of booking of trunk calls whether or not they would like the calls to be kept alive beyond midnight. Such a procedure would avoid not only inconvenience to the subscribers but also unnecessary work in the exchange.

#### **Reply of the Government**

Recommendations accepted. Instructions have been issued to the effect that subscribers may indicate at the time of booking trunk calls whether or not they would like the calls to be kept pending beyond midnight. The facility will be made available only for calls booked after 7.00 P.M.

[Ministry of Communications O.M. No. 14-91/81-PHM dated 13 November 1981.]

#### **Recommendation : Sr. No. 25 (Para No. 3-46)**

According to a general yardstick of standards lightening calls are expected to be put through within 15 minutes (maximum one hour) urgent calls within one hour and ordinary calls within two hours. The Committee have, however, found that in 1978-79 and 1979-80 average time taken in putting through urgent trunk calls has been two hours in Ahmedabad, Bombay, Calcutta and Delhi. In the case of ordinary calls it has been three hours in Calcutta, four hours in Delhi, six hours in Port Blair and three hours in Chandigarh. The Committee has also found that trunk call service in most of the metropolitan cities had deteriorated in 1979-80 as compared to the previous years. The Department have agreed to commission immediately in-depth studies into the problems of delays in trunk calls in various cities. The Committee expect that these studies would be completed without delay and remedial measures to tone up the

efficiency of the trunk call services to the level of the yardstick laid down by the Department taken expeditiously.

### Reply of the Government

Recommendation accepted in principle. For nine metropolitan and major telephone districts a system of monthly and daily monitoring of trunk services has already been introduced. Remedial measures as are feasible are being taken to improve the trunk efficiency.

Certain measures such as recruiting and posting of short duty operators, increasing the number of positions and circuits are being taken.

Trunk efficiency of other major towns is also being watched for improvement. In addition to this fault control arrangements are being augmented.

[Ministry of Communications O.M. No. 14-91/81-PHM dated 13 November 1981.]

### Recommendation : Sr. No. 26 (Para Nos. 3.47 and 3.48)

The Committee are disappointed to note that effectiveness rate of trunk calls has in no State capital reached the level of 80 per cent which is the objective of the Department. The effectiveness rate was as low as 40 per cent in Imphal, 49 per cent in Gauhati and Calcutta. It ranged between 50 and 60 per cent in Patna, Bhopal, Bhubaneswar, Gangtok, Agartala, Lucknow and Port Blair and only at three State capitals effectiveness ratio was more than 70 per cent.

The Committee would like the Department to analyse the reasons for poor effectiveness rate of trunk with a view to taking remedial measures. The Committee would also like that where trunk calls were getting delayed or obstructed because of inadequate trunk capacity or breakdowns in the trunk lines, the Department should seriously consider increasing the number of trunk circuits and upgrading the maintenance of trunk network. They would like to be apprised of the measures taken in this regard.

### Reply of the Government

Recommendation accepted. The augmentation of circuits where necessary is being regularly watched and implemented to the extent possible through Regional Trunk Planning Committees set up for the purpose.

[Ministry of Communications O.M. No. 14-91/81-PHM dated 13 November 1981.]

### Recommendation : Sr. No. 28 (Para No. 3.50)

A trunk call is charged at the rate relevant to the time of maturing of the call. That is to say, if a call is booked at a time when it is chargeable at full rate, but it matures at a time when the concessional rate applies, the call will be charged at concessional rate. The Committee would expect this aspect to be made clear in the next issue of the Directory for general information.

### Reply of the Government

Recommendation accepted. Instructions have been issued to this effect.

[Ministry of Communications O.M. No. 14-91/81-PHM dated 13 November 1981.]

**Recommendation : Sr. No. 29 (Para 3-51)**

The Committee were shocked at the reports of malpractices in the trunk exchanges received from subscribers in various cities. It was alleged that Trunk calls booked in normal course are put through but not so shown on the trunk call tickets thus helping the subscriber avoid payment; trunk calls are put through by operators without any booking; trunk calls are put through as urgent or lightening calls but shown as 'ordinary' calls on the ticket; trunk calls regularly booked are not put through promptly and in turn unless influence is brought to bear on the operator. These are allegations of serious nature and should be taken serious note of by the Department.

**Reply of the Government**

Recommendation accepted. To have a watch over the behaviour of operators and to detect malpractices, the Department constantly watches at random the activity of the telephone operators through special observation Positions which have been installed in all big trunk telephone exchanges. The telephone operators who are passing free trunk calls or indulge in any malpractice or rude behaviour are suitably dealt with by taking disciplinary action.

[Ministry of Communications O.M. No. 14-91/81-PHM dated 13 November 1981.]

**Recommendation : Sr. No. 31 (Para No, 3.53)**

The Committee take note of the Departments' plan to revive the practice of transferring operators in rotation from one exchange to another as part of drive to prevent malpractices in trunk exchanges and hope that this practice would be followed uniformly and judiciously.

**Reply of the Government**

Recommendation accepted. Instructions on the subject exist according to which telephone operators in trunk exchanges are required to rotate to man different positions in their spell of duty so that they do not remain posted indefinitely on one trunk position and on a particular route. Periodically the operator is allotted different type of work such as trunk booking, trunk assistance, etc.

The operators are also transferred to other types of work such as testing of local lines, special services and sometimes to other exchanges also in a division.

[Ministry of Communications O.M. No. 14-91/81-PHM dated 13 November 1981.]

**Recommendation : Sr. No. 32 (Para No. 3.54)**

The Committee would also urge that telephone operators found indulging in malpractices should be given deterrent punishment.

**Reply of the Government**

Recommendation accepted. In fact this is already the declared policy of the Department.

- (i) Vigilant watch is kept on sensitive points.
- (ii) Observations are being made on trunk lines.

(iii) Flying squads have been set up in metropolitan telephone districts to;

(a) make surprise checks.

(b) take preventive action in sensitive areas for curbing malpractices. Whenever any specific instance comes to the notice of the department, action is taken against the officials at fault.

(iv) Instructions have been re-iterated for taking deterrent disciplinary action in cases here passing of free calls are detected.

[Ministry of Communications O.M. No. 14-91/81-PHM dated 13 November 1981.]

**Recommendation : Sr. No. 33 (Para No. 3.55)**

The Committee have been unable to appreciate the reasons why arrangements to test the trunk lines thrice a day have been made only in a few circles and not in all circles. Trunk services being what they are, the Committee would like the Department to introduce a system of testing of trunk lines in all the circles with immediate effect.

**Reply of the Government**

Recommendation accepted. Instructions also exists vide 3-9/78-PHT, dated 25-4-1978 for testing the long distance P.C.O. trunk lines 3 times a day for ensuring availability of trunk lines. It has been already stated in oral evidence given to the Estimate Committee that trunk lines are tested once in the morning in bigger exchanges unlike PCO lines and this is considered adequate.

[Ministry of Communications O.M. No. 14-91/81-PHM dated for long.

**Recommendation : Sr. No. 35 (Para No. 4.20)**

The Committee note that as on 1 April, 1979 there were as many as 7557 subscribers on the Waiting List to have their Telephones STD barred. It is unfair to force STD facility on a subscriber who does not want it. The Committee would like the waiting list to be cleared at the earliest and ensure that the requests of subscribers for barring of STD facility are not kept pending equipment standard.

**Reply of the Government**

STD facility is provided normally to all subscribers. Barring of STD is done on specific requests. For providing this facility, additional equipment is required in Strowger exchanges. Generally in MAX-I type of Strowger exchanges there is provisioning of STD barring equipment for one subscriber out of every 10 subscribers. Now since more requests are received for barring, it is planned to provide barring equipment one for every 5 subscribers as

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There is no wating list in Cross-bar exchanges.

[Ministry of Communications O.M. No. 14-91/81-PHM dated 13 November 1981.]

**Recommendation : Sr. No. 37 (Para No. 4.22)**

A suitable amendment to the Indian Telegraphs Act is also stated to be under examination with the object of making unauthorised diversion of tele-

phone lines a cognizable offence and thereby deterring people from committing misuse of STD facilities. The Committee except this measure to be finalised early.

**Reply of the Government :**

Recommendation accepted. Amendments are being processed in consultation with the concerned Ministries. It is expected that amendments will be put up to Parliament in the coming session.

[Ministry of Communications O.M. No. 14-91/81-PHM dated  
13 November 1981.]

**Recommendation : Sr. No. 38 (Para No. 4.23)**

Complaints of high rate of failure in establishing STD connections with outside telephones have reached the Committee. The Department have stated that measures to improve the performance of STD have been under study in the Department on a continuing basis. The Committee would suggest that random checks on the quality on STD service between various points should be a regular feature in the Department as only through such random checks can they come to know of the congestion or poor quality of service on STD system. The Department should analyse the results of random checks and take concrete measures including increase in the number of circuits, where necessary, to improve the quality of service between trunk points.

**Reply of the Government :**

(i) Measures to improve performance of STD service are being taken on a continuing basis.

(ii) Regular checks of service through random sampling tests on statistical basis by operation planning groups in large installation and by maintenance units in smaller units are being carried out as part of Management Information System. Summaries are reported regularly to Directorate where the routes showing poor performance are analysed for action by concerned units.

(iii) Periodical service quality tests are conducted by staff of Regional Traffic Superintendents. These are more detailed tests than the MIS tests and help in identifying the weak links. The results of service quality tests are analysed in Directorate and concerned units asked to take corrective maintenance steps.

(iv) Limited monitoring of junction availability on important TAX and STD routes is done. The Heads of Circles are regularly kept informed on routes with poor availability for corrective action.

(v) Automatic traffic recording and analysis system (AUTRAX) has been installed in Delhi under ATRC scheme to monitor junction of Delhi TAX and STD centres. 5000 lines terminal units have been installed and commissioned at Calcutta and Bombay TAXs. These are connected to Central Data Control unit at Delhi and information passed back. Proposal for installing Central Data Collecting units at Calcutta, Bombay and Madras and terminal units at all TAX Centres is under clearance from D.O.E.

[Ministry of Communications O.M. No. 14-91/81-PHM dated  
13 November 1981.]

**Recommendation : Sr. No. 39 (Para Nos. 4.24 & 4.25)**

As regards excessive bills on account of misuse of telephones, the Committee have dealt with the problem in another chapter.

There is a wide spread demand for installation of completely sealed individual meters at the premises of the subscribers even at their own cost. The Committee are disappointed to note that the Department have not so far found it technically feasible to install such meters at the subscribers premises as they have not found it possible so far to devise tamper proof meters. The Committee would like that the need for devising a tamper proof meter for installation at the subscribers' premises should continue to engage the attention of the Telecommunication Research Centre and the Centre should make all efforts to devise such a meter without which the subscribers may never have full satisfaction.

**Reply of the Government**

It is true that the P&T Department has not so far found a technically suitable design for installation of tamper-proof meters at the subscriber's premises. And this is not the difficulty faced by the Indian P&T alone. A study of trends abroad indicates that no administration carries out billing on the basis of telephone meters installed at subscribers' premises. However, the Telecommunication Research Centre will continue to keep track of the developments in this direction by other administrations in the world and the take appropriate action.

[Ministry of Communications O.M. No. 14-91/81-PHM dated  
13 November 1981.]

**Recommendation : Sr. Nos. 41 & 42 (Paras 5.12 / 5.13)**

The Committee note that after certain peculiar features in the waiting list registers of Delhi and Ahmedabad were brought by them to the notice of the Ministry, the Ministry have issued new instructions to make the registers tamper-proof. It is unfortunate that senior officers allowed the waiting list registers to be maintained all along in a manner which was neither uniform in all Districts nor could be accepted as tamper-proof. The Committee cannot over-emphasize the need for maintaining waiting lists registers strictly in accordance with the order of receipt of applications and not allowing any loophole which could be taken advantage of by any person to tamper with them. Heads of District/Circles should be made personally accountable for the clean and correct maintenance of such registers.

The Committee find that the Waiting List registers are kept with the Head Clerk of the concerned District/Division though responsibility for proper upkeep of the registers is cast on the commercial officer. If Commercial Officer is responsible for their proper upkeep, there is no reason why these registers should not remain in his personal custody.

**Reply of the Government**

Recommendations accepted. Instructions on these points have already been issued.

[Ministry of Communications O.M. No. 14-91/81-PHM dated  
13 November 1981.]

**Recommendation : Sr. No. 43, (Para No. 5.14 & 5.15)**

As on 1st April, 1980 there were 3,35,548 applicants on the waiting lists for telephone connections all over the country and the average waiting period varies from 7 months to 2 years, 2 months in various parts of the country.

The Committee have been informed that people have been waiting for years to get the telephone connections but they do not know when they will get the telephones or where they stand on the waiting list vis-a-vis other applicants. The Ministry have stated that at the time of adding or opening of a new exchange advertisements are published in the local press for the information of general public indicating the dates upto which waiting lists have been cleared in each category of registration, and such publication has been done in Madras, Delhi and Bombay. The Committee would like such advertisements to be published at all State Capitals and such a publication should be done not only when new exchange is added but at regular intervals. This would not only keep the general public informed of the progress in clearance of waiting list but would also enable them to bring to the notice of authorities any malpractices in the matter of provision of telephones out of turn.

**Reply of the Government**

Waiting list clearance position is published in Telephone Directorates and also at the time of out-over of exchanges. Instructions have been issued to all units to publish waiting list clearance statement in the leading newspapers at the time of bulk release of connections.

[Ministry of Communications O.M. No. 14-91/81-PHM dated 13 November 1981.]

**Recommendation : Sr. No. 45, (Para No. 5.22)**

Pending second opinion and legal action, one thing that can be done immediately is to intensify vigilance over telephone officials who are suspected of collusion with brokers and agents or who are working in sensitive posts and give deterrent punishments to those officials whose involvement in any irregular or illegal action is established beyond doubt.

**Reply of the Government**

Instructions have been issued that whenever such malpractices come to the notice of the Department, deterrent action is taken against the officials at fault. The Department has set up flying squads in Metropolitan Telephone Districts of Delhi, Bombay, Calcutta and Madras to :—

- (1) make surprise checks;
- (2) take preventive action in sensitive areas for curbing malpractices.

Based on the experience gained from the working of the flying squads, any further action necessary will be taken.

Where outsiders are involved the matter is referred to C.B.I.

[Ministry of Communications O.M. No. 14-91/81-PHM dated 13 November 1981.]



**Recommendation : Sr. No. 47, (Para No. 5.24)**

In order to counteract the efforts of unauthorised agencies, the Department, it is stated, publish advertisement cautioning the public not to enter into contracts with unauthorised agents. Such advertisements should be published periodically and, if possible, the penal action taken in regard to unauthorised telephones may also be given publicity.

**Reply of the Government**

An advertisement has been published from the P&T Directorate cautioning the public against such agents.

[Ministry of Communications O.M. No. 14-91/81-PHM dated 13 November 1981.]

**Recommendation : Sr. No. 50, (Para No. 5.38)**

The Committee would also like the Department to keep a special watch on the quality of service provided by rural telephone exchanges and make arrangements to ensure that telephone lines and telephone instruments in rural areas going out of order are attended to promptly.

**Reply of the Government**

Group Maintenance practices is being followed in rural areas. A motor cycle has been provided to the Junior Engineer incharge of maintenance of a group of small automatic exchanges. Copper weld wires are being used in place of copper and ACSR wires to reduce cases of theft.

[Ministry of Communications O.M. No. 14-91/81-PHM dated 13 November 1981.]

**Recommendation : Sr. No. 51, (Para No. 5.39)**

The Committee find that according to the preliminary telephone needs of rural areas so far. They would urge a complete a long distance public call telephone is extended to about 45,000 strategically placed centres in the country, telephone service could be made available within about seven kilometres from practically all villages in the country. The Department hope that this could be achieved during the 7th Plan period. A Task Force in the Department is working on a new strategy to achieve this objective. The Committee cannot over emphasize the need to extend telephone services in rural areas in such a way these services are available within easy distance from each village. The Committee hope that the Department will be able to determine the strategy to spread telephone services in rural areas expeditiously and start implementing it in right earnest according to a systematic programme.

**Reply of the Government**

The Sixth Plan targets provide for installation of 20,000 Long Distance Public Telephone (LDPT) in the rural areas. Achievement of these targets is being vigorously pursued. Supplies of line and wire material for connecting the LDPTs are expected to improve this year, because of better supplies of raw material. Imported multi-access VHF radio systems are to be tried out in 12 different areas in the country. These supplies are expected to be received progressively from May, 1982 and will be expeditiously installed, to assist further planning and indigenous manufacture of

such systems. The report of the Task Force which was set up in the P&T Department to make recommendations on future patterns of development of rural telecommunications is also under consideration.

[Ministry of Communications O.M. No. 14-91/81-PHM dated 13 November 1981.]

**Recommendation : Sr. No. 52, (Para No. 5-40 to 5-42)**

The Committee are informed that the P&T Department have been following a liberal policy for extending telephone facilities to remote and hilly areas. This policy has been reviewed from time to time and according to the present policy telecommunication facilities can be provided at District Headquarters, Sub-Divisional Headquarters, Tehsil Headquarters, Sub-Tehsil Headquarters Block Headquarters, and places with population of 2,500 or above in hilly areas or backward areas without any conditions of minimum revenue. Telephone facilities can also be provided at other hilly and backward places provided anticipated revenue as prescribed vis-avis annual recurring expenditure is assured.

The Committee note that there are 3,127 category stations in hilly areas which qualify for telephone connections. Out of these 1,960 places had been provided with telephone facilities as on 31st March, 1980. The remaining 1167 places in hilly areas are expected to be provided with telephone facilities by the end of Sixth Five Year Plan if they fulfil the condition regarding minimum revenue condition.

Telephone needs of people of hilly and remote areas should not be examined merely on revenue considerations. These should be examined on human, social and other considerations as well. The Committee hope that taking an overall view, the Department would cover the maximum number of hilly and remote areas during the Sixth Five Year Plan and not deny telephone services to genuinely needy hilly and remote places just because they cannot assure the prescribed revenue.

**Reply of the Government**

Although the P&T as a Commercial Department has to keep revenue considerations constantly in view, financial norms have been specially relaxed for public call offices in hilly and remote areas in view of special needs of the latter. Feasibility of further relaxation in such norms will be examined. The Department has also decided to try out "multiaccess V.H.F. radio relay system" for provision of long distance public telephones and encourage their manufacture in the country. These systems will have special utility in hilly areas.

[Ministry of Communications O.M. No. 14-91/81-PHM dated 13 November 1981.]

**Recommendation : Sr. No. 54, (Para No. 5-44 to 5-45)**

It has been brought to the Committee's notice that even certain District Headquarters like Keylong (Headquarters of Lahaul and Spiti District) and Kalpa (Headquarter of Kinnaur District in Himachal Pradesh) and a number of other category stations such as sub-divisional headquarters and tehsil headquarters have not been provided with telephone services so far. The Committee recommend that District Headquarters and category stations should be provided with telephone services expeditiously.

Far flung border areas and strategic places deserve special priority for telephone connection in the interest of national security. The Committee

would strongly urge that these places should be identified and brought on the telephone network at the earliest.

### Reply of the Government

Regarding provision of telephone facilities in category stations such as District, Sub division, Tehsil and Sub-Tehsil headquarters, it is mentioned that out of total of 2,775 such places 2,569 (92.6%) places have been provided with telephone facilities and 2,587 (93.3%) have been provided with telegraph facilities as on 30-9-1980. Instructions have been issued to cover the category stations on priority basis during the 6th Plan period. Instructions will be issued to examine the cases of far-flung border areas and strategic places as identified by appropriate authorities for provisions of telecommunication facilities progressively during the plan period.

[Ministry of Communications O.M. No. 14-91/81-PHM dated  
13 November 1981.]

### Recommendation : Sr. No. 55 (Para No. 5.46)

The Committee take note of the satellite communication system which has been provided to serve, among other places, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, northern-most points of Himachal Pradesh, Ladakh and similar other remote and strategic places. The satellite communication is certainly a step in the right direction as it provides modern communication links between far-flung areas and rest of the country. But it has been brought to the Committee's notice that the present arrangement in these far-flung areas is not able to meet the local needs fully. The Committee suggest that the present satellite communication should be adequately strengthened to provide efficient Telecommunication service within these areas also.

### Reply of the Government

The Committee's suggestion that the present satellite communication should be adequately augmented and strengthened to provide efficient telecommunication services is accepted. Towards this objective, four-fold action has been initiated :

- (1) Action has been taken to increase the number of channels at the working Earth Stations to cater for the growth in traffic.
- (2) To extend the coverage of satellite communication, 24 more stations (including three portable ones) are under installation.
- (3) For efficient performance and upkeep of the sophisticated satellite equipment located mostly in remote areas, competent staff has to be posted at remote places which do not have the usual amenities. In order to attract proper staff, P&T Department has taken up the case for special pay to satellite staff which is being pursued with the Finance Ministry.
- (4) For intensive training of the staff in satellite technology, a number of courses have been started in P&T's Advanced Level Telecom. Training Centre and training has also been arranged with the Foreign suppliers of the equipment in their Works.

[Ministry of Communications O.M. No. 14-91/81-PHM dated  
13 November 1981.]

**Recommendation : Sr. No. 57, (Para No. 5.57)**

The Committee would expect that STD and no-delay services should be established between the industrial suburbs and the neighbouring cities without delay so that the industries are not put to any inconvenience.

**Reply of the Government**

Recommendation accepted in principle. In order to provide 'no-delay' trunk facility to more and more stations, the norms have been liberalised. Heads of Circles have been empowered to commission 'no-delay' services provided the route carries 30 to 50 trunk calls a day, and adequate boards, circuits and staffs are available.

[Ministry of Communications O.M. No. 14-91/81-PHM dated  
13 November 1981.]

**Recommendation : Sr. No. 61, (Para No. 6.21)**

It has been brought to the Committee's notice that PCOs remain largely out of order and no attempt is made to set them right promptly. The Ministry have stated that PCOs with CCB instruments are subjected to mishandling by unscrupulous persons by using fake coins and other means, which render them unserviceable. Even though orders exist for their regular inspection by Departmental officers, Secretary (Communications) agreed during evidence that inspection was not satisfactory in all areas and it required tightening up. Needless to say, the purpose of providing PCOs is defeated if they are not kept in working order or if the latest directories are not available there. The Committee would like that responsibility for maintenance of PCOs should be specially assigned to designated officers, area-wise, and they should be held accountable if the faults in the PCOs in their charge remain unattended for unreasonably long time or if latest directories are not available at such PCOs. The Department would do well to devise a suitable information system to keep a watch on the functioning of PCOs.

**Reply of the Government**

Instructions have been issued on the lines indicated by the Committee.

[Ministry of Communications O.M. No. 14-91/81-PHM dated  
13 November 1981.]

**Recommendation : Sr. No. 62, (Para No. 6.22)**

The Committee note that out of a total number of 10,883 PCOs in state capital, 4880 are of 'attended type'. The Committee are of the view that it would not only make for a more efficient maintenance of PCOs but also achieve a great social purpose of rehabilitation of physically handicapped persons and ex-servicemen if more and more PCOs are of 'attended type' and allotted to such persons. They are glad to note the Government decision taken in this regard in December 1980. The Committee would like to suggest that, hereafter, as far as possible, the PCOs should be of 'attended type' and the physically handicapped and the needy ex-servicemen should have the first claim on them.

**Reply of the Government**

Recommendation accepted. More than 400 attended public telephones manned by handicapped have been opened as on 16-9-1981.

[Ministry of Communications O.M. No. 14-91/81-PHM dated  
13 November 1981.]

**Recommendation : Sr. No. 64, (Para No. 6.24)**

The Committee would like adequate publicity to be given to this social welfare measure, so as to attract the right type of persons for the new PCOs.

**Reply of the Government**

Recommendation accepted. Adequate publicity has been given.

[Ministry of Communications O.M. No. 14-91/81-PHM dated  
13 November 1981.]

**Recommendation : Sr. No. 65, (Para No. 7.54)**

From the information furnished by the Department regarding targets and achievements for telephones, the Committee find that during the Fourth and Fifth Plans, achievements were much below the physical targets. The Department have attributed the shortfalls in achievements to shortfalls in the supplies of equipment, notably the switching equipment and cables. With the Sixth Plan target tentatively almost double that in the Fifth Plan and with the Sixth Plan outlay out from Rs. 2,950 crores for telecommunications to Rs. 2,380 crores, it is doubtful if even in the Sixth Plan the telephone targets set by the Department would be fully achieved, especially when Department themselves apprehend a large gap between the requirements of equipments and materials and the supplies. The Committee feel that now when the plan allocations have been decided and the new strategies for addition in indigenous capacities and imports of equipment have been determined, the targets for the Sixth Plan should be determined more realistically, year by year, and all resources mobilised to ensure that at least the revised targets are fully achieved.

**Reply of the Government**

The advice of the Committee has been noted. All efforts will be made to achieve the revised targets for the 6th Plan subject to timely receipt of imported and indigenous supplies.

[Ministry of Communications O.M. No. 14-91/81-PHM dated  
13 November 1981.]

**Recommendation : Sr. No. 66, (Para No. 7.55)**

The perspective plan formulated by the Ministry, for the period 1980-90 envisaged the provision of telephone connections practically on demand by 1990. The Ministry have informed the Committee that with allocations for Sixth Plan having been reduced from Rs. 2,950 crores to Rs. 2,380 crores, it may not now be possible for the Department to work to the target of providing telephone connections on demand by 1990. The Committee take note of the growing waiting list for telephone which is expected to swell from 4.35 lakhs in 1981 to 7 lakhs in 1985. The inability of the Department to provide adequate number of telephone connections has been having a serious effect on the quality of service and has over-loaded the exchanges and network resulting in a more rapid wear and tear of the equipment, besides inviting public criticism. The Committee feel that if the Department have to provide a reasonably efficient service, their demand for adequate funds deserves to be considered more sympathetically. The Committee hope that additional allocations to enable the Department to cope with the demand would become available during annual plans.

### Reply of the Government

We agree with the view of the Committee that clearance of waiting list for new telephone connections would have a beneficial effect on the quality of service by reducing overloading and wear and tear. The availability of material resources, namely equipment, cables etc., is even more important than funds for increasing the telephone expansion programme. Steps for increasing production capacity have been taken but in the interim, the needs which are in excess of available indigenous production have to be met to the extent possible by imports. Additional funds will be asked for in the Annual Plans to the extent that these can be utilised by higher availability of equipment and stores.

[Ministry of Communications O.M. No. 14-91/81-PHM dated 13 November 1981.]

#### Recommendation : Sr. No. 67, (Para No. 7.56 and 7.57)

The perspective plan for telephones for the decade 1980-85 provides for an addition of about 52 lakh telephone connections. While the existing units would be able to produce sufficient quantity of telephone instruments to meet the demand during 6th and 7th Plan periods, the country will be short of switching equipment. To meet the gap between the production from the existing factories and the requirement of switching equipment during 1980-90, it has been decided inter alia to expand the capacity of Rae-Barci factory by 2 lakh lines per annum based on Indian Cross-bar System and to set up two units each with a capacity of 5 lakhs lines a year of electronic switching equipment based on imported technology for local and trunk exchanges. Besides, about 4 lakh lines of crossbar switching equipment and over 30 lakh lines of electronic exchanges are proposed to be imported to cope with the demand in the meantime.

The Committee find that orders for the supply of electronic trunk automatic exchanges have been placed on Messrs. NEC, Japan and tenders for electronic local exchanges are in the final stage of evaluation. The Committee hope that the selection of foreign technology has been and will be made after a thorough scrutiny of offers of all competitors in the best interest of the country and the agreement will ensure not only smooth and timely supply of the latest technological data and equipment but also contemporaneous flow of any advances that may take place in the selected technology from time to time. (Sl. No. 67).

### Reply of the Government

Orders have been placed on M/S Fujitsu of Japan for supply of electronic local exchanges. Selection of the suppliers for electronic TAX and electronic local exchanges have been made after thorough scrutiny of global tenders. Both the firms, M/S Fujitsu & NEC have agreed to give long term technical support to the equipment purchased. This support will include updating of equipment to incorporate technological advancements, recompilation and modification of Software programmes etc.

[Ministry of Communications O.M. No. 14-91/81-PHM dated 13 November 1981.]

#### Recommendation : Sr. No. 58, (Para No. 7.58)

The Committee would strongly urge that R&D set-up in the Department should immediately be strengthened to enable it to accept and absorb the technology and to up-date it contemporaneously to keep it abreast of the

latest advances in the world. They would expect the Department to lend full financial and administrative support of R&D units to be able to reach a stage at the earliest when the country would not have to depend on import of equipment or technology any longer.

### Reply of the Government

The S&T Plan for the TRC to cover the period 1980-85 has been drawn up. This S&T Plan provides for development of various equipment either by the TRC itself or with the help of R&D Groups in the production units or other agencies. The list of equipment included for development cover all areas where equipment would be required by the P&T in the foreseeable future. The S&T Plan provides for an expenditure of Rs. 50 crores. The Plan provides for land and building, additional staff for expanding the R&D activities in the TRC, a prototype workshop, a computer and other infrastructural facilities that would be needed to increase the tempo of work to the level necessary and possible. The S&T Plan is yet to be formally approved by the Planning Commission. The case for land and buildings for the TRC and other infrastructural facilities are under various stages of process. Proposals for augmenting staff to cover various areas of activities are also under examination.

[Ministry of Communications O.M. No. 14-91/81-PHM dated 13 November 1981.]

### Recommendation : Sr. No. 70, (Para No. 7.60)

- As part of the betterment plan, the Department have decided to use jelly-filled cables for distribution net-work. It is stated that indigenous production of jelly-filled cable is not adequate. Though some quantity is being imported for meeting urgent needs, the Department propose to step in indigenous production. The Committee are informed that a scheme for setting up a new plant to produce 30 lakh CKM of telephone cables at Hyderabad has been approved in principle. But this, the Department opined, will not be adequate to meet the needs of the perspective plan and further augmentation of indigenous production capacity will have to be taken up. In view of the importance of jelly-filled cables in distribution net-work and the longlead-time involved in setting up additional capacity, the Committee feel that investment decision to augment the indigenous capacity should be taken now so that the demand for jelly-filled cables is met indigenously at the earliest. Pending that, the Committee would expect the urgent needs to be fulfilled by raising maximum production from the already existing production unit and, if necessary, by imports, to the extent possible.

### Reply of the Government

The total capacity for production of telephone cables is 24.8 lakh conductor kilometers (LCKM) out of which 1.6 LCKM is for jelly-filled cables. Optimum utilisation of the capacity in the existing production units is being availed of. Investment decision for augmentation of capacity for production of jelly-filled cables by 9.49 LCKM in HCL has already been taken and the project is under implementation. Investment decision for setting up of additional capacity to the extent of 30 LCKM in HCL, Hyderabad is being processed. Ministry of Industrial Development has also issued licenses to some of the undertakings for setting up capacity for production of jelly-filled cables.

Orders for import of small capacity jelly-filled cables were issued in 1979-80 and these are being progressively received. Tender has been issued for additional imports to meet the shortfall in demands during 1981-82 and 1982-83.

[Ministry of Communications O.M. No. 14-91/81-PHM dated 13 November 1981.]

**Recommendation : Sr. No. 71, (Para No. 7.73)**

As on 1-4-1980, there were 7,430 Telephone Exchanges in the country, of which 1,285 were manual exchanges. The Committee take note of the Government plan to automatize the manually operated Exchanges in a phased programme by 1990. In view of the persistent demands for automation of the service, the Committee would wish that conversion programme is accelerated to the extent possible.

**Reply of the Government**

Recommendation accepted. There are over 1300 manual exchanges in the country with an aggregate capacity of more than 3.5 lakh lines. Efforts will be stepped up for expediting conversion to automatic operation as more automatic equipment become available through increased indigenous production and imports.

[Ministry of Communications O.M. No. 14-91/81-PHM dated 13 November 1981.]

**Recommendation : Sr. No. 72, (Para No. 7.74)**

Though all but fifty exchanges in the country are electrically operated and provided with battery sets as standby power plan, the battery capacity normally provided is for 3 to 6 busy hours. Prolonged and frequent power supply failures do not give adequate time to charge the standby batteries and this consequently diminishes their life and utility. There are 50 Telephone Exchanges, which do not have standby battery sets at present. The Committee have been assured during evidence that these Exchanges would be equipped with battery sets by the end of 1981. The Committee would like to be apprised of the progress.

**Reply of the Government**

Recommendation accepted. Action is being taken to provide standby batteries in these exchanges on priority. Twenty Nine Telephone Exchanges have already been provided with battery. Attempts will be made to provide standby battery to the remaining exchanges by December 1981. This will depend upon the actual supply position of batteries.

[Ministry of Communications O.M. No. 14-91/81-PHM dated 13 November 1981.]

**Recommendation : Sr. No. 74, (Para No. 7.83 / 7.84)**

The Telecommunication Research Centre of the P&T Department was set up in 1956. Since it has grown considerably. Its expenditure has ranged between Rs. 2.35 crores and 3.93 crores during the period 1976-77 to 1979-80. In the year 1980-81 its budget was to the tune of Rs. 2.73 crores out of which the staff expenditure was Rs. 92 lakhs and the expenditure on research projects Rs. 1.76 crores. The Committee have been informed that evaluation of the performance of the TRC was done in 1965 by



a Committee set up under the chairmanship of Dr. S. Bhagvantham, then Scientific Adviser to the Ministry of Defence and again in 1978 by a high-level experts Committee under the chairmanship of Professor M. G. K. Menon, then chairman of the Electronic Commission. The Menon Committee, while acknowledging the creditable results achieved by the TRC, have identified a number of shortcomings in the working of the centre. The Menon Committee have, however, stated that the highlighting of the shortcomings of TRC does not take away the merits of the Centre's achievements. The Menon Committee have recommended enlarging the staff as well as annual expenditure on the TRC.

The Committee take note of the evaluation of the Menon Committee on the working of TRC and feel that the Department should take a balanced view of the achievements and the shortcoming highlighted by the Menon Committee. The Estimates Committee would expect that the shortcomings pointed out by the Menon Committee would receive immediate attention of the authorities concerned and would be removed at the earliest. They would like to be apprised of the action taken in this regard.

### **Reply of the Government**

The Menon Committee report deals extensively with the TRC in Chapter IV of its Report. It has identified the steps that are to be taken to make the TRC fulfil its objectives in paras 4.04 to 4.25. Action has been taken on some of these points and in some others action is yet to be taken. In many cases it would not be possible to take action in one step but it has to be an extended action and the goal achieved over a period of time. For example, the committee recommends that the R&D expenditure per year should be 1% of the annual telecommunication revenue. In view of the revenue increasing from year to year the TRC's allotment also should go up. The budget allotment for TRC over the last two years was an average of about Rs. 3 crores. To make this figure reach the 1% revenue, has to spread over a time, since infrastructure for absorbing the extra input can be created only, in stages.

#### *Details of action taken and proposed action :*

1. *Augmentation staff* : The Committee has envisaged that there should be a 20% growth of staff every year. Proposals for additional staff to TRC are under consideration.

#### *The desirable objective of annual expenditure for the R&D should be 1% of the annual Telecom. Revenue.*

2. As explained earlier, the budget provisions for the TRC is being increased from year to year. There are some restrictions on the budget provisions due to limitations on plan resources. Attempts will be made to reach the 1% figure over a period of years. The present year's budget has been placed at Rs. 7.01 crores and is under consideration of the Planning Commission (4.04).

#### *Establishment of prototype shop in the TRC :*

3. Estimates for this are under consideration by Internal Finance (4.05).

*Exposure of TRC staff to the latest trend in telecommunication technology by visits to R&D laboratories, deputation or extended stays or courses etc.*

4. Some headway has been made in this direction since it has been possible to get some representatives of foreign R&D Organisations to come and discuss with the officers in TRC. Recent visit of a Team from FTZ of West Germany can be cited as an example. However, there continues to be difficulty in deputing enough personnel for attending seminars, visiting R&D laboratories and even in participation in the CCITT/CCIR meetings. Many proposals are not cleared apparently because of the general policy of Government regarding austerity in expenditure on foreign deputations (4.06).

*Very few development contract in the field of materials and components.*

5. TRC has successfully completed vander development for some systems recently. Examples of AMA, 60 channel UHF by M/s. GCEL, 30 channel PCM systems by M/s. GCEL may be quoted. One of the possible sources of help in such projects of development of material or components could be the Universities. In the recent years, TRC has been making efforts to get academic institutions interested in some of the studies like propagation etc. Perhaps because of shortage of manpower resources with the academic institutions it has been difficult to get such institutions interested in such projects in adequate measure. It has been possible to make IIT, Madras agree for undertaking a project worth about Rs. 25 lakhs for conducting detailed prepagation studies in the VHF and UHF areas. This case is under process (4.08).

6. Menon Committee has suggested 24 groups in which TRC could be interested. They have accepted that "it is not essential that all the programmes are taken up simultaneously or are completed by the end of the year 1983. The actual work will depend upon priority and availability of right staff. The areas recommended for work are given below :

- (i) Telephone Services.
- (ii) Telegraph Services.
- (iii) Telephone Subscriber apparatus.
- (iv) Telegraph apparatus.
- (v) Electro-mechanical switching.
- (vi) Electronic switching.
- (vii) Digital switching.
- (viii) Digital transmission.
- (ix) Data and facsimile transmission.
- (x) Digital logic and memory circuits.
- (xi) Analog multiplex equipment.
- (xii) Line Transmission.
- (xiii) Local area network.

(e) *Library* : The library facility is being updated within the resources possible. Further augmentation will be done as and when appropriate.

(f) *Drawing Office and documentation* : These facilities exist to some extent. This will be augmented suitably as and when appropriate.

(g) *Stores* : The stores facility in the TRC is reasonably adequate for the level of work. It will be augmented if necessary later.

(h) *Acoustic Room* : An elementary acoustic room is available. It has not been possible to create a good acoustic room due to lack of accommodation. A case for a good acoustic room would be processed when adequate accommodation becomes available.

(i) *Antenna Testing* : This facility is not available. It may be difficult to create this facility unless the accommodation in the form of a large test range is available. This has been provided for in the plans for a new campus for the TRC which is under examination by the Internal Finance.

(j) *Administrative & Accounts* : The present facilities, though inadequate, does not present a handicap for the day to day administration. Some proposals for augmentation are on the anvil. Other proposals will be processed at the appropriate time.

#### *New Building*

8. A proposal for acquiring 50 acres of land for constructing a new campus for the TRC is under consideration.

#### *Staff*

9. There is inadequacy of staff. Vacancies remain unfilled at all levels below the level of Deputy Director. Cases are being pursued. 4.18 to 4.26).

#### *Simplifying the Procedures*

10. There is no major handicap today due to procedures either in the procurement of material or in processing cases for indigenous manufacture. If any difficulties are met with in future, action will be taken to get the procedures modified (4.27 to 4.28).

Note : Number in brackets indicate the para number in the Menon Committee Report.

[Ministry of Communications O.M. No. 14-91/81-PHM dated 13 November 1981.]

#### **Recommendation : Sr. No. 76, (Para No. 8.18)**

It is seen that the number of complaints of wrong bills received during the three years, 1976-79, ranged between 1.33-1.37 lakhs of which 38-40,000 complaints were found to be correct. The Committee do not think it is right for the Department to derive satisfaction as they appear to do, from the fact that the percentage of wrong bills (vis-a-vis total number of bills issued) had declined from 0.43 per cent in 1978-79. The index of subscriber satisfaction with billing system, in the Committee's opinion, should be not the number of complaints found correct but the number of complaints received, by the Department. From this angle, the Department have a long way to go to give satisfaction to the subscribers.

#### **Reply of the Government**

The observations of the Committee have been noted. It is hoped that with the implementation of the instructions issued the number of complaints will decline.

[Ministry of Communications O.M. No. 14-91/81-PHM dated 13 November 1981.]

**Recommendation : Sr. No. 77, (Para No. 8.19)**

The Ministry have stated that whenever a complaint from a subscriber is received about abnormality of local calls recorded in the meter, the bill is split up a subscriber's request and he is asked to pay immediately for the highest number of calls recorded in the previous three quarters and the balance is kept as disputed and settled after investigation is completed by the Department. But, from the representations made to the Committee, it appears that at least in certain cases the subscribers have been asked to pay the whole bill first and complain later. The Committee would like the Department to give adequate publicity to the facility of splitting up the allegedly inflated bills into two parts—one part to be paid immediately and the other to be paid after investigation—and also to ensure that the Districts/Circles actually grant this facility to the subscribers without demur or delay.

**Reply of the Government**

Necessary orders for indicating the availability of the facility of splitting up of such bills in the information pages of the Telephone Directories have been issued to all the Units.

[Ministry of Communications O.M. No. 14-91/81-PHM dated  
13 November 1981.]

**Recommendation : Sr. No. 78, (Para No. 8.20)**

The Committee take note of the new facility of one stage of appeal provided to a subscriber against the decision of a departmental officer in an excess billing complaint. They hope that this facility of appeal would also be given general publicity and such appeals will be decided impartially and promptly as only then would the subscribers' faith in this new system be fully established.

**Reply of the Government**

Recommendation accepted. Instructions already exist for appeal against the decision of a departmental officer. This will be published through Telephone Directories.

[Ministry of Communications O.M. No. 14-91/81-PHM dated  
13 November 1981.]

**Recommendation : Sr. No. 81, (Para No. 8.23)**

The Committee cannot visualise any other explanation for wrongly disconnecting a telephone on alleged ground of non payment of bills except administrative lapses in Billing Department which are deplorable. The Committee would like the Department to take serious note of such lapses at the field, section and supervisory levels with a view to fixing responsibility and plugging loopholes. The minimum that the Department can do to assuage the hurt feeling of subscribers in such cases is to offer apology for the mistake and assurance of greater care in future.

**Reply of the Government**

Instructions have been issued to all concerned to fix responsibility in every case where a telephone is disconnected irregularly due to administrative lapses and plug the loopholes which led to the irregular disconnection and

at the same time, to issue a letter of apology regretting the inconvenience caused to the subscribers invariably.

[Ministry of Communications O.M. No. 14-91/81-PHM dated  
13 November 1981.]

**Recommendation : Sr. No. 82 & 83, (Para No. 8.36 & 8.37)**

The Committee take note of the heavy outstanding amounting to Rs. 10.06 crores (as on 1-9-1980) in respect of telephone bills issued upto 31-3-1979. The amount of over Rs. 2 crores is stated to be outstanding against Government Departments where settlement of bill gets delayed due to cumbersome procedures of scrutiny and sanctions. In the opinion of the Committee, a commercial Department like that of Telephones should not be made to suffer because of time-consuming procedures in the Government Departments and the Telephone Department cannot be faulted if they are constrained to disconnect even Government telephones for which bills are not paid within a reasonable time. At least in the case of Government Telephones the practical approach should be to enforce payment of even disputed bills after a certain specified period, subject to adjustments later on between one Government Department and the other which should present no difficulty to either. The Committee would like the Telephones Department to consider evolving a suitable approach on these lines.

Pending evolution of such an approach, the Telephone Department should continue to pursue cases of outstanding bills with Government Departments concerned at high level with a view to realising telephone dues as early as possible.

**Reply of the Government**

The outstandings of Rs. 10.06 crores as on 1-9-80 has been reduced to 7.6 crores as on 1-7-1981 and out of this 1 crore pertains to bills of Government subscribers.

On similar lines as now suggested by the Estimates Committee, Secretary (C) had addressed all the Chief Secretaries of State Governments and Secretaries of the Central Government Departments in December, 1977 requesting them to settle the Telephone bills provisionally subject to settlement of discrepancies if any, later. These are being reiterated. In this connection, it may be pointed out that Government telephones are not exempted from disconnection excepting a few under the exempted category. Constant efforts including personal contacts at higher levels are continued to be made to bring down the outstandings further.

[Ministry of Communications O.M. No. 14-91/81-PHM dated  
13 November 1981.]

**Recommendation : Sr. No. 84, (Para No. 8.38)**

In the case of telephones of high state dignitaries on exempted list, the telephones are not disconnected even if dues in respect of their telephones remain unpaid for long. The Committee take note of the Department's proposal to reduce the number of Telephones on exempted list and to have a designated officer in each Ministry/Department with whom unpaid bills in respect of telephones of exempted categories in that Ministry/Department can be discussed at higher level and settled without delay. The Department's approach to keep under control and to realise without delay the arrears of telephone dues in respect of telephones on exempted list is unexceptionable and should be pursued with vigour and tact.

### Reply of the Government

Noted. Suitable instructions have been issued to all concerned to pursue the dues against the exempted categories with vigour and tact. Heads of Circles/Districts have also been requested to contact the Ministries etc. to nominate liaison officers to settle the dues.

[Ministry of Communications O.M. No. 14-91/81-PHM dated  
13 November 1981.]

### Recommendation : Sr. No. 85, (Para No. 8.39)

Heavy outstandings amounting to nearly Rs. 8 crores against Private subscribers is a matter which the Committee cannot but view with concern. It is stated that though telephones against which dues remain outstanding for long are generally disconnected, the telephones in respect of which disputed are pending settlement are not disconnected as an exception. The Committee would like to caution the Department against the stratagem of disputed bills employed by private parties for delaying payment of Government dues with impunity.

### Reply of the Government

Observations of the Committee have been noted. Instructions have been issued to all concerned to review the outstandings against Private Subscribers critically and take effective action for liquidation of the arrears.

[Ministry of Communications O.M. No. 14-91/81-PHM dated  
13 November 1981.]

### Recommendation : Sr. No. 86, (Para No. 8.40)

The Committee take note of the various steps taken by the Department to realise outstanding dues from private subscribers. The Department have inter alia set up Liquidation Boards at Divisional levels and High Power Committees at District levels to expedite recovery of outstanding dues and the Department think these bodies have achieved "success" in their aim because "... in spite of the increase in telephones, the percentage of outstandings has been maintained at about 0.5 per cent of the billing for the previous 5 year." The Committee do not think it can be called a "success" since maintenance of outstandings at a certain level in "percentage" terms only, in other words, means that outstanding are rising, though in proportion to the billings. The Committee would like the Department to give these bodies positive targets of reduction of outstandings in absolute terms and then to judge whether and how fast they succeed in bringing the outstandings down to the desired levels...

### Reply of the Government

Liquidation Boards/High Power Committees have been reconstituted at zonal level to enable a regular and effective review of outstandings by Area Manager/Regional Directors. Targets to be achieved by each Unit are fixed twice a year by the Secretary Communications and the performance of each Unit is watched. High Power Committee and Liquidation Boards are only part of this machinery and are actively associated with the arrears and thus help in achieving the targets.

[Ministry of Communications O.M. No. 14-91/81-PHM dated  
13 November 1981.]

**Recommendation : Sr. No. 87, (Para No. 8.41)**

The Committee would like that information about telephones dues outstanding against Government as well as private subscribers (in absolute terms and in percentages) together with degree of success achieved in liquidating the arrears should be published in the Annual Report of the Ministry.

**Reply of the Government**

The outstandings on first July of the year in respect of the bills issued upto 31st March of year will be indicated in absolute terms as well as percentage of the amount of bills issued during the year in the Annual Report of the Ministry. The outstandings for Government as well as for private subscribers will also be indicated separately.

[Ministry of Communications O.M. No. 14-91/81-PHM dated  
13 November 1981.]

**Recommendation : Sr. No. 88, (Para No. 8.42)**

During the five years 1974-79, sum of about Rs. 1 crore was written off after all the avenues for realising this amount are stated to have failed. Every case of write-off, in the Committee's view, is a reflection on the efficiency of the Telephone Department and a write-off of about Rs. one crore in five years is a sad commentary on their efficiency. The Committee would wish the Department to impress upon all the Circles/Districts/Divisions to take every possible measure to avoid a situation when legitimate dues of Government may have to be written off. The Committee hope that write-offs are agreed to only as a last resort after the competent authorities have satisfied themselves that the dues cannot be realised at all.

**Reply of the Government**

Instructions have been issued to all the Units to resort to rite off the dues only in cases where absolutely necessary and where there is no chance of realisation of the same.

[Ministry of Communications O.M. No. 14-91/81-PHM dated  
13 November 1981.]

**Recommendation : Sr. No. 89, (Para No. 9.10)**

The Committee are concerned to note that the rate of absenteeism among telephone operators manning special services like complaints, trunk booking is as high as 30 to 40 per cent. With such a high rate of absenteeism the performance of the special services cannot be improved unless a satisfactory solution to this problem is found. The Committee are told that the Department's proposal to raise the number of leave reserve posts from 10 per cent to 25 per cent has not been agreed to. The Committee agree with the new approach of the Department to engage short duty telephone operators to fill the breaches caused by absenting operators. The Department hope that with the engagement of short duty operators the problem created by absenteeism would be tackled effectively. The Committee would like to judge the efficiency of the new approach by the results.

### Reply of the Government

It has been decided to maintain a trained reserve pool of telephone operators to tackle the problem of staff shortage.

[Ministry of Communications O.M. No. 14-91/81-PHM dated 13 November 1981.]

### Recommendation : Sr. No. 90 (Para No. 9.11)

The Committee would like that recruitment to services should be done well in advance and a waiting list made after estimating the staff needs. It should not be difficult for the Department to assess the demand of requirement of staff and accordingly take advance action for recruitment of staff.

### Reply of the Government

The recruitment procedure of the Department envisages that there should be annual recruitment in all cadres where any vacancies are anticipated to be filled up. In some cadres where the requirement fluctuates widely, depending upon the increase of traffic like Telephone Operators, Clerks and Telegraphists, the recruitment is done bi-annually so that if there is any shortfall in one recruitment due to any unforeseen circumstances the same is taken care of in the subsequent bi-annual recruitment of the year. For calculating the likely vacancies to be filled up on the basis of these annual and bi-annual recruitments detailed procedure for calculation of vacancies has been prescribed. This procedure takes into account not only the period for completion of the various formalities of recruitment but also the training period involved in each case. A percentage is also prescribed for unforeseen circumstances. In spite of this, we were finding that staff is not available immediately on the occurrence of vacancies. In order to meet this situation, it has now been decided that trained reserved pool of officials will be kept in all the operative cadres, so that trained officials are available for posting as soon as the vacancies arise. This trained reserved pool will be 50 per cent of the vacancies, which are likely to arise during the year of recruitment.

So far as recruitment procedure is concerned instead of restricting the Reserved Trained Pool to 50% of the vacancies, the General Managers of the Circles/Distts. have been given discretionary powers to decide the size of the said pool so as to :

(a) Meet with absenteeism effectively and

(b) Manning all the positions fully whenever required.

With this prescription it is expected that there would be no delay in filling up any vacancy whenever they occur. It is hoped that there will be no vacancy left unfilled at any stage.

[Ministry of Communications O.M. No. 14-91/81-PHM dated 13 November 1981.]

### Recommendation : Sr. No. 92 (Para No. 9.13)

The Committee do not agree with the practice prevailing in the Department of not taking into consideration the likely absenteeism while drawing up the duty chart. The Committee would like that now when the system



of short duty operators has been adopted the likely absenteeism should be taken into account while drawing up duty chart as otherwise the special services would continue to be unsatisfactory.

#### **Reply of the Government**

Accepted. Absenteeism among regular telephone operators is being taken into account while preparing the duty charts of short duty telephone operators.

[Ministry of Communications O.M. No. 14-91/81-PHM dated 13 November 1981.]

#### **Recommendation : Sr. No. 93 (Para No. 9-14)**

The Committee cannot but express their unhappiness at the reports against bad behaviour of telephone operators. If the service provided by them is not efficient (though there is no reason why it should not be efficient), the minimum that can be expected of them is good and courteous behaviour. The Committee would regard it the failure of supervisory cadres if they cannot curb incidence of bad behaviour among the staff. They would expect that proven cases of rude behaviour are dealt with firmly under the Rules.

#### **Reply of the Government**

Recommendation accepted. To have watch over the rude behaviour of the operators, the department constantly watches at random the activity of the Telephone Operators through Special Observation positions. Telephone Operators found to behave rudely are firmly dealt with.

[Ministry of Communications O.M. No. 14-91/81-PHM dated 13 November 1981.]

#### **Recommendation : Sr. No. 94 (Para No. 9-15)**

Having examined various aspects of the working of telephones, the Committee have come to the conclusion that in various matters instructions issued by the Department are not being observed. For example, 85 per cent of calls on complaints No. 198 and 90 per cent of calls on trunk No. 181 are expected to be attended to within 10 seconds, in case of delays in trunk calls beyond a certain period, subscribers are required to be informed of the likely delays; underground cables are required to be laid at a certain depth. But these and many other instructions are not being followed at the base level giving rise to complaints. This state of affairs is a direct reflection on supervisory cadres whose duty it should be to watch the observance of such instructions by staff. The Committee would like the Department to look into this area of weakness seriously and take adequate measures to ensure compliance with the instructions issued by them.

#### **Reply of the Government**

Recommendation accepted. Acceptance testing of cable construction has been introduced in the telephone districts. A special traffic measurement on trunk routes and Special Services have been taken and the number of circuits justified as per traffic measurements are being provided progressively. Feed back information is being collected to ensure compliance with the instructions issued by the P&T Directorate to the field units.

[Ministry of Communications O.M. No. 14-91/81-PHM dated 13 November 1981.]

### Recommendations : Sr. No. 95 (Para No. 9-16)

Human element is one of the most important factors for efficiency of any service, more so in the case of telephone service, from reports reaching the committee, it appears that the standard of efficiency and integrity in various cadres of telephone officials is not what it should be. Maintenance of Exchanges has been neglected; malpractices in trunk services are the subject of talk among subscribers; faults in telephones are not rectified promptly and competently; payments of bills are not recorded in the registers and telephones of subscribers are wrongly disconnected on this account. The Committee would desire that the Department should take special attention to human failings among officers and staff and see what can be done to elevate the standard of men and women handling telephone services without which their efforts to improve the telephone systems will not be succeed fully.

#### Reply of the Government

The Department has recognised the role of human element in efficiently running the telephone services in the country. Efforts are being made with the help of refresher training courses and environmental changes to inculcate in the operating staff a sense of discipline, efficiency and devotion to duty. Initial training is given to all staff comprising various cadres before actual employment in the Department. Due emphasis is laid on discipline, efficiency and integrity during such training.

2. Behavioural courses have also been instituted for the training of immediate supervisors i.e. the junior supervisors Trunk Services and Junior Engineers Trunks. For officers of the level of Assistant Engineers and above, courses have also been instituted for administrative leadership and behaviour. The problem of employee motivation can be solved to some extent by providing good leadership. In an organisation made of human beings, there are a large number of variables and any attempt to alter any one of them is likely to start chain reaction. Orders and policies no matter however detailed and plainly stated will be subject to psychological 'set' of those who transmit or carry them out. These are also subject to the environment in which they function and the conflicting pressures they are subject to. The main attempt to these courses is to change mode of behaviour of individuals and groups in their official work, in their relationship with one another, in their relation to the public and in responding to environmental changes. The courses also dwell on the findings of social sciences having a bearing on the individuals and on administrative behaviour, organisational structure etc. The courses vary from one week to six week period.

3. For Telephone Operators, refresher courses have been already introduced in all Circle and District Training Centres (a) one week course for their work and behaviour and (b) a five day course for operators for maximum personal efficiency and cordial public relations. The latter have introduced in all major telephone districts. In the refresher courses for operators, due emphasis is laid on courtesy to be extended to the subscribers.

4. Apart from the above, training is being provided for the various supervisory levels for their role in efficient discharge of their duties and in obtaining cooperation of the staff under them. Apart from strictly

professional and technical training, there is need for general management training for each level of the supervisors. A general training course in management oriented to departmental needs has been introduced for Jr. Engineers and Asstt. Engineers. A refresher course has also been instituted for training of SDOTs who are supervising a large number of operating staff in their day to day work.

5. The Department has introduced the management information system (MIS) whereby the performances of various operations and services are judged and norms are prescribed. A Course in management information system has also been introduced for benefit of officers. Courses on administrative leadership and behaviour and executive development and management development programme have been instituted at the Advance Level Training Centre for officers. The basic objective of these courses is to provide an understanding of the principle of management including the behavioural pattern, leadership and human relations, the working of the Government with reference to inter-department and inter-disciplinary approach. These courses impart a working knowledge of the modern tools and techniques of management including that of projects and sharpen and emphasise the decision making ability in case of officers both of junior level and senior level. Apart from courses set up within the department, utilisation of similar courses available in other public administration institutions is also made by deputing officers for training in these institutions/centres.

#### COURSES ON BEHAVIOURAL ASPECTS AND MANAGEMENT AT VARIOUS TTCs.

1. Courses on Telephone Operation for maximum personal efficiency and cordial public relations-(For Telephone Operators).
2. Courses on "Cooperative Supervision" for Jr. Supervisors (Special Services and Trunks) and Junior Engineers (Trunks).
3. Administration and Management for AEs. and JEs.
4. SDOTs refresher course.
5. Course on Management for Junior and Senior officers.
  - (i) Administration Leadership and behaviour.
  - (ii) Executive Development Programme.
  - (iii) Management Development Programme.
  - (iv) Modern Aids to Management.
  - (v) Project Management.
  - (vi) Management Information System.

[Ministry of Communications O.M. No. 14-91/81-PHM dated 13 November 1981.]

#### Recommendation : Sr. No. 96 (Para No. 9.17)

The Committee feel there is an imperative need to inculcate a sense of discipline and create a motivation among officers and staff at all levels in the Telephone Department. While all efforts should be made to redress their legitimate grievances consistent with Government policies and to provide them with basic amenities necessary for them to discharge their duties honestly and efficiently, no quarter should be given to indiscipline

or mischief. While their difficulties should be viewed with compassion and consideration, any act which tends to undermine efficiency or discipline should be dealt with firmly at the very outset.

### Reply of the Government

The Minister for Communications had recently addressed the Members of the Central Working Committee of both, National Federation of P&T Employees and Federation of National P&T Organisations separately and laid great emphasis on the maintenance of discipline and efficiency in the Department. Actually he indicated that efficiency, discipline and service to the people should be the slogan of the P&T Department for the year 1981.

2. The objective of efficiency can be achieved only if the employees at all levels are fully alive to their responsibilities and are adequately motivated to be attuned to the objectives of the Department. Every body must be permeated by a sense of proper discipline to which highest importance should be attached.

Discipline does not, however, mean that employees are not permitted to ventilate their genuine grievances. Forums are already available to ventilate their grievances but these must be done in a proper way. In fact, there should be no scope for any type of strike/agitation when there are several kinds of forums available in the Department to discuss and sort out grievances of the staff. There is a provision for grant of monthly meetings at the Divisional level bi-monthly meetings at the Regional/Area Manager level, four monthly meetings at the Circle level as well as at the All India level ordinarily. Much more effective forum is the forum of Joint Consultative Machinery in the forum of Regional Councils at the Circle level and Departmental Council at the All India level also. Many issues have been sorted out in the Joint Consultative Machinery forum.

4. With a view to curbing strikes/agitations instructions have been issued that whenever an employee remains absent unauthorisedly in pursuance of a concerted action by a group of employees, the unauthorised absence must necessarily be treated as break in service. Recently we have also issued instructions to all Heads of Circles, etc., to take strict disciplinary action against the employees who take part in any type of demonstration or raising of slogans or other such disorderly conduct within office premises. The Secretary Generals of the recognised Federations have also been addressed to help the Department to curb, if not to eliminate the increasing agitational approach on the part of some sections of the staff.

5. Besides all Heads of Circles/Telephone Districts/Administrative Offices have also been addressed by Secretary (C) on the 13th of August, 1981 for setting up of a small cell for redressal of grievances of employees. This Cell will work under the charge of DPS (HQ)/DGM (Admn.) in each Postal and Telecom. Circles. All Heads of Circles have intimated that they are taking necessary action to set up such cell. They have asked to give wide publicity about the formation of this cell.

[Ministry of Communications O.M. No. 14-91/81-PHM dated 13 November 1981.]

**Recommendation: Sr. No. 97 (Para No. 9.30)**

The Committee take note of the elaborate set up in the Department for conducting training courses for officers and staff of various levels. In view of the large number of complaints received by the Committee about the working of telephone connections, and the frequency with which faults occur and recur in telephones, the Committee cannot help feeling that the technicians employed to maintain equipments in the exchanges and telephone instruments and plants at the premises of the subscribers are not as skilled and proficient as they ought to be, even though the Department think otherwise. The Committee would like the Department to shed the complacency in this regard and launch a well organised series of refresher courses, particularly for the field staff who have to deal with the faults in the subscribers' telephones and put the entire cadre of technicians through such courses in convenient batches within as short a period as possible. This should not be a one-time operation but should be repeated from time to time in a selective way.

**Reply of the Government**

There are already a number of refresher courses available for technicians at the various Telecom. Training Centres. The technicians are given this training as and when necessary. A decision has been taken by the P&T Board in 1980 to impart refresher courses to all the technical staff at least once in four years. This is being given effect to. As far as technicians are concerned, the refresher training can be given as and when required at a greater frequency depending upon their competence and when new techniques/equipment is introduced in the field. A list of such courses is given below :—

**REF. COURSES FOR TECHNICIANS**

Sl. No.	Name of the Course	Duration	Conducted at
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
1.	Cross-bar switch adjustment	3 weeks	RT C Bombay/Calcutta/Trivandrum/Madras/DTTC ND/TTC Jabalpur.
2.	Mtce. of Hindustan Teleprinters	12 weeks	RTTC Jabalpur/CTTC Madras/DTTC ND.
3.	Mtce. of Stand by Diesel and Petrol Engines.	5 weeks	TTC Jabalpur.
4.	Crossbar Installation	6 weeks	TTC Jabalpur/RTTCs Bombay, Calcutta, Madras, Trivandrum.
5.	Hindi T/P and attached Units	5 weeks	TTC Jabalpur/CTTC Madras/DTTC ND.
6.	Mtce. of SAX	2 weeks	Circle/Distt. TTCs.
7.	Maintenance of PABX/PBX	2 "	-do-
8.	Mtce. of Strowger	4 "	-do-
9.	Mtce. of Power Plant	2 "	-do-
10.	Mtce. of Auto Equipment (for CB Exch. Technicians)	8 "	-do-
11.	Auto Telex Technicians	3 "	-do-

All the Heads of Circles/under whom training centres administratively function, are being addressed to plan and provide refresher courses for all technicians particularly those concerned with the switching equipment both indoor and at the subscribers premises. Such training imparted to the technicians would be noted in their personal record so that a reference is available.

[Ministry of Communications O.M. No. 14-91/81-PHM dated 13 November 1981.]

**Recommendation: Sr. No. 98 (Para No. 9.31)**

The Committee also take note of the emphasis laid by the Inter-Departmental Working Group on Electronic Exchanges on the need for orientation and training of technical personnel in the electronic technology which is being imported to set up new electronic exchanges in the country. The Committee would urge that a comprehensive orientation and training programme for officers and staff of various levels should be drawn up and implemented with a view to ensuring that by the time the new technology and equipment come in, the Department have adequate strength of fully trained personnel to handle the new exchanges.

**Reply of the Government:**

The Department has recognised the necessity of giving comprehensive training and orientation to the officers and staff at various levels in electronic switching systems technology. As stated earlier, courses on electronic switching as per details shown below have already been introduced at the ALTTC. Such training is being given to all level of staff who are expected to handle planning, installation, commissioning and maintenance of such equipment. Short courses and seminars are being conducted. Action is being taken to reconstitute these courses in the light of the experience gained during the last 4-5 years and keeping in view the technologies likely to be introduced in the Department. In case of electronic switching equipment being imported (electronic TELEX, electronic trunk automatic and electronic exchanges) training models of equipment are being obtained and will be installed at training centres for training the staff :—

(Details of training programme for Electronic Switching System)

*Inservice Courses :*

Sl. No.	Name of Course	Duration
1.	SPC (Fundamental)	4 weeks
2.	SPC	1 weeks
3.	SPC Local	2 weeks
4.	SPC TAX	4 weeks
5.	SPC Telex	4 weeks
6.	Fundamentals of Digital Techniques	4 weeks

(Courses are held generally twice a year. Each batch has a capacity of 30 trainees)

*B. Seminars*

Sl. No.	Name of Seminar	Duration
1.	Electronic Exchanges (Hardware & Software)	2 weeks
2.	Electronic Exchanges	1 week

In case of imported equipment, teams of officials have been deputed to the manufacturers works for training in the design, installation and maintenance of such equipment. Some of the staff so trained would be posted to the training centres for further training of the staff to be employed on such equipment.

Thus action is being taken on more than one front to train the staff in electronic switching system so that adequate manpower is available when the electronic exchanges start functioning in the country.

Apart from some quantities of Electronic Switching equipment being imported now, large scale introduction will depend on the actual system chosen for manufacture in the ESS factories to be established in the country. Comprehensive training in these types of ESS will be provided even before the factories are established so that adequate staff is available for field work.

[Ministry of Communications O.M. No. 14-91/81-PHM dated 13 November 1981.]

### **Recommendation: Sr. No. 99 (Para No. 9.32)**

It is seen that a Management Information System (MIS) was introduced in the Department in 1975 to monitor performance of various responsibility levels in key areas on periodic basis. The Department had hoped that MIS would help in improving performance level of the telecommunication service very considerably. The Committee regret to observe that the performance level of telephone service does not appear to have improved; rather it has deteriorated over the past few years. The Department themselves have admitted that while in some units a positive improvement is noticed on account of MIS, in other units, improvement is not perceptible. Needless to say, the Management Information System is an important tool to monitor the performance efficiency of operational units with a view to identifying their shortcomings and enabling the top management to organise corrective measures without loss of time. It is unfortunate that the Department consider a period of over five years too short to assess the shortfalls in performance levels after the introduction of MIS. The Committee would urge that the reasons for MIS not yielding the desired results be analysed and necessary steps taken to plug the loopholes and activate this system in order to fulfil the objective for which it was introduced. The Committee would like to be apprised of the action taken in the matter.

### **Reply of the Government**

The performance value reported in the MIS reports under various operational indicators are monitored periodically and attention of the field units is drawn to the areas of weak performance regularly. The accuracy and reliability of the information is stressed by checks and cross checks introduced in the field as that the field units are made aware of the accuracy of the value reported.

2. The field units are encouraged to report the sub-units whose performance is sub-average as compared to overall general performance of the unit. This has identified specific weak areas for concentrated remedial action to upgrade their performance.

3. An annual guidelines for fixing performance standards are issued before the start of financial year to help the field units in formulating their own targets for achievement under various performance and financial indicators.

4. Annual and half yearly review of the performance is made and attention of field units is drawn to both good and bad performance levels achieved by them.

5. The activities listed above are a continuous process and by its very nature MIS calls for constant monitoring and review of the performance under all critical areas of performance to have effective maintenance control.

6. MIS is only a tool for improvement management. Specific upgradation schemes within the limitation of resources are needed to be drawn up and executed by the operational units to which MIS reports are fed.

[Ministry of Communications O.M. No. 14-91/81-PHM dated  
13 November 1981.]

**Recommendation : Sr. No. 100 (Para 9.36)**

There were as many as 23,298 complaints of all types received by the Telephone Department all over the country during the three years (1976-79). The Department, it is stated, get quarterly reports from all the Circles and Districts about these complaints and keep a watch on the state of efficiency of telephone services in various parts of the country. The Committee would like the Department to make sure that there is proper arrangement to receive and register every complaint in all the circles and district and to examine it promptly and independently at a high level with a view to redressing the grievances of subscribers. Every Complaint received in writing should be acknowledged and follow up action taken.

**Reply of the Government**

The Department has introduced a new system of handling telephone complaints in Telecom Circles and Telephone Districts in June, 1981. Under this system Nodal points at sufficiently high level have been established and arrangements have been made to ensure that each written complaint received is registered, and acknowledged immediately and prompt remedial action and follow up action are taken.

[Ministry of Communications O.M. No. 14-91/81-PHM dated  
13 November 1981.]

**Recommendation : Sr. No. 101 (Para 9.37)**

The Committee feel that each complaint should be viewed from two angles; one, the immediate problem highlighted by a subscriber for redress and two, the defect, if any, in the system which gave rise to the complaint. While the former is important for the subscriber, the latter is essential for plugging the loopholes in the system. The Committee would like the Department to emphasise on all the Circles and districts to evolve an approach on the lines suggested above with a view to bringing about all round efficiency in the telephone services.

**Reply of the Government**

Under the new system of handling Telephone complaints, provision has been made to view each complaint both from the point of view of prompt remedial action to redress the grievance of the subscriber and from the angle



of plugging loopholes and defects in the system on the basis of an indepth analysis of data throw up by the complaints.

[Ministry of Communications O.M. No. 14-91/81-PHM dated  
13 November 1981.]

**Recommendation: Sr. No. 102, (Para No. 9.42)**

The Committee feels that adverse press reports and letters published in the newspapers project a very bad image of the Telephone Department. In the absence of any contradiction, the public cannot be blamed if they accept the veracity of press reports and form a very adverse view of the efficiency of the Department. If the press reports refer to specific cases of delay irregularity, favouritism or revenue loss and these reports are not correct, the Department should publish contradictions at the earliest to set the record straight.

**Reply of the Government**

The Department's policy, as communicated to Circles/Districts from time to time, is to issue rejoinders to adverse press reports and letters appearing in news papers. This was reiterated in the P&T heads of Circles Conference. We have also since sent communication to this effect to the Heads of Circles.

[Ministry of Communications O.M. No. 14-91/81-PHM dated  
13 November 1981.]

**Recommendation: Sr. No. 103, (Para No. 9.48)**

Acute dearth of spares is stated to be the cause of delays in carrying out repairs to telephone. The Ministry have stated that steps like stepping up production capacity in ITI, identifying of alternative sources of manufacture and in house manufacture of critical items have been taken to improve the supply of spares for telephone instruments. The Committee feel that spares management system in the exchanges should be reviewed with expert assistance with a view to making it more efficient and methodical and bringing about perfect coordination between supply and demand. Automatisation of cable records in metropolitan cities which the Department have now undertaken is a step in the right direction. The Committee would expect this work which will greatly facilitates location of faults in underground cable network to be completed expeditiously in all the metropolitan cities.

**Reply of the Government**

Study of Strowger Spares requirement has already been carried out. Messers I.T.I. have been advised to supply the spares as per the norms recommended by the Study Team. Computerisation of the cable records forms a part of the in-house Computer scheme. Action is in progress for the purchase of Computers for Bombay, Delhi, Madras and Calcutta.

[Ministry of Communications O.M. No. 14-91/81-PHM dated  
13 November 1981.]

**Recommendation : Sr. No. 104, 105 (Para No. 9.56, 9.57)**

The Committee find that Copper wire of the value of over Rs. 38 lakhs was stolen and pilfered during 1979-80. It is stated that the Department have taken certain measures to check the menace of theft and pilferage of copper wire from telecom. lines. These steps include (i) amendment of

the Telegraph Wires (Unlawful Possession) Act, 1950 to make the punishment more stringent; (ii) Stopping of copper wire in erection of new lines; (iii) Progressive replacement of copper wire on the existing lines by other types of wire; (iv) Requests to State Governments to form special cells to deal with thefts of copper wire; and (v) discussions of the problem at the Conference of Home Ministers/Chief Ministers held in September, 1978. The Committee are constrained to observe that despite all these measures the losses due to theft and pilferage of copper wire etc. still quit large in value, though less than in the previous year. (Sl. No. 104.).

Special Police cells to deal with this problem have been set up in only two States (Karnataka and Tamil Nadu). The Cell set up in West Bengal was disbanded on account of the Department's reluctance to meet the cost as the Department felt that this was a normal law and order matter and should be dealt with the State Governments in the normal course. The Committee would suggest that the matter may be pursued by the Department with the State Governments at a high level and satisfactory arrangements made to enlist the active cooperation and support of the local administration to deal with this problem effective. (SS. No. 105).

#### Reply of the Government

Thefts of copper wire are continuing. Cases are being pursued with Police authority by heads of circles at various levels to minimise thefts. The problem of theft being primarily a law and order problem, this department has to depend on state law and order authorities, with whom a liaison is already being maintained.

Secretary (Communications) has addressed Chief Secretaries of all States and Union territories for setting up special Police cells to curb the menace of thefts. Heads of telecom circles would pursue with the law and order authorities of the State in setting up police cells to minimise theft problem. They have also been reminded.

[Ministry of Communications O.M. No. 14-91/81-PHM dated  
13 November 1981.]

#### Recommendation : Sr. No. 106, (Para No. 9.58)

The most effective solution of the problem of thefts and pilferage of copper wire from lines especially in forests and remote areas is the extension of micro-wave system to all such areas. It will be of significant advantage in dacoit infested areas. Though the extension of micro-wave system is stated to be continuing process and all the District headquarters are expected to be covered by the end of Sixth Plan period, the Committee would suggest that the areas which are more prone to such thefts and dacoit infested areas should be taken up on priority basis. In identifying priority areas, the report of the Study Group on wireless communications system for police may also be taken into consideration.

#### Reply of the Government

Most of the District headquarters will be linked by a reliable medium like Microwave of UHF Radio Relay system or coaxial cable system during the Sixth Plan. While deciding on the type of transmission medium to be adopted the incidence of wire theft in that areas will be kept in view.

As regards dacoit infested areas due priority will be given to meet the communication demand of the police authorities as and when placed on the Department.

[Ministry of Communications O.M. No. 14-91/81-PHM dated 13 November 1981.]

**Recommendation: Sr. No. 107, (Para No. 9.69)**

Telephone directory has come in for criticism on many counts. It is stated that the directory is not published regularly, there are printing errors, quality of printing is not good, the size of the print type is too small to facilitate easy reading. The Department have admitted that though telephone directories are required to be published annually, there have been delays in the past due to shortage of paper and certain other factors. The Committee hope that the directories are not unduly delayed in future.

**Reply of the Government**

Indent for directory paper for 1982 has been released.

The Department is seized of the problem and efforts are being made to bring out the Telephone Directories on schedule.

Increasing the print size will make the directory more bulky and also increase paper consumption. This matter had been considered more than once in the past. The Department now proposes to try thinner paper for telephone directory. If this is successful, a large print size can be tried.

[Ministry of Communications O.M. No. 14-91/81-PHM dated 13 November 1981.]

**Recommendation: Sr. No. 108, (Para No. 9.70)**

The Committee would also expect the printing errors in a directory are detected immediately after the release of a new issue and corrigendum or supplement published for the benefit of subscribers.

**Reply of the Government**

Recommendation accepted. A group is specially assigned at the time of a telephone directory which carries out the final-proof reading. Any printing errors detected in the final print are included in an 'errata' which is attached to the directory at the time of binding.

[Ministry of Communications O.M. No. 14-91/81-PHM dated 13 November 1981.]

**Recommendation: Sr. No. 109, (Para No. 9.71)**

The Committee would suggest to the Department to make the get up of a directory better by arranging various sections like Government tele-phones, classified index and the like in a way that they can be easily located.

**Reply of the Government**

An index is included in the directory. Efforts will be made to make the directory attractive and more easily readable.

[Ministry of Communications O.M. No. 14-91/81-PHM dated 13 November 1981.]

**Recommendation: Sr. No. 110 (Para No. 9.72)**

The Committee appreciate the Department's difficulties in printing telephone directories in bigger types; but the Committee would expect that the Department also appreciate the difficulties of subscribers. The Committee would like the Department to re-examine the size and style of the print types used in the directories of metropolitan districts and see how the readability of a telephone directory can be improved. Since the Department are aware of the dissatisfaction of the subscribers in this regard, the Committee hope that something tangible would be done in the matter before long.

**Reply of the Government**

Increasing the print size will make the directory more bulky and also increase paper consumption. This matter had been considered more than once in the past. The Department now proposes to try thinner paper for telephone directory. If this is successful, a larger print size can be tried.

[Ministry of Communications O.M. No. 14-91/81-PHM dated 13 November 1981.]

**Recommendation: Sr. No. 111 (Para No. 9.73)**

The subscribers are not happy at the discontinuance of the system of publication of a consolidated directory for the whole state or circle. The Committee feel that if it is not practical to issue a consolidated directory for each State/circle, the Department may at least provide directories of various places in a state in a bound volume at least to those subscribers who are prepared to pay for it. Though such an arrangement is stated to have been decided by the Department, they would like the Department to ensure that bound volumes of directories are in fact freely available at all places. It would be highly appreciated if the directories of various divisions could be published in a distinctive colour scheme or coloured separators could be inserted in between directories of two Divisions at the time of binding them into one volume.

**Reply of the Government**

The Department is reviewing the arrangements for sale of Directories with a view to make the directories easily available to the public. Regarding the suggestion to place coloured paper separators for each Division, the field units will be advised. Bound volumes of Divisional directories are already being prepared for sale.

[Ministry of Communications O.M. No. 14-91/81-PHM dated 13 November 1981.]

**Recommendation: Sr. No. 114 (Para No. 9.83)**

The Committee recommend that it would enhance the status and prestige of TACs if conscientious, public-spirited persons of social standing are appointed on these committees and emphasis in their terms of reference is laid on providing better service to the subscribers and improving the telephone system.

**Reply of the Government**

This is already kept in view while making appointment to a T.A.C. One of the functions of the Committee (as already laid down) is to advise the Department on the improvement of telecommunication services.

[Ministry of Communications O.M. No. 14-91/81-PHM dated  
13 November 1981.]

**Recommendation: Sr. No. 115 (Para No. 9.84)**

The Committee regret to note the delay in the constitution of Telephone Advisory Committees at various places. They would like the Department to ensure that in future the new Telephone Advisory Committees are constituted before the term of the existing committees expire. They would also like the Department to see that the Committees meet as frequently as they are expected to meet.

**Reply of the Government**

The observations of the Committee have been taken note of.

The Telephone Advisory Committees do meet every quarter in most cases.

[Ministry of Communications O.M. No. 14-91/81-PHM dated  
13 November 1981.]

## CHAPTER III

### RECOMMENDATIONS/OBSERVATIONS WHICH THE COMMITTEE DO NOT DESIRE TO PURSUE IN VIEW OF GOVERNMENT'S REPLIES

#### **Recommendation Sr. No. 27 (Para No. 3.49)**

The Committee feel that where a call booked as 'urgent' call is not put through within the time prescribed for putting through such calls, it is unfair to charge such a call at higher rate fixed for 'urgent' calls. While the Committee appreciate the difficulties of the Department in down-grading such a call as 'ordinary' call for the purpose of billing, they still feel that an 'urgent' call delayed beyond a reasonable limit, which may be determined by the Department, deserves to be given concession in the form of some rebate in billing. The Committee would like the Department to consider all aspects of the matter and inform them of their decision.

#### **Reply of the Government**

This will be difficult to implement. An urgent trunk call might get delayed due to various reasons, such as, no reply from the called number, wrong number being given at the time of booking, faulty circuits, particular person not available, calling or called number being faulty during pendency of the call or the calling party not available when the call matures. An urgent call continues to receive priority over other calls of lower priority until the call is put through.

[Ministry of Communications O.M. No. 14-91/81-PHM dated  
13 November 1981.]

#### **Recommendation: Sr. No. 63 (Para No. 6.23)**

At present, the person manning the 'attended type' of PCO is proposed to be allowed an incentive of 20 paise per call. The Committee would like that, for such 'attended type' PCOs, where people will be able to get personalised and efficient service, the call charge should be slightly higher as to leave a sufficient margin for the attendant to be gainfully employed and make a reasonable living. This higher rate should not apply to 'attended type' PCOs situated in Post Offices.

#### **Reply of the Government**

At present 50 Paise is collected per call from the user of an attended type public telephone, out of which an amount of 20 paise is retained by the attendant. Enhanced charging could be counterproductive in as much as in intending caller may show preference to call from unattended PCOs.

[Ministry of Communications O.M. No. 14-91/81-PHM dated  
13 November 1981.]

#### **Recommendation Sl. No. 69 (Para No. 7.59)**

The Committee find that the Department have decided to set up additional capacity at Rae Bareilly to manufacture two lakh lines per annum of Indian cross-bar switching equipment. They have also decided to import

about 4 lakh lines of cross-bar switching equipment during the Sixth Plan period. The Committee are informed that the expansion of the Rae Bareilly factory was decided several years ago. The new expansion units to be set up there would be the last one to be set up to manufacture electro-mechanical type of exchanges. The Committee also find that electronic exchanges have already been introduced in almost all the developed countries and also in a few developing countries. Experience of telecommunication administrations in these countries is reported to have shown that electronic exchanges provide better services than the existing electro-mechanical exchanges including cross-bar. Though according to the Ministry, cross-bar exchanges are reportedly being manufactured and installed in advanced countries even at present, the Committee feel that it was not inevitable or unavoidable to import cross-bar exchanges or to set up new capacity to manufacture cross-bar exchanges in the country at this juncture; especially when, as pointed out by Inter-Departmental Working Group, investment on setting up of electronic exchanges is much more productive than that on cross-bar exchanges inasmuch as with an investment of Rs. 30 crores on equipment, it would be possible to set up an electronic exchange system product line with a capacity of 5 lakh lines as compared to 2 lakh lines of cross-bar equipment. It would have been better if now when electronic exchanges are available and reportedly giving much better service than electro-mechanical exchanges, the Department had straightaway gone in for import and manufacture of electronic exchanges only.

#### **Reply of the Government**

The setting up a manufacturing unit for 2 lakh lines cross-bar equipment per annum comprises the second phase of development of the telephone switching factory at Rae Bareilly which Government had decided upon much earlier. After careful consideration of the recommendation of an inter-ministerial committee, it was decided to manufacture Indian Cross-bar Project System (ICP Cross-bar) which has been indigenously developed to suit Indian conditions. Import of cross-bar equipment has been done to supplement existing indigenous production in the I.T.I. to meet development targets.

Electronic switching represents a radical departure from electro-mechanical switching technology used so far in the Indian network. Certain studies and R&D work had been done earlier but operational experience was not available as regular electronic exchanges had not been installed. A wide ranging review of the whole subject of introduction electronic switching in the India network was made taking into account the electronic system requirements, acquisition of operational experience and steps required to set up production of equipment. On the basis of this review, decisions have been taken to set up manufacture of electronic exchanges for different types of needs in the Palghat unit of III and in two other large factories in the country. The total production from these 3 units is expected to reach about 11.5 lakh lines by the end of the decade and will thus greatly exceed the production of electro-mechanical switching equipment. Tenders for manufacturing collaboration have already been invited. The cost estimates so far are very tentative and will be firm ed up after evaluation of tenders. Meanwhile, significant quantities of electronic TAX, Telex and local exchanges are being imported, which, besides

meeting urgent development requirements, will also give us operational and maintenance experience. This will help in undertaking much larger development programmes foreseen in future.

[Ministry of Communications O.M. No. 14-91/81-PHM dated 13 November 1981.]

#### **Recommendation Sr. No. 73 (Para No. 7.75)**

The Committee feel that the existing battery sets with a limited capacity of 3 to 6 busy hours when fully charged with changes of remaining under-charged in areas having frequent power cuts can hardly be relied upon as these would not be able to keep the telephone service going for more than a few hours in the event of power failure. The Committee would like the Department to explore the feasibility of having a more reliable standby power plant than the one in use at present and try it on an experimental basis in the fifty Exchanges which do not have battery sets at present.

#### **Reply of the Government**

Performance characteristic of existing Power Plants are satisfactory. The problem is generally due to unsatisfactory local power supply. Engine Alternators of adequate capacity are provided in exchange where necessary.

[Ministry of Communications O.M. No. 14-91/81-PHM dated 13 November 1981.]

#### **Recommendation Sr. No. 91 (Para No. 9.12)**

The Committee would like to suggest that in recruiting short duty operators preference should be given to local people registered with local telephone exchanges, particularly in hilly, tribal, remote and backward areas. In recruiting short duty operators in such areas, if persons with minimum qualifications prescribed by the Department for short duty operators are not readily available, the Department may have to lower the minimum educational standards in deserving cases and make up for this deficiency by extra training, if necessary.

#### **Reply of the Government**

The recruitment to the cadres of telephone Operators has recently been decentralised from the Circle level to the Divisional level. One of the essential conditions for being considered for recruitment to the cadre of Telephone Operators is that the candidates should be registered in the local employment exchange within the Divisions. As per statutory rules reservations are faithfully followed so that S/C & S/T candidates also get recruited. There is a concession in age as well as merit qualification so as to attract sufficient S/C & S/T candidates. As such, the recruitment to the cadre of Telephone Operators is only from the local people registered within the Divisions Short Duty Telephone Operators are engaged only from the waiting list of the main list for recruitment of regular Telephone Operators. This is done in order to ensure that the Short Duty Telephone Operators after working for some time in the Department can be absorbed against the regular posts of Telephone Operators. If the



Short Duty Telephone Operators do not possess the required minimum qualification as of regular Telephone Operators, it will not be possible to absorb them in the regular cadre after they have gained some experience at a later date and it will be a cause of frustration amongst these candidates. The minimum qualification prescribed for the cadre of Telephone Operators in the Statutory Recruitment Rules cannot be relaxed. At present we have not experienced shortage of candidates on this score in all areas including backward areas.

[Ministry of Communications O.M. No. 14-91/81-PHM dated  
13 November 1981.]

## CHAPTER IV

### RECOMMENDATIONS/OBSERVATIONS IN RESPECT OF WHICH GOVERNMENT REPLIES HAVE NOT BEEN ACCEPTED BY THE COMMITTEE

#### **Recommendation : Sr. No. 8 (Para No. 2.67)**

The Committee note with concern that in metropolitan cities and State capitals where cable and other transmission systems are in the process of upgrading, it will take at least four years to improve the telephone service. For the entire country, even if substantial investments are forthcoming, the Department would take about 10 years to provide a reasonably satisfactory service throughout. This is too disappointing picture. It will be too much to expect the subscribers to wait patiently for ten long years before getting a reasonably efficient service in the country. The Committee strongly urge that the position may be re-appraised and all resources mobilised on a high priority basis to put the telephone system in the entire country back on the rails in the shortest possible time. The Committee would like to be appraised of the programme evolved by the Department in this regard.

#### **Reply of the Government**

At present there is no comprehensive programme for upgradation of telephone net-work throughout the country. Programmes have been drawn up for Calcutta and Delhi to improve the outdoor (cable) net-work in about 3 years. Task Forces are being set-up for Srinagar, Patna and Ahmedabad to identify reasons for unsatisfactory service and take corrective actions. Network upgradation programme will be drawn up where required, for State capitals and other important cities without any avoidable delay.

[Ministry of Communications O.M. No. 14-91/81-PHM dated 13 November 1981.]

#### **Comments of the Committee**

Please see paras 1.7 & 1.8 of Chapter I of the Report.

#### **Recommendation : Sr. No. 14 (Para No. 2.74)**

The Committee are informed that 25 percent of the calls made to No. 198 are expected to be and are actually replied to within 10 seconds. This seems to be too optimistic to be true. The Committee would like the Department to test the efficiency of these service through outside agencies, not only through departmental officers.

#### **Reply of the Government**

The percentage of calls on special services answered within 10 seconds at various places in the country ranges from 41% to 96%. It is to be noted that generally the group which makes test calls and collects the data is not connected with operations and directly reports to the General Manager or Additional General Manager. As these figures were observed

and recorded by the departmental agencies which are not connected with day-to-day operation, there is no ground for suspecting their veracity. The Department, therefore, is of the opinion that it is not necessary to involve outside agencies in the matter. In addition the observation unit from P&T Directorate periodically study the different telephone systems particularly in the cities to check up performance of 198 service.

[Ministry of Communications O.M. No. 14-91/81-PHM dated  
13 November 1981.]

**Comments of the Committee**

Please see para 1.18 of Chapter I of the Report.

**Recommendation : Sr. No. 15 (Para No. 2.75)**

According to a sample survey made by the Department in 1975, 30 per cent of the calls were made to Assistance No. 199 by subscribers who did not wait to dial the required number again if that number was found busy; instead they dialled 199. The Committee wonder whether such a large number of subscribers do not wait to dial the desired number again and instead dial 199 when it is well known how difficult it is to get 199. The Committee would like an independent survey in this regard to be conducted again so that the Department may have at their command accurate and upto date data without which it will be difficult for them to appreciate the magnitude of the problem.

**Reply of the Government**

The Department will conduct survey of calls received on (199) service in Bombay, Hyderabad and Indore telephone districts. This job will be entrusted to the Efficiency Cells which directly report to G.Ms/D.Ms in these districts.

[Ministry of Communications O.M. No. 14-91/81-PHM dated  
13 November 1981.]

**Comments of the Committee**

Please see para 1.18 of Chapter I of the Report.

**Recommendation : Sr. No. 17 (Para No. 2.79)**

The Committee feel that the present system to make surveys of failure rate and wrong call rate through Departmental units cannot inspire confidence as the tendency on the part of departmental officers to under play these phenomena cannot be ruled out. The Committee would like that sample survey in these matters should also be carried out through outside officers and officers not in active service of the Department and the data received through them should be given due weight.

**Reply of the Government**

The Department is of the view that there is no need for sample surveys to be conducted by outside agencies. The figures obtained by departmental surveys show good as well as bad performance and as such there is no ground to suspect that the departmental officers suppress failure rates and wrong-call data.

[Ministry of Communications O.M. No. 14-91/81-PHM dated  
13 November 1981.]

**Comments of the Committee**

Please see para 1.18 of Chapter I of the Report.

**Recommendation : Sr. No. 19 (Para Nos. 2.85 & 2.86)**

The Committee would like that signature of subscribers should also be faults in respect of each telephone, in taken on his satisfaction after each be examined at responsible level with a view to finding the cause and fault is repaired.

The Fault Cards of telephones which develop faults frequently should be examined at responsible level with a view to finding the cause and solution of the frequent defects.

**Reply of the Government**

The fault card is a technical document and should be kept as an exchange record. The Department is, therefore, of the view that obtaining signature of the subscriber on the fault card is neither necessary nor practicable.

The fault card entries are analysed on regular basis and cases of repeat complaints are brought to the notice of the higher officers to help in prompt diagnosis and clearance of faults.

The Department is also introducing computerised complaint records to help in speedy analysis of faults and especially to identify cases where frequent faults are repeated. It has been decided to set up in-house computers in the four metropolitan telephone districts for the purpose. As an interim measure, the General Managers and District Managers will be asked to hire out computer time and implement computerised complaint records in metropolitan/major telephone districts and state capitals wherever feasible.

[Ministry of Communications O.M. No. 14-91/81-PHM dated 13 November 1981.]

**Comments of the Committee**

Please see Para 1.21 of Chapter I of the Report.

**Recommendation: Sr. No. 23 (Para No. 3.44)**

Though the Department have laid down that in case of ordinary/urgent/priority calls being delayed by three hours, two hours and one hour respectively, the subscribers concerned should be rung back and informed of the likely delays in their trunk calls. But according to the reports reaching the Committee this is not being done. The Department have also admitted that in many stations the procedure of keeping the subscribers informed of the period of delay in trunk calls is not being followed because of high rate of staff absenteeism. This is unfortunate. The Committee would expect the Department to enforce their instructions and ensure that the subscribers are kept informed of the likely delays in their trunk calls.

**Reply of the Government:**

This recommendation has been examined and but has not been found practicable for introduction in large telephone systems. It is, however, being tried at a few selected stations.

[Ministry of Communications O.M. No. 14-91/81-PHM dated 13 November 1981.]

**Comments of the Committee**

Please see Para 1.27 of Chapter I of the Report.

**Recommendation: Sr. No. 53 (Para No. 5.43)**

Now when the telephone services in the rural areas are proposed to be extended at an accelerated pace, it is necessary that these services in rural areas are not made unreasonably expensive. It has been brought to the Committee's notice that rental and other charges for telephones beyond a range of 5.7 kilometres from an exchange in rural areas are fixed at a higher rate than that applicable to telephones within this range. The Committee desire that the rental and other charges upto a range of 15 kilometres from an exchange in rural areas should be at the same level and higher charges levied only in respect of telephones beyond 15 kilometres or so.

**Reply of the Government**

Recommendation not accepted.

Subscribers situated at distances more than 5-6 kilometres require higher gauge of cable or of open-wire line with thicker gauge wire, making the cost of construction very high.

[Ministry of Communications O.M. No. 14-91/81-PHM dated 13 November 1981.]

**Comments of the Committee**

Please see Para 130 Chapter I of the Report.

**Recommendation: Sr. No. 56 (Para No. 5.49)**

The Committee recommend that self-employed handicapped persons should be given priority in the matter of sanctioning of telephones as they need telephone facility more than others to carry on their business activities. Now when the Ministry too agree that the handicapped deserve special consideration the Committee expect that an early decision would be taken in this regard and implemented.

**Reply of the Government**

Recommendation not accepted as there is possibility of large-scale misuse of the concession proposed for the physically handicapped. Individual cases will be considered sympathetically.

[Ministry of Communications O.M. No. 14-91/81-PHM dated 13 November 1981.]

**Comments of the Committee**

Please see Para 1.33 of Chapter I of the Report.

**Recommendations : Sr. No. 59 & 60 (Para No. 6.19 & 6.20)**

There are 10,883 Public Call Offices (PCOs) installed in the State Capitals in the country but this number, it has been represented, is not adequate. The Committee do not think the number of PCOs in each state capital has any relationship to the size or population of the city as otherwise Calcutta would not be having only 892 PCOs as against 2450 in Madras and 3197 in Bombay. The Committee recommend that more PCOs should be opened at premises easily accessible to the general public and in locating new PCOs the areas not having PCOs or not adequately served by private telephones should be given priority.

The Committee would like that the number of PCOs in places other than state capitals should also be reviewed and facility extended to all those area where such telephones are needed but are not in existence in adequate number.

### Reply of the Government

Instructions already exist on the lines indicated by the Committee.

[Ministry of Communications O.M. No. 14-91/81-PHM dated 13 November 1981.]

Please see para 1.37 of Chapter I of the Report.

### Recommendation : Sr. No. 75 (Para No. 8.16 & 8.17)

Even though various steps for streamlining the billing work and minimising wrong billing such as periodical tests of meters and circuits of subscribers' telephones, observation of subscribers' telephones, meters and equipments, taking of fortnightly meter reading, sealing of individual meters etc. are reported to have been taken by the Telephone Department, complaints of faulty and inflated billing have been received by the Committee from a large number of subscribers and non-official organisation from all parts of the country.

While on the one hand, complaints of wrong billing may continue to be looked into, as at present, with a view to giving relief to subscribers in individual cases, where due, what is more important is the need to make the metering and billing system less prone to fault and mischief. The Committee would like the Department to evolve a suitable mechanism to make a critical study of the phenomenon of wrong billings with a view to plugging loopholes in working procedures and metering equipment and thus bringing about a qualitative improvement in the billing system as a whole.

### Reply of the Government

To avoid mistakes in billing computerised billing stands introduced in the four Metropolitan Districts. In addition to bills where abnormal calls are observed in these four Metropolitan Districts, are rechecked before issue. In places where bills are prepared manually necessary metering and billing such as periodical tests of meters and circuits of observe the existing checks scrupulously with a view to reduce the incidence of wrong billing due to human failure. As regards metering mechanism and equipment faults which may lead to excess billing, the following provisions exist :

1. Meters are kept locked and access to the meter room is restricted.
2. Vigilance squads have been set up to detect unauthorised connection, diversion etc., by surprise checks.
3. Orders have been placed for supply of "charge analysers". These can given separately the details of STD calls made by subscribers who complain of excess billing.
4. New metering circuits have been introduced to eliminate metering faults.

5. Locking of distribution points and cabinets.
6. Testing of meters and STD barring facility.
7. Creation of awareness among the subscribers about the proper use of STD facility by publishing suitable captions in the telephone directories. The instructions are being issued to the Units to enforce the measures prescribed above more rigidly to avoid abnormal calls due to diversion of lines, faulty equipment etc.

[Ministry of Communications O.M. No. 14-91/81-PHM dated 13 November 1981.]

#### **Comments of the Committee**

Please see para 1.41 of Chapter I of the Report.

#### **Recommendation : Sl. No. 80 (Para No. 8.22)**

Telephones are reported to have been disconnected on the ground of alleged non-payment of bills even when the relevant bills had already been paid. A case study made by the Committee reveals that as many as 4783 telephones were wrongly disconnected on this ground in Delhi alone during the last three years (1978—1980). From such a large number of telephones wrongly disconnected in Delhi alone, the Committee cannot but conclude that the present procedure of giving “telephonic” notice to a subscriber before disconnecting this telephone for non-payment of outstanding bills is highly unfair, irrational and indefensible in the face of Public harassment and acute embarrassment which it has caused to such a large number of innocent subscribers. Such a procedure should be discontinued forthwith. The Committee recommend that in order to avoid harassment and inconvenience to subscribers in future, notice on disconnection of telephones on the ground of non-payment of outstanding bills should be sent by registered post at the subscriber’ cost in all cases and no telephone should be disconnected before the lapse of a reasonable time after the service of such notice.

#### **Reply of the Government**

The recommendation of the committee asking notices to be issued by Regd. post to all the defaulting subscribers for non-payment of bills has been very carefully examined. A study of the paying habits of the subscribers reveals that hardly 30 to 40 percent subscribers pay within the due date viz. 15 days. After reminder on telephone regarding pending bills, about 20 to 30 per cent of the subscribers settle the bills. We have nearly 24 lakhs subscribers and issue about 2 crore bills in a year. It will virtually be an impossible task to attempt the issue registered reminders for 70% of 24 lakhs subscribers. This will not only dislocate the working in all T.R.A. Offices but also will result in considerable work load at the post offices. We have the following safeguards to prevent irregular disconnection of telephones despite payment of bills :—

- (i) The subscribers have the option to register themselves for issue of Regd. reminders for outstanding bills at the cost of Rs. 3/- for each notice. A number of subscribers have been availing of this facility. The existence of this facility has also been directed to be widely publicised in the Information pages of Telephone Directories.

(ii) We have recently opened late payment counters at the various Area Manager's offices at Delhi for receiving payment of bills after the due date. The payments received at this counter are being delayed to the A.Os. T.R. concerned on the same day so that they take care that the telephones for which payments have been received are not disconnected. A report received from Delhi Telephone Distt. shows that after introduction of this procedure, there has practically been no instance of disconnection after payment of dues.

(iii) Again we have amended the procedure for recovery of reconnection charges for telephones disconnected for non-payment with a view to see that subscribers are not put to unnecessary expenditure due to accidental disconnection of telephones for non-payment. Under this procedure telephones disconnected for non-payment of dues will be reconnected without levy of any reconnection charges if the dues are cleared within 10 days from the date of disconnection. Reconnection charges will be collected only in cases where the dues are paid after the tenth day of disconnection.

To safeguard subscribers' interest, instructions have been issued that written intimation about disconnection for non-payment should be sent to each subscriber by 15th day of disconnection.

We are not able to accept the recommendation of the Estimates Committee for issue of Regd. notices to all defaulters due to the following reasons :—

(i) The subscribers have already the option to register themselves for issue of Regd. reminders at the cost of Rs. 3/- per notice. Those who desire to avail of this facility may do so. Many subscribers may not like compulsorily to have a registered notice at their cost. It is also observed that most of the defaulters respond to the telephonic reminders and arrange payment.

(ii) We have nearly 24 lakhs subscribers. Regd. reminders to 60 to 70 per cent of the billed subscribers would be an uphill task.

(iii) The enforcement of issue of Regd. notice may lead to a tendency to delay the payment till Regd. notices are received which will result in increase in the outstandings. Th Estimates Committee also have been highly critical of the increasing trend in the outstandings.

(iv) Cases of wrong disconnection are generally those where payments are made much after the due date and just a day or two before disconnection which is normally done between 30 to 35 days from the date of issue of bills.

Instructions have already been issued to all the units to reduce the time gap between the date of payment and actual note in records to the minimum possible extent. In Delhi Telephones, special late payment counters have been opened to overcome this problem and the result has been quite encouraging. This coupled with free restoration of telephones upto ten days from the date of disconnection will mitigate the difficulties of the subscribers to a great extent.

In view of the facts explained above, it is requested that the recommendation may not be insisted upon.



This has been seen and approved by Minister (C).

[Ministry of Communications O.M. No. 14-91/81-PHM dated  
13 November 1981.]

**Comments of the Committee**

Please see Para 1.48 of Chapter I of the Report.

**Recommendation : Sr. No. 112 (Para No. 9.74)**

Whereas telephone directories of various Divisions in a State are published at different points of time, the bound volume of such directories loses all utility. The Department should ensure that the telephone directories of various Divisions in a State are published at the same time.

**Reply of the Government**

The period of supply of paper for directories is spread round the year. Hence it is not possible to print all the Divisional directories at the same time.

[Ministry of Communications O.M. No. 14-91/81-PHM dated  
13 November 1981.]

**Comments of the Committee**

Please see Para 1.51 of Chapter I of the Report.

## CHAPTER V

### RECOMMENDATIONS/OBSERVATIONS IN RESPECT OF WHICH FINAL REPLIES ARE STILL AWAITED

#### **Recommendation: Sr. No. 13 (Para 2.73)**

Service telephones 198 and 199 have a number of parallel circuits at each place to enable a large number of subscribers to contact those numbers simultaneously for registering complaints or for assistance. The Committee find that there is no uniform pattern as regards the number of circuits on 198 and 199 at various places. In 1978-79, the number of telephones per circuit on complaints telephone 198 were 694 in Delhi, 1287 in Calcutta, 1574 in Madras, 2000 in Bombay, 1570 in Bangalore, 1117 in Chandigarh and 1314 in Ahmedabad. Similarly the number of circuits on assistance number 199 vary from place to place. The number of circuits do not appear to be having any relation with the number of telephones at a place or the number of complaints at the place.

It is a moot point how far an international formula which is reportedly used to determine the number of such circuits can provide an accurate answer in India where pattern and nature of telephone traffic and complaint rates must be different from those obtaining abroad. The Committee have a feeling that the difficulties which the subscribers are reported to be facing in getting through to telephone numbers 198 and 199 could perhaps be due to inadequate number of circuits especially at places where the complaint rate and failure rate are high. The Committee would suggest that the position regarding number of circuits on 198 and 199 be reviewed with reference to special circumstances obtaining in various cities of India and optimum number of circuits provided to meet the local needs.

#### **Reply of the Government**

Traffic formula used for determining the number of circuits and position is the traffic intensity which takes care of the number and duration of calls on any service. The Department, therefore, assures the Estimates Committee that the international traffic formula used in these cases is applicable for Indian conditions also.

The Department will review the position. Measurement of traffic is made on a continuous basis and additional circuits and positions are provided from time to time as per traffic.

There is some shortage of equipment like boards, relay sets etc. The Department have mounted a drive to make larger procurement and allotment of equipment for this purpose from all available sources.

[Ministry of Communications O.M. No. 14-91/81-PHM dated  
13 November 1981.]

#### **Comments of the Committee**

Please see Para 1.53 of the Report.

**Recommendation: Sr. No. 21 (Para No. 2.105)**

There has been a general feeling that the Department should not charge rental for the period during which telephones remain out of order. The Committee note that Government have recently decided that, in Ahmedabad Telephone District on an experimental basis a pro rata reduction in rental would be allowed for the actual period of interruption, if telephone service is interrupted for an aggregate period of 45 days or more in a quarter due to reasons other than natural calamities. It is a welcome decision though the Committee felt that pro rata rebate should be granted even if the period of interruption is 21 days in a quarter and even if the interruption in service is due to natural calamities since the Committee see no moral justification for the Department to charge rental for the period when the telephone service is not available for no fault of the subscriber. The Committee would like that a final view which is now overdue may be taken in the matter without delay in the light of the Ahmedabad experiment and the system of pro rata rebate extended to all the Districts/Circles after taking safeguards against malpractices.

**Reply of the Government**

The recommendation is under examination.

After receipt of final report from Ahmedabad Telephones where the system is still on trial the matter will be examined further by the P&T Board.

[Ministry of Communications O.M. No. 14-91/81-PHM dated 13 November 1981.]

**Comments of the Committee**

Please see Paras 1.24 & 1.53 of the Report.

**Recommendation: Sr. No. 30 (Para No. 3.52)**

Though the Department are stated to have taken many measures to check malpractices the fact that subscribers still feel that malpractices are continuing unchecked, shows that the measures taken so far have not been fully effective. The Department have admitted that certain problems exist in different stations and they had tried to curb malpractices substantially. The Committee feel that unless an in-built system to automatically record trunk calls together with the duration of the calls and the called number is devised, it will be difficult for the Department to eliminate such malpractices. The Committee would strongly urge that instead of appointing more supervisors or adding to paper work, the Department should provide an in-built check in the system itself or automatic recording device which will keep an account of every call put through and ensure that every call put through is billed against the proper subscriber.

**Reply of the Government**

Recommendation is under examination.

[Ministry of Communications O.M. No. 14-91/81-PHM dated 13 November 1981.]

**Comments of the Committee**

Please see para 1.53 of the Report.

**Recommendation: Sr. No. 34 (Para No. 4.19)**

Subscriber Trunk Dialling (STD) service has been the subject of all round criticism from subscribers all over the country. A general feeling persists among the subscribers that their telephones are being misused for STD calls by other subscribers in collusion with Telephone staff. It must have been this fear of misuse which led over 1 lakh subscribers in the State capitals alone during April, 1976 to March, 1979 to request the Department to withdraw STD facility from their telephones even though STD calls in certain circumstances are cheaper than regular trunk calls. The Committee cannot but express concern at this phenomenon. They feel that the Telephone Department owes it to the subscribers to develop a foolproof system to dispel fear of misuse from the subscribers minds and to win back their confidence. The Department, it is stated, have taken a number of steps to minimise the chances of misuse of STD but the Committee feel that what has been done is precious little and does not completely rule out the possibility of misuse; much more remains to be done.

**Reply of the Government**

Efforts will be continued to win the confidence of telephone users in the system of billing and charging for calls.

Design of a completely tamper-proof check meter has not been possible but some studies have been made in respect of automatic message accounting systems. Equipments for such a system developed under the supervision of the Telecommunication Research Centre have been field tried in one crossbar and one strowger exchange. Automatic message accounting systems which would represent a radical departure from the present billing method and several aspects need to be examined in depth before policy decisions are taken in this respect. These aspects which include manufacturing capacity for indigenous production, costs of the additional equipment and availability of financial resources, relative priorities, availability of computer facilities for processing billing data etc., are currently engaging the urgent attention of the P&T Department.

[Ministry of Communications O.M. No. 14-91/81-PHM dated 13 November 1981.]

**Comments of the Committee**

Please see Para 1.53 of the Report.

**Recommendation: Sr. No. 36 (Para No. 4.21)**

During 1979-80 and first six months of 1980-81, the flying squads paid on an average 10 visits per month per squad and detected only 9 cases of misuse of STD facility during this period. The Committee felt that there is need to extend the operations of flying squads to more cities and to intensify their efforts with a view to covering more telephones during surprise visits. They hope that, as assured by Secretary (Communications), the number of flying squads will be increased and their activities will go up and would be reflected in better results.

### Reply of the Government

Recommendation is under consideration.

Eight flying squads as shown below are already functioning.

1. Delhi Telephones	2 squads
2. Bombay Telephones	3 squads
3. Calcutta Telephones	2 squads
4. Madras Telephones	1 squad

Quarterly reports on the activities of the squads are being received and their performance is being critically assessed.

The question of enlarging and extending the scheme is under consideration.

[Ministry of Communications O.M. No. 14-91/81-PHM dated 13 November 1981.]

### Comments of the Committee

Please see para 1.53 of the Report.

#### Recommendation: Sr. No. 40, (Para No. 4.26)

The Committee take note of the research work done on automatic message accounting system which will enable the Department to record the particulars of STD calls separately in respect of each telephone. They would like to be apprised of the outcome of experiment with this system when it is installed.

### Reply of the Government

Telecommunication Research Centre was cooperating with a vendor to develop indigenous capability for an 'Automatic Message Accounting System for recording particulars of STD calls separately in respect of each telephone. Proto-types suitable for pentaconta crossbar exchange and the stronger step by step exchange have been proved satisfactorily in one exchange of each type in Bangalore. Introduction of this equipment; however, also requires examination of other aspects such as the indigenous manufacturing capacity costs and availability of financial resources, priorities for introduction and problems of introducing of a new billing system requiring computerized facilities. These aspects are currently engaging the attention of the P&T Department.

[Ministry of Communications O.M. No. 14-91/81-PHM dated 13 November 1981.]

### Comments of the Committee

Please see para 1.53 of the Report.

#### Recommendation: Sr. No. 44 (Para Nos. 5.20 & 5.21)

The Committee take serious note of reports of unauthorised telephone connections being provided by telephone officials in collusion with "pro-

fessional agents". Four cases of telephone connections installed through allegedly fraudulent means were reported in the Bombay press last year. Investigations are stated to be under way in these cases. It has also been brought to that Committee's notice that certain brokers regularly advertise in newspapers offering help to get telephone connections promptly on payment of certain charges.

The Department are aware of the operation of agents dealing with telephone matters but they appear to be helpless to deal with such agents in view of the Law Ministry's opinion that the Department cannot interfere with the work of such agents. The Committee feel that there is need for a second opinion in the matter and it should be taken immediately.

#### Reply of the Government

Recommendations accepted. As directed by the Committee the matter has been taken up with the Ministry of Law for a second opinion.

[Ministry of Communications O.M. No. 14-91/81-PHM dated  
13 November 1981.]

#### Comments of the Committee

Please see para 1.53 of the Report.

#### Recommendation : Sr. No. 46, (Para No. 5.23)

The Committee would like to be appraised of the result of investigations in the four cases of alleged fraud reported in Bombay press last year (1980) and the follow-up action to plug loopholes in the system to prevent recurrence of similar malpractices.

#### Reply of the Government

The details of investigation in 4 cases of alleged fraud in regard to transfer of telephones reported in the Bombay press is as follows :

(i) *Case of Smt. Rajudevi K. Bhatia* : Shri B. R. Mewada to whom the telephone was transferred, has gone to Court and obtained stay order. Therefore, telephone No. 569293 could not be disconnected.

(ii) *Case of Shri Harbanslal Amarnath Vij* : Telephone No. 374455 has been disconnected, in consultation with C.B.I. on 18-12-81. Case is under investigation by C.B.I. Connection cannot be given to the original party for want of records or a fresh application from original party.

(iii) *Case of Shri A. S. Khan* : Telephone No. 392905 has been disconnected on 11-2-81 in consultation with the C.B.I. Investigations are under progress.

However, the original applicant has been given a telephone connection (No. 679955) on production of Indemnity Bond. The telephone has been opened on 22-5-1981.

(iv) *Case of Dr. (Miss) K. K. Shah* : The telephone (No. 665102) provided to a wrong party, viz., Shri R. R. Bhatia, has been disconnected on 27-7-79. Sanction has been issued for instituting proceedings against Shri S. N. Singh, J.E. and charge sheet has been filed by S.P. (C.B.I.) in Special Court.

The procedure to be adopted in plugging the loopholes is being examined.

[Ministry of Communications O.M. No. 14-91/81-PHM dated 13 November 1981.]

#### Comments of the Committee

Please see para 1.53 of the Report.

#### Recommendation: Sr. No. 48 (Para No. 5.27)

The Committee do not think the Department are justified in delaying refunds of advance deposits on the ground of non tally of the depositors original signatures with the present signatures or because their own field staff are not coming up with 'No expenditure certificates'. They find that the Department have now seen it fit to withdraw the condition regarding "No expenditure" certificate. Besides tallying signatures, there are various other ways of establishing the identity of the depositors of checking the genuineness of the claimants or indemnifying the Department against payment to wrong persons. The Committee feel that refunds should not be delayed because of cumbersome procedures or unreasonable conditions. They would like to be apprised of the action taken in this regard.

#### Reply of the Government

The Recommendation is under examination.

[Ministry of Communications O.M. No. 14-91/81-PHM dated 13 November 1981.]

#### Comments of the Committee

Please see para 1.53 of the Report.

#### Recommendation : Sr. No. 49 (Para No. 5.37)

The Committee note that out of a total number of about 5.76 lakh villages in the country, telephone facilities as on 31-3-1980 existed in only 17,880 villages. With the proposed addition of 20,000 new long distance public telephones by the end of the Sixth Plan, the number of villages having telephone facilities will go up to about 37,880. The Committee are concerned at the scant attention paid to telephone needs of rural areas so far. They would urge a complete re-orientation of approach towards rural areas in regard to telephone service so as to spread telephone network there more speedily than done in the past.

#### Reply of the Government

Considerable attention has been given to the development of telecommunications in rural areas. Although the number of villages with telephone facility is still small as compared to the total number of villages in the country, the former represents a manifold increase since Independence. (In 1947, the number of long distance public telephone was only 230). A liberal policy is being followed for opening of long distance public telephones and the Department subsidises losses involved particularly in backward and tribal areas. A substantial proportion of the Department's Sixth Plan provisions will be for development of telecommunication facilities in

semi-urban and rural areas although these investments will be less remunerative than those in large cities.

The Department has also been looking into improvements in technology for further development of telecommunication facilities in rural areas. Import orders have been placed for multi access VHF radio systems for trial in twelve areas in the country. Each of these can serve upto 50 long distance public telephones or provide junctions for rural exchanges without the disadvantages of open-wire lines. Transfer of manufacturing know-how for future manufacture of such systems in India has also been promoted. The P&T Board had also set up a task force to make further studies to evolve improved patterns for integrated development of telecommunication facilities in the rural areas, taking advantage of new technologies in switching, transmission and power supplies. The task force has submitted its report which has also been discussed in the last Conference of Heads of Telecommunication Circles. The report is under consideration for approval and implementation of its recommendations.

[Ministry of Communications O.M. No. 14-91/81-PHM dated  
13 November 1981.]

#### **Comments of the Committee**

Please see para 1.53 of the Report.

#### **Recommendation: Sr. No. 58 (Para No. 5.60)**

The Committee urge that the Department should take an early decision permitting third party transfer of telephones with suitable safeguards against misuse of this facility.

#### **Reply of the Government**

This matter is under consideration of the Department.

[Ministry of Communications O.M. No. 14-91/81-PHM dated  
13 November 1981.]

#### **Comments of the Committee**

Please see para 1.53 of the Report.

#### **Recommendation Sr. No. 79 (Para No. 8.21)**

The Committee also take note of the Department's move to import and install Charge Analysers for automatic meter observations in major telephone systems as another measures to check excess billing. It is stated that with the help of Charge Analysers, the Department will be able to have all the necessary details about the calls, like the called number, duration of call, number of mtered units etc. and will thus be able to settle the excess billing complaints to the satisfaction of subscribers. The Committee would like to be informed of the outcome of this experiment.

#### **Reply of the Government**

Two types of Charge Analysers have been imported. Single-line observation sets have been received and are being tried in exchanges. Multi-line Observation Equipment has also been received at Bombay Port.



Results of the evaluation of these sets are expected to be after about 6 months of trial.

[Ministry of Communications O.M. No. 14-91/81-PHM dated  
13 November 1981.]

#### **Comments of the Committee**

Please see para 1.53 of the Report.

#### **Recommendation: Sr. No. 113 (Para No. 9.82)**

Telephone Advisory Committees (TACs) have been appointed in the Telephone Districts to provide liaison between the Department and the users of Telephone service. There is a general feeling that TACs have not served the real purpose for which they were set up. Except getting telephone connections for their friends, the members of the Telephone Advisory Committees, it is generally felt, have rendered little service to the subscribers at large. The Department have stated that they have not made any study into the working of TACs. The Committee are pained to observe that the image of TACs is now very bright among the subscribers. The Committee would like that a study into the working of TACs be made by the Department with a view to making them an efficient forum of service not only to the Department but also to the subscribers.

#### **Reply of the Government**

This is under examination of the Government.

[Ministry of Communications O.M. No. 14-91/81-PHM dated  
13 November 1981.]

#### **Comments of the Committee**

Please see Para 1.53 of the Committee.

NEW DELHI

April 8, 1982

Chaitra 18, 1904 (Saka)

S. B. P. PATTABHI RAMA RAO

*Chairman,  
Estimates Committee*

## APPENDIX

(Vide Introduction of the Report)

### *Analysis of Action Taken by Government on the 11th Report of Estimates Committee (Seventh Lok Sabha)*

I. Total number of Recommendations	115
II. Recommendations/Observations that have been accepted by Government (Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 16, 18, 20, 22, 24, 25, 26, 28, 29, 31, 32, 33, 35, 37, 38, 39, 41, 42, 43, 45, 47, 50, 51, 52, 54, 55, 57, 61, 62, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 70, 71, 72, 74, 76, 77, 78, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 114, 115).	
Total	84
Percentage	73%
III. Recommendations/Observations which the Committee do not desire to pursue in view of Government's replies (Nos. 27, 63, 69, 73, & 91.)	
Total	5
Percentage	4.3%
IV. Recommendations/Observations in respect of which Government's replies have not been accepted by the Committee. (Nos. 8, 14, 15, 17, 19, 23, 53, 56, 59, 60, 75, 80 & 112)	
Total	13
Percentage	11.3%
V. Recommendations/Observations in respect of which final replies of Government are still awaited. (Nos. 13, 21, 30, 34, 36, 40, 44, 46, 48, 49, 58, 79 & 113.)	
Total	13
Percentage	11.3%