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Title: Need to open Regional Passport Offices at Coimbatore and Madurai in Tamil Nadu.

SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN (PALANI): In Tamil Nadu, there are only two Passport Offices – One at Chennai and the other is located at Tiruchirappalli. Large number of people from southern parts of Tamil Nadu are applying to Trichy Passport Office for getting their passports and they are facing lot of difficulties in getting their passports. Hence the people of the State have requested to open a Regional Passport Office at Madurai but the proposal is pending with the Government.

Sir, I also want to mention here that the city of Coimbatore is fast developing next to Chennai. Tirupur is one of the textile centres located nearby and thousands of hosiery units are functioning here. Large number of people are going abroad from Tirupur, Nilgiris, Salem, Namakikal, Coimbatore and nearby areas. Every year more than 50,000 people are applying for getting passport from Chennai Regional Passport Office. During the year 2005, Chennai Regional Passport Office received 2, 54,498 applications, but this year upto October nearly 2, 42, 289 persons had applied for passport out of which nearly 55, 000 applications were from Coimbatore region only. For getting their passports, they have to travel more than 400 kms. It is time consuming and also creates unnecessary hardships for them. Moreover Coimbatore is developing as a centre for IT. Coimbatore and Tirupur are municipal corporations. Through District Passport Collection Centre at Coimbatore, last year nearly 14,000 people had applied for issue of new passports and this year upto the end of October it crossed to more than 14 thousand applications.

Hence, there is also an urgent need for opening a Regional Passport Office at Coimbatore. I shall, therefore, request the Hon'ble Minister to direct the authorities to open Regional Passport Offices at Coimbatore as well as at Madurai at the earliest.