

SIXTY-NINTH REPORT
ESTIMATES COMMITTEE
(1988-89)

(EIGHTH LOK SABHA)

MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS
(DEPARTMENT OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS)
TELECOMMUNICATION SERVICES IN
RURAL AREAS

Action Taken by Government on the recommendations
contained in the Fifty-ninth Report of
Estimates Committee (Eighth Lok Sabha)



सत्यमेव जयते

Presented to Lok Sabha on 4 April 1989

LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI

April, 1989/Chaitra, 1910 (Saka)

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Corrigenda to the 69th Report
of Estimates Committee (1988 - 89)

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| <u>Sl.No.</u> | <u>Page</u> | <u>Para</u> | <u>Line</u> | <u>For</u> | <u>Read</u> |
|---------------|-------------|---------------------------------------|--|---|--|
| 1. | 4 | 1.13 | 1 | note | noted |
| 2. | 4 | 1.13 | 6 | necessary | necessity |
| 3. | 4 | 1.14 | 1 | <u>After</u> action | <u>Add</u> taken |
| 4. | 5 | 1.16 | last | provided | provide |
| 5. | 5 | 1.20 | 1 | haave | have |
| 6. | 11 | <u>Under</u> 'Reply of Government' | 7 | egorts | efforts |
| 7. | 20 | Recommendation S. No. 20 | 5 | feel that unless the system is streamlined and appropri- ate steps | are firmly of the opinion that the major contributory factors lies |
| 8. | 22 | Recommendation S. No. 3 | 19 | <u>After</u> additional | <u>Add</u> demand of Rs. 2000 crore. <u>Delete</u> last line. |
| 9. | 25 | Recommendation Sl. No. 7 | 1 | informal | informed |
| 10. | 26 | Recomm. Sl. No. 10 | 14 | privated | private |
| 11. | 30-31 | Annexure I | S. No. 11 in column 'Block' | 70 | - |
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(1988-89)

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**STUDY GROUP ON ACTION TAKEN REPORTS OF
ESTIMATES COMMITTEE**

(1988-89)

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8. **Dr. Manoj Pandey**
9. **Shri Ram Singh Yadav.**

INTRODUCTION

1, the Chairman of the Estimates Committee having been authorised by the Committee to submit the Report on their behalf present this Sixty-Ninth Report on action taken by Government on the recommendations contained in the Fifty-Ninth Report of the Estimates Committee (Eightth Lok Sabha) on the Ministry of Communications (Department of Telecommunications)—Telecommunication Services in Rural Areas.

2. The Fifty-Ninth Report was presented to Lok Sabha on 19th April, 1988. Government furnished their replies indicating action taken on the recommendations contained in the Report on 20th January, 1989. The replies were examined and the draft report was adopted by the Estimates Committee at their sitting held on 16th March, 1989.

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

- (i) Report
- (ii) Recommendations/Observations which 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 Fifty-Ninth Report of Estimates Committee (Eighth Lok Sabha) is given in Appendix. It would be observed that out of 23 recommendations made in the Report 14 recommendations i.e. about 61 per cent have been accepted by Government. The Committee have desired not to pursue 3 recommendations in view of Government's reply i.e. about 13 per cent. Replies have not been accepted in respect of 3 recommendations i.e. about 13 per cent. Final replies of Government in respect of 3 recommendations i.e. about 13 per cent are still awaited.

NEW DELHI:

ASUTOSH LAW
Chairman
Estimates Committee

March 28, 1989
Chairman 7, 1910(S)

CHAPTER I

REPORT

1.1 This Report of the Estimates Committee deals with Action Taken by Government on the recommendations contained in their Fifty-Ninth Report (8th Lok Sabha) on Telecommunication Services in Rural Areas which was presented to Lok Sabha on 19th April, 1988.

1.2 Action Taken Notes have been received in respect of all the recommendations contained in the Report. These Notes have been categorised as follows :—

- (i) Recommendations/Observations which have been accepted by the Government :
Sl. Nos. 1, 2, 5, 8, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 23.
(Total 14 Chapter II)
- (ii) Recommendations/Observations which the Committee do not desire to pursue in view of Government's replies :
Sl. Nos. 3, 4, 6.
(Total 3 Chapter III)
- (iii) Recommendations/Observations in respect of which Government's replies have not been accepted by the Committee :
Sl. Nos. 7, 10, 21.
(Total 3 Chapter IV)
- (iv) Recommendations/Observations in respect of which final replies are still awaited :
Sl. Nos. 9, 11, 22.
(Total 3 Chapter V)

1.3 The Committee will now deal with the Action Taken by Government on some of the recommendations.

Policy for provision of Public Telephones

Recommendation, Sl. No. 5 (Para 1.19)

1.4 The Committee had noted that even as on 31.3.87 as many as 3144 hexagons falling in the first-priority categories which included 171 districts, sub-divisional, tehsil, sub-tehsil and block headquarters, were not provided with Long Distance Public Telephones. While taking note of the difficulties experienced in providing LDPTs in the administrative headquarters for reasons stated by the Department during evidence, the Committee regretted the failure of the department to cover the remaining first priority hexagons in a large number of States where problems akin to those given for the administrative headquarters, did not apparently exist. The Committee accordingly desired that the reasons for non-coverage of such a large number of first priority

hexagons might be centrally examined by the department and steps taken for their coverage in 1988-89.

1.5 In their reply the Ministry of Communications, Department of Telecommunications stated that in almost all the Circles, most of the first category hexagons having administrative headquarters had been covered except in hilly and difficult terrain states of North East, Assam & J&K. It was also brought out that there were 163 hexagons without Telephone facility containing administrative headquarters upto Block level as on 31-3-88. Out of these 163, 121 were in N.E. circle, 26 in J&K, in Assam and only 2 in Bihar circle. Because of hilly and difficult, remote & inaccessible areas in these circles, these facilities could not be provided on openwire and the same needed new technologies which were under development. When these new technologies became fully available most of such hexagons would be covered by 1990. The Ministry also stated that 982 such hexagons out of 2882 as on 31.3.88 were likely to be covered during the year 1988-89 and bulk of remaining during 1989-90. A few hexagons which would be left would be covered progressively upto 1992.

1.6 In their original recommendation the Committee had desired that all the 3144 hexagons falling in the first priority category which remained uncovered as on 31st March, 1987 should be covered in 1988-89. They, however, note with dismay that of these, only 262 could be covered in 1987-88 and another 982 would be covered upto 31st March, 1989. They view the situation with growing concern and urge the Department to pursue the matter vigorously with the Indian Telephone Industries and to avail of the latest technological advancement so as to ensure that all these hexagons are now covered at least by 31st March, 1990. The progress of implementation should be watched at an appropriately higher level so that there are no slippages and the prescribed targets are achieved. The Committee would like to be apprised of the further developments in this regard.

Rural Telephone Exchange

Recommendation, Sl. No. 7 (Para 1.38)

1.7 In their original report of Committee had pointed out that out of 4,954 Rural Telephone Exchanges envisaged to be opened during the 7th Plan, only 1451 Telephone Exchanges were opened in the first two years of the Plan and had commented upon on the slow development work in the first two or three years of the Plan. The Committee had observed that the Department should streamline the system to ensure even annual performance during the Plan period and also to ensure that the targets set for the 7th Plan were achieved and there were no shortfalls in this connection.

1.8 In their reply the Government stated that during the last two years the Plan in addition to the strowger units, I.T.I. would also be supplying

electronic mini ILT exchanges and would also step up the production of 25 line strowger MAX-III. They also stated that it was proposed to open 1000 new exchanges during 1988-89 and approximately 1200 new exchanges in 1989-90.

1.9 The Committee are not satisfied with the above reply of the Government and note that out of 3503 telephone exchanges envisaged to be opened during the last two years of the 7th Plan it would be possible to open only 2200 exchanges during this period. The Committee view this situation with growing concern and deprecate that the targets set for the 7th Plan could not be achieved. The Committee would urge the Government to streamline the system and to ensure that targets fixed are realistic and every effort is made to ensure that these are adhered to scrupulously and there are no slippages in this regard. The progress in this regard should be constantly monitored at an appropriately higher level. They would also like to be apprised of further steps taken in this direction.

Policy for opening of Telephone Exchanges

Recommendation S. No. 8 (Para 1.39)

1.10 The Committee had observed that the Department did not even possess the basic data on the extent of outstanding demands for new exchanges for rural areas. The Committee had also found it difficult to reconcile the conflicting facts placed before them—one relating to the low utilisation of rural telephone exchange capacity to the extent of hardly 76% (as against the optimum feasibility of utilisation of upto 94%) and the other relating to a large number of as many as 0.50 lakh applicants kept in the waiting list who were not provided with telephone facilities. The Committee considered this position hardly in tune with the system of planned growth and pointed out that the existing system was indicative of lack of proper monitoring and control either at the Department or at Circle level on the utilisation of the rural telephone exchanges as also the demand for new such exchanges. They felt that the position called for an urgent review at an appropriate level for the corrective action that needed to be taken to remedy the situation.

1.11 In their action taken reply the Ministry of Communications, Department of Telecommunications, stated that Telephone Circles maintained the basic data of rural exchanges and that new exchanges were opened in accordance with the policy of the Department when a minimum paid demand existed. It was also stated that waiting list in rural areas mainly pertained to exchanges with 100-line capacity and not in exchanges of the order of 25 and 50-line capacities. The former could not be expanded due to technical limitations. The waiting list was attributed to non-replacement of these exchanges where demand increased beyond 100. It was also

stated that the waiting list of 100-line exchanges would be substantially reduced when large number of ESAX-200 and 512 Port C-DOT/ILT were productionised and utilised to replace existing 100-line MAX-III.

1.12 The Committee are not satisfied with the above reply of the Government and are of the view that the matter has not been given the serious consideration it deserved. It is imperative that urgent steps are taken to get the 100-line MAX-III exchanges replaced by either MAX-II equipment or electronic exchanges by taking the matter at an appropriately higher level with the Indian Telephone Industries so that it is possible to clear the waiting list of persons not provided with telephone facilities and to effect substantial improvement in the low utilisation of rural telephone exchange capacity. The Committee would also like to be apprised of further development in this regard.

Telegraph Rules

Recommendation, Sl. No. 9 (Para 1.40)

1.13 The Committee had note that the existing rules framed under the Indian Telegraph Act did not cover the essential aspects relating to the principle to be adopted for allotment of telephone to subscribers and the existing instructions in this regard were administrative in nature and hence not available for the common subscribers. The Committee had recommended the necessary to frame appropriate rules and notify the same for the guidance of the public.

1.14 In their action reply, the Ministry has stated that the Telephone allotment rules made under the Indian Telegraph Rules, 1951 are being redrafted.

1.15 The Committee hope that the redrafting of the rules will be done expeditiously. They recommend that all the major aspects relating to allotment of telephones to subscribers and matters incidental thereto should be regulated by the rules to be made under the Indian Telegraph Act, 1951. They would like to be apprised of further developments in this regard.

Policy for Provision of Telegraph Services

Recommendation, Sl. No. 10 (Para 1.46)

1.16 The Committee had noted that due to difficulties in establishing more omnibus circuits at all places with adequate volume of work or facilities for training, the telegraph facilities were being extended through phonocom and, as a result, development of telegraph facilities had been merged with the policy of extension of LDPTs. The Committee were, however, constrained to note that development of telegraph facilities had failed to keep pace with the development of telephone facilities because for every year

there had been a backlog in provision of telegraph facilities as against the number of LDPTs opened in the same year; the backlog being as high as 1538 places for a period of 4 years ending 1985-86. As resort to telegraph facilities was more frequent for communication by the public, the Committee considered it imperative for a review of the existing policy, for provision of telegraph facilities so as to ensure that growth of telegraph facilities was extended at a faster pace than provision of LDPTs. The Committee had recommended that a policy decision might be taken for provision of telegraph facilities wherever LDPTs were located even if some of them were in private premises. The Committee also felt that the existing policy of merger did not provide for any solution of this problem.

1.17 In their Action Taken reply the Ministry stated that LDPTs were provided at the rate of one per hexagon in rural areas and that telegraph facility was also permitted to be provided on LDPTs located in Post Offices. It was also stated that the case for providing telegraph facility on LDPTs located in private premises was under consideration and approval of the Telecom Board.

1.18 The Committee deprecate that their original recommendation has not been considered in the right perspective. The Committee had desired that as the resort to telegraph facilities was more frequent for communication by the Public a review of the existing policy for provision of telegraph facilities should be made so as to ensure that growth of telegraph facilities was extended at a faster pace than provision of LDPTs. The reply of the Ministry does not indicate whether any such review has been made by the Department. The reply of the Ministry only indicates that "the case for providing telegraph facility on LDPTs located in private premises is under consideration and approval of the Telecom Board."

1.19 The Committee deplore that the recommendation of the Committee which has a vital bearing on the expansion of the telegraph facilities in rural areas has been treated rather casually. They would like the Ministry to undertake the necessary review, as recommended earlier, so as to ensure the growth of telegraph facilities at a faster pace than provision of LDPTs. They would also like the Ministry to take final decision regarding providing telegraph facility on LDPTs located in private premises with due promptitude. The Committee would like to be apprised of further developments in this regard.

Revenue

Recommendation, Sl. No. 12 (Para 2.17)

1.20 The Committee have observed that no reliable data had at any time been compiled to ascertain how far the rural services were actually

subsidised and both the Department and Circle offices were ignorant of the extent of actual revenue realised in the rural telephone facilities. It was also noticed that there was leakages of revenue and that no reconciliation for calls booked from LDPTs with reference to trunk call tickets was done. They had observed that watch over revenue performance and consequently traffic performance had neither been prescribed nor was being done. The Committee had desired the Department to initiate necessary steps immediately for a review of the actual revenue performance of all rural telephones over a period of years by a time-bound programme by deputing internal audit teams, so as to ascertain the extent of misappropriation, fraud etc. that had taken place and to plug loopholes in the system in consultation with the Comptroller and Auditor General of India, if considered necessary.

1.21 In their Action Taken reply, Ministry of Communications, Department of Telecommunications, stated that the detailed procedure for monitoring the revenue earned from PCOs including LDPTs was prescribed under Chapter IX of P&T Manual, Vol. XXV. According to this, the Post Offices were required to send a daily list of collections to the TRA so that reconciliation of the revenue earned as per the records of the PCOs and TRA took place. This work regarding the verification of the revenue earned by the PCOs was not being done properly by most of the units and this lapse was also being pointed out in the Internal-Check Report. It was also stated that Department of Posts had been requested to issue directives to all the PMGs to ensure that daily list of revenue realised from PCOs/LDPTs was sent by the Post Offices to the TRA units as prescribed under rules. It was also stated that besides daily lists, LDPTs also sent a monthly statement of the revenue earned in the form of challan to the TRA Section and trunk-call tickets were received from the telephone exchanges in the TRA which were sorted out PCO wise. It was brought out that instructions had been issued to all the Heads of Circles and Districts to examine the revenue earned from each LDPT and report to Directorate if there was any shortfall in the collection of revenue due.

1.22 The Committee are not satisfied with the above reply of the Ministry which does not indicate whether any review regarding the actual revenue performance of all rural telephones over a period of years by a time-bound programme was conducted by internal audit team of the Department so as to ascertain the extent of misappropriation, fraud etc. that had taken place. The reply of the Ministry that instructions had been issued to all Heads of Circles and Districts to examine the revenue earned from each LDPTs and report to Directorate if there was any shortfall in the collection of revenue due and that on receipt of this report a detailed probe would be conducted is vague and evasive.

1.23 The Committee would, therefore, reiterate their earlier recommendation and urge the Ministry to take urgent steps to get the review done of actual revenue performance of all rural telephones over a period of years after framing a time-bound programme which should be monitored periodically at an appropriately higher level. The Committee would like to be apprised of further progress in this direction.

Telegraph Services

Recommendation Serial No. 21 (Para 3.38)

1.24 In their original recommendation the Committee had noted that in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and North Eastern Circles, as many as 32%, 20.38%, 14.5%, and 10.5% respectively of telegrams were sent by post and in other States also, the position was none too good. The Committee felt that the divided responsibility of Postal Department and Telecommunication Department, the former for receipt and delivery and the latter for Communication, had been one of the major contributory factors for the poor attention given to telegrams and had recommended urgent remedial action.

1.25 In their Action taken reply, the Ministry of Communications, Department of Telecommunications, stated that the instances of posting of telegrams between CTOs and DTOs were negligible. The posting of telegrams was resorted to due to non-availability of postal signallers against vacancies caused by leave, transfer or promotion and unreliability of open wire media. It was also stated that quarterly coordination meetings between officers of Department of Posts and Department of Telecom. had been introduced at Divisional, Area and Circle levels and at these meetings the above problems were discussed and corrective action taken.

1.26 In their original report the Committee while expressing concern over the number of telegrams sent by post in various states, had desired the Department to take urgent remedial action in this matter. In their reply the Government have merely enumerated the reasons due to which telegrams were sent by post in certain situations and has not given details of corrective action proposed to be taken to rectify the situation. The Committee would like the Ministry to examine the problem again in depth and take effective steps to avoid sending telegrams by post and also to consider giving refund to the concerned persons in such situations. They would also like to be apprised of further developments in this regard.

Monitoring

Recommendation Serial No. 23 (Para 3.45)

1.27 The Committee had observed that in the provision, maintenance and operation of telecommunication facilities, the rural areas had been given

a very raw deal and the Department seemed to have geared up only after the Committee started examining the subject. The Committee had hoped that this sort of awakening would be sustained and the Department would take steps to ensure that the rural services were no longer neglected and were placed on better footing in days to come.

1.28 In their Action taken reply the Ministry of Communications, Department of Telecommunications, merely noted the observations of the Committee.

1.29 The Committee are not satisfied with the Ministry's reply that "observation of the Estimates Committee has been noted". The Committee would like to be apprised of the details of the concrete steps/measures taken by the Department in pursuance of their recommendation after the presentation of original report on 19th April, 1988 to augment the telecommunication facilities in rural areas. At this stage the Committee only hope that the Ministry would give first priority to the provision maintenance and operation of telecommunication facilities in rural areas and would endeavour for provision of telecommunication facilities in rural areas at least at the level of urban areas.

Implementation of recommendations

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

1.31 The Committee desire that reply in respect of the recommendations contained in Chapter V of the Report may be finalised and final reply of the Government furnished to Committee expeditiously.

CHAPTER II

RECOMMENDATIONS/OBSERVATIONS WHICH HAVE BEEN ACCEPTED BY THE GOVERNMENTS

Recommendation Serial No. 1 (Para 1.15)

The Committee need hardly emphasise the establishment of quick and effective two way communication facilities in village is *sine qua non* not only for weaving the villages intimately in infrastructural support for implementation and monitoring of the various development programmes. Viewed in this context, the Committee regret to note that despite substantial provision of funds for development of telephone facilities in the country over the several plan periods, the tilt has been towards providing more and more facilities in urban areas rather than in rural areas as is indicative from the fact that as on 31st March, 1986, there were 3 telephones for every 200 people in the urban areas as compared to hardly one for every 2000 persons in the rural areas. The Committee therefore are firmly of the opinion that an immediate review of the priorities is called for so as to ensure that due justice is done to the rural areas in the remaining years of the 7th Plan and in the 8th Plan for provision of communication facilities at least at the level of urban areas.

Reply of Government

DOT fully endorses the views expressed by the Committee with regard to provision of telecom. facilities in rural areas. There are also no denying of urban areas getting some advantages over the rural areas previously in certain spheres. There was demand in the urban area whereas in the rural areas there was little awareness for this service. If there was demand the network was almost non-existent to meet it. Also for the department to change its approach from commercial and administrative angle and undertake social obligations naturally needed time and efforts as realisation had to be created in the entire governmental set-up.

As already explained under our policy, right from the time of independence the department understood this obligation and started enlarging its functions in this regard both from the demanded as well as social benefit angle depending upon—

- (a) availability of resources
- (b) technology available
- (c) experience gained, and

- (d) the feedback received from the field and the public representatives.

Changing of stress first from the administrative needs to population criteria and then to the spatial distribution is evidently the result of the openness of the mind on the part of the department.

A glance to the growth pattern given below may explain the effectiveness of this approach.

| Sl. No. | Item | 1984 | 1988 | Growth |
|---------|---|------------------------------------|-------|--------------------------|
| 1. | Phones in urban areas as on (in lakhs) | 0.82 | 37.99 | 46 fold |
| 2. | Exchanges in urban areas (Nos.) | 321 | 2765 | 8.5 fold |
| 3. | LDPTs in rural areas (Nos.) | 338 | 26507 | 80 fold |
| 4. | Exchanges in rural areas (Nos.) | a few (exact data not known) | 10201 | } more than 1000 fold |
| 5. | Telegraph offices in urban areas (Nos.) | 3324 | 4700 | |
| 6. | Telegraph offices in rural areas (Nos.) | | 33097 | |

Besides the total waiting list in the rural areas is 0.50 lakhs against 10.17 lakhs in the urban areas as on 31-3-87. Furthermore there is normally not more than one year waiting time in the rural areas whereas in the urban areas it is more than 5 years on the average.

Even though the Department is run on commercial basis; the policies with regard to the provision of telecom. facilities in the rural areas are purely based on the objectives of social upliftment of rural masses in tune with the National Manifesto. One LDPT per hexagon and exchanges upto 100 lines are being provided on fully subsidised basis.

High priority is being accorded to the rural areas in the 7th Plan as a continuation of policies followed during 6th Plan. Induction of new technologies and high reliable equipments in the rural network has already been started.

It may, however, not be out of place to mention that the level of outlays for telecom. services is linked with internal resource generation—higher the internal resource higher is the outlay and higher is the subsidy available for rural network. Internal resources in turn are directly proportional to the size of urban network. Larger the urban network, more is the subsidy available for rural development.

Department has already decided to explore the possibility of covering all the hexagons even before the end of 8th Plan. As regards telephone in

the rural areas the department is not only interested in providing the service but is keen to extend it on reliable radio medium even on considerable costs and practically without any consideration of returns.

[Ministry of Communications Department of Telecommunications O.M.
No. 3-52/88-TPL(P) dated 16-12-1988]

Recommendation Serial No. 2 (Para 1.16)

The Committee note that a target of 20,000 LDPTs with an investment of Rs. 2,950 crores at 1979-80 prices was proposed for the Sixth Plan. However, the financial outlay was fixed at Rs. 2,336 crores at 1979-80 prices. But surprisingly the physical target of providing 20,000 LDPTs was retained on the specific request of the Planning Commission. Eventually the final allocation was increased to Rs. 2,722 crores i.e. by 17% over the amount of Rs. 2,336 crores, the physical targets remaining the same. Notwithstanding this increase of 17% in provision of funds, the achievement under LDPTs, was to the extent of 11774 only against a target of 20,000 LDPTs, resulting in a shortfall of 41%. The Committee are surprised to observe conscious non-correlation of physical targets with the Plan allocation as well as fixation of unrealistic targets which were known to be not achievable within the funds provided. The Committee cannot help expressing their deep anguish on the above estimation of physical targets and consequential presentation of an illusory picture. The Committee recommend that a proper coordination between the physical and financial targets should be worked out in the planning process to ensure accountability of the executive for achieving the prescribed level of development with the funds provided.

Reply of Government

The Department of Telecom. no doubt fully endorses the views expressed by the Committee that a proper coordination between physical and financial targets should be worked out. Target of 20,000 LDPTs was fixed against plan outlay of 2950 crores at 1979-80 price level and when the allocation was reduced to 2336 crores DOT did revise this target to 12,100 LDPTs. Planning Commission no doubt requested the DOT to maintain the same targets and promised efforts for providing more funds.

During the Annual Plan discussions, the Department sought enhanced outlay but when these could not be provided DOT had to be confined to its reduced targets.

With a view to coordinate between physical and financial targets the figures for LDPTs were revised and fixed each year in the light of actual

allocation of funds as per the table given below :—

| Year | Revised Target | Actual achievement |
|---------|----------------|--------------------|
| 1980-81 | 2500 | 2251 |
| 1981-82 | 2800 | 2082 |
| 1982-83 | 2300 | 2264 |
| 1983-84 | 1500 | 2468 |
| 1984-85 | 3000 | 2709 |
| Total | 12100 | 11774 |

It will thus be seen that actual achievement was 11,774 against target of 12,100 and not 20,000 as stated above.

[Ministry of Communications Department of Telecom. O. M. No. 3-52/88-TPL(P) dated 16-12-1988]

Recommendation Serial No. 5 (Para 1.19)

The Committee are surprised to note that even as on 31-3-87 as many as 3144 hexagons falling in the first priority categories which include 171 districts, sub-divisional, tehsil, sub-tehsil and block headquarters, are yet to be provided with LDPTs. While taking note of the difficulties experienced in providing LDPTs in the administrative headquarters for reasons stated by the Department during evidence, the committee cannot but regret the failure of the department to cover the remaining first priority hexagons in a large number of states where problems akin to those given for the administrative headquarters, do not apparently exist. The Committee, therefore, suggest that the reasons for non-coverage of such a large number of first priority hexagons may be centrally examined by the department and steps taken for their coverage in 1988-89.

Reply of Government

In almost all the Circles, most of the first category hexagons having administrative headquarters have been covered except in hilly and difficult terrain states of North East, Assam & J&K. Left over hexagons are generally having villages with population of more than 2000. The details are given in Annexure.

There are 163 hexagons without Telephone facility containing administrative headquarters upto Block level as on 31-3-88 as per details given in the Annexure-I. Out of these 163,121 are in N.E. circle, 26 in J&K 14 in Assam and only 2 in Bihar circle. Because of hilly and difficult, remote & inaccessible areas in these circles, these facilities cannot be provided on openwire. These need new technologies which are

under development. When these new technologies become freely available most of such hexagons will be covered by 1990.

982 such hexagons out of 2882 as on 31-3-88 are likely to be covered during the year 1988-89 and bulk of remaining during 1989-90. A few hexagons which will be left will be covered progressively upto 1992.

Heads of circles have been addressed for their early coverage.

[Ministry of Communications Department of Telecom. O. M. No. 3-52/88-TPL(P) dated 16-12-1988]

Recommendation Serial No. 8 (Para 1.39)

The Committee are surprised to find that the Deptt. does not even possess the basic data on the extent of outstanding demands for new exchanges for rural areas. The Committee also find it difficult to reconcile the conflicting facts placed before them—one relating to the low utilisation of rural telephone exchange capacity to the extent of hardly 76% (as against the optimum feasibility of utilisation of upto 94%) and the other relating to a large number of as many as 0.50 lakh applicants kept in the waiting list who are yet to be provided with telephone facilities. The Committee consider this position hardly in tune with the system of planned growth. It is needless for the committee to point out that the present system is indicative of lack of proper monitoring and control either at the Deptt. or at Circle level on the utilisation of the rural telephone exchanges as also the demand for new such exchanges. They, therefore, feel that the position calls for an urgent review at an appropriate level for the corrective action that needs to be taken to remedy the situation.

Reply of Government

(i) Telephone Circles maintain the basic data of rural exchanges. This data includes outstanding demand for new exchanges for rural areas. New exchanges are opened in accordance with the policy of the Department when a minimum paid demand exist.

(ii) & (iii)—There is a low utilisation of exchange capacity in smaller capacity rural exchanges of the order of 25 line and 50 line capacities. This is due to inadequate demand in such exchanges. Since the number of smaller telephone exchanges is large as compared to higher capacity exchanges, the average utilisation of capacity is low. It may be pointed out that approximately 80% of the waiting list in rural areas pertain to exchanges of 100 line capacity. The 100 line MAX-III exchanges cannot be expanded further due to technical limitations. These exchanges have to be replaced by either MAX-II equipment or electronic exchanges which at present are in a short supply. Due to non-replacement of these ex-

changes there is a substantial waiting list. Where demand increase beyond 100. The waiting list at the lowest spectrum is very low.

The results of two representatives circles viz. Kerala Circle and M.P. Circle are as under :

(A) Kerala Circle

| Type of exch. | No. of Exchanges | W/L as on 30-9-87 |
|-------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| 1. MAX-III 25 line | 16 | 281 |
| 2. MAX-III 50 line | 139 | 3737 |
| 3. MAX-III 100 line | 391 | 25171 |

(B) M. P. Circle

| | | |
|-------------------------------|-----|-----|
| 1. MAX-III 25 line | 460 | 199 |
| 2. MAX-III 50 line | 129 | 364 |
| 3. MAX-III 100 line | 67 | 314 |

Regarding clearing waiting list of 100 line MAX-III, it is hoped that when large number of ESAX-200 and 512 port C-DOT/ILT are productionised and utilised to replace 100 line MAX-III, waiting list will be substantially reduced.

[Ministry of Communications Department of Telecom. O. M. No. 3-52/88-TPL(P) dated 16-12-1988]

Recommendation Serial No. 12 (Para 2.12)

The Committee feel highly perturbed to find that no reliable data have at any time been compiled to ascertain how far the rural services are actually subsidised and both the Department and Circle offices are ignorant of the extent of actual revenue realised in the rural telephone facilities. It is equally shocking to note the admission about existence of leakages of revenue and the absence of reconciliation for calls booked from LDPTs with reference to trunk call tickets. It is also strange that watch over revenue performance and consequently traffic performance has neither been prescribed nor is being done as admitted in the report of the Committee appointed by the Deptt. in August, 1985. The Committee would like the Department to initiate necessary steps immediately for a review of the actual revenue performance of all rural telephones over a period of years by a time-bound programme by deputing internal audit teams, so as to ascertain the extent of misappropriation, fraud etc. that have taken place and to plug loopholes in the system. The advice of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India may also be sought in this connection, if necessary.

Reply of Government

The detailed procedure for monitoring the revenue earned from PCOs including LDPTs is prescribed under Chapter IX of P&T Manual Vol. XIV. According to this, the Post offices are required to send a daily list of collections to the TRA so that reconciliation of the revenue earned as per the records of the PCOs and TRA takes place. It is correct that his work regarding the verification of the revenue earned by the PCOs is not being done properly by most of the units and this lapse is also being pointed out in the Internal-Check Report. The Department of Posts has been requested to issue directives to all the PMGs to ensure that daily list of revenue realised from PCOs/LDPT is sent by the Post offices to the TRA units as prescribed under rules.

It may be pointed out that besides daily lists, LDPTs also send a monthly statement of the revenue earned in the form of challan to the TRA Section and trunk-call tickets are received from the telephone exchanges in the TRA which are sorted out PCO wise. The comparison of trunk call Tickets with the list sent by the LDPTs can always bring into notice any short charges of trunk-call revenue. Thus, even otherwise, there is a system of monitoring the revenue earned from the LDPTs. However, as desired by the Estimates Committee, instructions have been issued to all the Heads of Circles and Districts to examine the revenue earned from each LDPT and report to Directorate if there is any shortfall in the collection of revenue due. On receipt of this report a detailed probe will be conducted.

[Ministry of Communications Department of Telecommunications O.M.
No. 3-52/88-TPL (P) dated 16-12-1988]

Recommendation Serial No. 13 (Para 3.10)

The Committee note with deep concern that the proper maintenance of the LDPTs and rural exchanges leaves much to be desired. One of the contributory factors that has been brought to the notice of the Committee for lack of proper maintenance is non-availability of spare parts, particularly a large number of critical items. The Committee are also unhappy to be informed that the Deptt. has no system of collection of data either regarding the efficiency of function of the rural telephone facilities or for the complaints received from the users in the rural areas. In the circumstances, the Committee cannot help concluding that the Department has not evolved any effective mechanism for properly maintaining the telephones and also exchanges over the year and has been working in a most casual manner. It is really surprising that even after an expert committee was appointed to go into the functioning of the telephone exchanges and that committee had made a series of recommendations for improving the situation, precious little has been done by the Deptt. in the matter. The Committee urge that urgent steps should be taken to streamline the whole functioning of the department

vis-a-vis the LDPTs and rural telephone exchanges. The Committee also feel that not only suitable accountability for the maintenance of rural telephones be determined by it, also a system of incentives involved to encourage better devotion to duty. So far as the paucity of spare parts is concerned, the Committee suggest that the problem may be sorted out in consultation with the Indian Telephone Industries without any avoidable loss of time.

Reply of Government

The number of rural exchanges and LDTPs in the country are very large in number and it is not possible to monitor the performance of these services in rural areas centrally. These services can be monitored only at the field level and report sent to the Head Office on exception basis. Instructions, therefore, have already been issued to all the G.Ms giving them guidelines for monitoring the performance of SAXs and LDPTs from JTO upto the Area Director level. It is the responsibility of the JTO to take necessary action and contact the parent exchange to which these SAXs and LDPTs are parented and test the LDPTs and SAXs daily. He is required to report to the SDO all those SAXs which remain faulty for more than 3 hours and LDPTs for more than 12 hours. The report is then required to be submitted to the DET by the SDO for those cases where the LDPT is interrupted for more than 24 hrs. As per the instructions the Area Director will get the report for those SAXs which remain faulty for more than 12 hrs. and LDPTs for more than 2 days. GM Telecom. will get the report for SAXs which remain faulty for more than 24 hours and LDPTs for more than 3 days. The Heads of Circles are submitting their report monthly to the Secretary (T) in the Top Management Review proforma for the SAXs which remain faulty for more than 2 days and LDPTs remaining faulty for more than 7 days. These instructions are being followed by the Department.

Hitherto there was some shortage of spare parts mainly because the ITI's capacity was not adequate to meet the demands made on it for new exchange equipment required for expansion of the telephone services. However, this pressure has reduced due to availability of electronic systems. The Deptt. has now worked out the minimum requirement of spares and following it up vigorously with M/S ITI for increasing the availability of these parts.

[Ministry of Communications Department of Telecom. O.M. No. 3-52/
88-TPL (P) Dated 16-12-1988]

Recommendation Serial No. 14 (Para 3.11)

The Committee note that due to erratic power supply in the rural areas, the charge/discharge cycle of the batteries installed in the telephone exchange is affected. The Committee welcome the strategy being adopted by the Department for charging periodically the batteries by a portable generator as installing a permanent generator at each exchange will be too costly.

Reply of Government

Noted with thanks.

[Ministry of Communications, Department of Telecom. O.M. No. 3-52/88-TPL (P) dated 16-12-1988.]

Recommendation Serial No. 15 (3.15)

The Committee are surprised to note that nearly after 24 years of the introduction of rural exchanges the Deptt. has only now come to the conclusions that the existing assessment of codal life of telephone exchanges needs to be reduced from 25 years to 10 years. As the factors that are now considered relevant for determining the life of a telephone exchange were already there when the life span was originally determined, the Committee apprehend that the question of replacement has arisen, not because of the causes mentioned, but due to lack of proper maintenance over the years. The committee have been informed during their visits to various centres that several old exchanges are functioning very well even today in certain States wherein the factors mentioned are equally relevant. The Committee therefore, suggest that a review of the contributory causes may be made for each exchange which is to be replaced after 10 years but before 25 years to find out whether its life could be increased by initiating proper maintenance measures.

Reply of Government

As given in para 3.13 above, the average life of the equipment is fixed for various types of exchanges but the actual performance depends on the working environment of the system. In many areas there exchanges are subjected to the high temperature and dust conditions. Thus the equipment gets worn out quickly. There are instances of erratic power supply to the exchanges which result in burning of some components. All these have its effect on the fast wearing out of such exchanges. Guidelines have already been prepared for the 8th Plan for replacement of the exchanges and the Heads of Circles are being addressed to formulate their plan for the replacement of worn out exchanges. It is quite possible that in some exchanges the equipment remains in a better condition and continues to work even after the expiry of the average life.

[Ministry of Communications, Department of Telecom. O.M. No. 3-52/88-TPL(P) dated 16-12-1988.]

Recommendation Serial No. 16 (Para 3.16)

The Committee appreciate that since 1970, provision for depreciation is being made strictly in accordance with commercial practices. If that be the case, there should be no problem to find resources for financing replacement

of worn out exchanges, as Depreciation Fund is intended for this very purpose. In the circumstances the Committee are unable to understand as to why the programme of replacing the worn out equipment has to wait till the 8th plan as the cost of the replacement of time expired equipment can be met out of accumulations in Depreciation Fund.

Reply of Government

The demand of telephone lines in the rural areas have been growing very fast and the capacity was limited. The Deptt. had also to give lines for increasing the capacity and meeting the availability of Telephones in the rural areas. Therefore, due to shortage of capacity the replacement of the worn out exchanges was not given the desired priority. However during first 3 years of 7th Plan, DOT has replaced 13,700 L of MAX-II electro-mechanical exchanges and further in 1988-90, it is proposed to replace 11,950 lines of life expired/worn out exchanges. In the 8th plan objective the department has decided to replace those exchanges which have been worn out and their life has expired.

[Ministry of Communications, Department of Telecom. O.M. No. 3-52/88-TPL(P) dated 16-12-1988.]

Recommendation Serial No. 17 (Para 3.21)

The Committee regret to note that despite large scale investment in sophistication and modernisation over the years, as against target of 90%, effective trunk calls have reached the level of 80% only in two Telecommunications Circles, varies between 70% to 80% in 12 Circles and is less than 70% in as many as 10 Circles (including all metropolitan cities). The Committee consider this a very sad reflection on the working of the Deptt. and would call for necessary corrective measures for achieving the prescribed target on a priority basis. In this connection the Committee recommend that the contributory causes for non-materialisation of trunk calls may be studied and accountability therefor fixed.

Reply of Government

As per Mission-Better Communication, department has fixed objective for improving manual trunk services. As per these objectives the manual trunk call efficiency is to be increased to 85% by year 1990. The targets fixed for year 1988 was 80%. Against this target, during the period April, 1987 to December, 1987, 9 Telecom. Circles achieved the manual trunk call efficiency of 80% and more. 5 Telecom. Circles achieved 75% to 80% and 6 Circles achieved 70% to 75%. Details of trunk call efficiency for various circles for the period April 1987 to December, 1987 and for 1986 is given in the *Annexure II*. From the comparison of trunk call

efficiency figures for the year 1986 and 1987 it is very clear that majority of the Telecom. circles have made improvement during 1987.

The Department is aware of problems effecting the trunk call efficiency and has initiated actions to improve trunk performance. A revised incentive scheme for the manual trunk exchange staff has been introduced from September, 1987. This scheme has resulted in improvement in the trunk performance.

[Ministry of Communications, Department of Telecom. O.M. No. 3-52/88-TPL(P) dated 16-12-1988.]

Recommendation Serial No. 18 (Para 3.22)

In view of a very large number of public complaints, the Committee do not see any justification for discontinuance of the collection of data on the time taken on the materialisation of trunk calls. The Committee recommend that reasonable time norms for calls to materialise may be determined and the actual performance studied objectively so that the contributory causes could be identified and appropriate action taken for doing away with inordinate delays.

Reply of Government

In the past there was no practice of collecting data on the delay in maturity of effective calls, except on sample check on a few routes on selected days. However for the Mission better communication the department has laid down the following objectives for the delays for effective trunk calls between 500 cities in India.

URGENT

- 50% within 30 Minutes
- 80% within 60 Minutes

ORDINARY

- 30% within 30 Minutes
- 50% within 60 Minutes
- 90% within 120 Minutes

Sample check is being made by the field units to observe delays for the effective calls. The data is further examined by the field units for taking appropriate action for improving the trunk performance. The performance has been observed to be quite satisfactory.

[Ministry of Communications, Department of Telecom. O.M. No. 3-52/88-TPL(P) Dated 16-12-1988.]

Recommendation Serial No. 19 (Para 3.23)

When the position of trunk call services in urban areas is so, the Committee can well imagine the position of trunk calls booked to/from rural telephones. The Committee suggest that a specific study on the effectiveness and timelines of trunk calls to/from rural exchanges may be made, results analysed and remedial action initiated.

Reply of Government

The Department is aware of the poor performance of trunk services in the rural areas. The telecom services including trunk services in the rural areas are mainly affected due to prolonged power failures, wire thefts. The objectives for the manual trunk call efficiency and the delays for the effective trunk calls mentioned in para 3.21 and 3.22 are also applied to the rural areas and every efforts is made to achieve the above objectives.

The department is also taking effective measures to modernise the trunk services by computerising certain operations in the trunk exchanges at Minor Telephone Districts and at some of the State Capitals. These improvements are expected to speed up the transit trunk calls from the rural areas which pass through such large trunk exchanges.

The department is also proposing computerisation of trunk exchanges in District Headquarter towns in the 8th Plan (1990-95).

[Ministry of Communications, Department of Telecom. O.M. No. 3-52/88-TPL(P) Dated 16-12-1988.]

Recommendation Serial No. 20 (Para 3.37)

The Committee note with grave concern that test checks, conducted have revealed that hardly 57% of telegrams were delivered within a period of 24 hours. If a telegram can not be delivered within 24 hours the Committee feel that the very purpose of sending a telegram is lost. The Committee feel that unless the system is streamlined and appropriate steps in human failure that are allowed to occur without proper control. The Committee feel that unless the system is streamlined and appropriate steps taken to simplify procedures for fixing responsibility and taking action for recovery there can be no improvement in the situation with whatever sophistication in communication system that may be established. The Committee therefore recommend that the issue regarding accountability for timely delivery of telegrams should be thoroughly analysed and placed on proper footing urgently.

Reply of Government

The delays to telegrams are due to various reasons. Human failure is not the only factor contributing to delays. The other factors are technical

constraints such as unreliable power supply, administrative constraints such as limited working hours of Combined offices etc. The service is to be run within the financial means provided. As regards accountability for timely delivery of telegrams, if it is *prima facie* established that the delay is due to human failure, action is taken for recovery of the cost of the telegram from the official responsible for the delay. The procedure for fixing responsibility and effecting recovery is already in vogue. To reduce delays due to power supply failure arrangements for stand by power supply is being ensured in CTOs/DTOs and possibly C.Os for working on Teleprinters; Modernisation of the telegraph network has also been taken up to eliminate transit delays in handling of telegrams in large CTOs/DTOs and some C.Os.

[Ministry of Communications, Department of Telecom. O.M. No. 3-52/88-TPL(P) Dated 16-12-1988.]

Recommendation Serial No. 23 (Para 3.45)

The Committee have been constrained to note that in the provision, maintenance and operation of telecommunication facilities, the rural areas have been given a very raw deal and the Department seems to have geared up only after the Committee started examining the subject. This is evident from the several steps taken during the last one year for monitoring the working of the rural communication system. The Committee only hope that the present awakening will be sustained and the Department will take steps to ensure that the rural services are no longer neglected and are placed on better footing in days to come.

Reply of Government

As regards comments about maintenance and operation are concerned, "Observation of the Estimates Committee has been noted".

[Ministry of Communications, Department of Telecom. O.M. No. 3-52/88-TPL(P) Dated 16-12-1988.]

CHAPTER III

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

Recommendation Serial No. 3 (Para 1.17)

The Committee note that the funds allocated for the 7th Plan have been Rs. 4010 crore, out of which only a sum of Rs. 110 crore has been allocated, for rural telephone facilities. The Committee also note that the funds needed to provide LDPTs in all the remaining hexagons have been only Rs. 320 crore which work out to hardly 8% of the total provision for the 7th plan. The Committee also note that despite a request to the Planning Commission for increase to the extent of 50% the allocation for provision of facilities to the rural areas will still leave over 10,000 hexagons to be covered in 8th Plan. The Committee regret to note the neglect in provision of rural telecom. facilities. The Committee recommend that a fresh look at the allocation of funds for the remaining two years of the 7th Plan may be taken so as to ensure that by the end of the 7th Plan or latest by the end of the first year of the 8th Plan, all hexagons in the country are provided with LDPTs. Even this coverage which envisages provision of one LDPT in a radial distance of 5 kms. cannot be considered liberal or ambitious but is an essential need of the rural populace. The Committee also recommend that if it is not feasible to divert funds from existing allocation due to commitments already on hand, funds to the required extent may be earmarked for rural telephone out of the additional required estent may be earmarked for rural telephones out of the additional

Reply of Government

Telecom. facilities in rural areas are provided in the form of Long Distance Public Telephone (LDPTs) rural exchanges, long distance network for linking rural exchanges to National Network and telegraph offices. Provision of Rs. 110 crore (at 1984 prices) out of an outlay of Rs. 4010 crore is exclusively for providing 9000 LDPTs and Telegraph offices. Rs. 4010 crore plan envisages provision of 9000 LDPTs only.

We have asked for an enhanced outlay of Rs. 6000 crore (1984 prices). However so far no enhanced allocation have been received from the Planning Commission.

A review of the requirement has, however, been made and it has now been decided to increase the 7th Plan target from 9000 to 10000 for the same allocation of Rs. 4010 crore.

There are about 50,280 inhabited hexagons and telephone facilities exist in about 28,447 hexagons as on 31-3-88. It is proposed to cover another 5400 hexagons during 1988 to 1990. This would leave about 17,000 hexagons to be covered during 8th Plan. The coverage of most of the balance hexagons would need not only financing but also require reliable and new technologies like MARR, VHF, UHF Statellite, RCT etc. for difficult, remote and inaccessible areas and equipment like 1+9, 1+4 radio sharing systems etc. for special requirements. These technologies are still at developmental stage. Development and procurement of these types of equipment would still need some more time, no doubt. In view of this the coverage of all the hexagons can mainly be completed by the latter part of the 8th Plan. Efforts are, however, being geared up to see if this work can be completed earlier.

[Ministry of Communications, Department of Telecom. O.M. No. 3-52/88-TPL(P) Dated 16-12-1988.]

Recommendation Serial No. 4 (Para 1.18)

The Committee are surprised to note that the development of LDPTs in various states is highly lopsided even after the new policy was introduced in 1982, because certain states like Kerala, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu have LDPTs in practically all the hexagons whereas States like Assam, Bihar, Rajasthan, J&K, Manipur etc. have covered hardly 25% of the hexagons with LDPTs and States like Gujarat, M.P., Maharashtra, Punjab etc. have provided LDPTs to 50% of their hexagons only. The Committee regret to note in this connection that even during the first two years of the 7th Plan adequate attention has not been given for development of the States wherein the progress has been slow as the following table would indicate :

| States | Total No. of hexagons | No. to be provided (LDPTs) as on 31-3-85 | Provided in 1985-86 and 1986-87 |
|-------------|-----------------------|--|---------------------------------|
| Assam | 1715 | 1298 | 24 |
| Bihar | 4740 | 3686 | 252 |
| M. P. | 6103 | 3267 | 433 |
| Rajasthan | 6193 | 4808 | 355 |
| West Bengal | 2777 | 1961 | 60 |

The Committee strongly feel that this lopsided development has been due to lack of Centralised coordination in planning as a result of which the States that showed better awareness or enthusiasm developed faster than the others. While the Committee welcome such enthusiasm, they consider it necessary for the Department to oversee the functioning of the sub-ordinate executive formations so as to ensure, as far as possible, even growth. The Committee therefore, recommend that the planning process of the LDPTs may be reviewed centrally and appropriate steps taken to ensure that the States lag behind are given proper attention.

Reply of Government

No doubt the coverage of the hexagons is uneven over the various states. This has quite a few factors behind it :

- (a) Some of the circles have been very enthusiastic in achieving the targets. Pulling them backward was not advisable. They were rather to be emulated by the other circles.
- (b) Many of the Circles like J&K, North East, Assam, Himachal Pradesh had very difficult terrains and geographical conditions.
- (c) Some of the Circles like Assam, North East, Punjab, West Bengal had many administrative and political problems as a result of which their achievement could not be comparable to the enthusiastic and energetic Circles.

Nevertheless the objective targets to each Circle were being allotted centrally and their progress was also being monitored regularly. This process of centrally fixing of targets and the remonitoring of their progress has been now further been strengthened. For the Circles having difficult terrains and inaccessible areas arrangements are being made to provide more of radio equipments in the form of MARR, single channel VHF system & cordless telephone etc.

[Ministry of Communication Department of Telecom. O. M. No. 3-52/
88-TPL (P) dated 16-12-1988.]

Recommendation Serial No. 6 (Para 1.20)

The Committee also recommend that the feasibility of providing telecom. facilities at all extra departmental and departmental postal offices located within a radius of 5 kilometers, without linking the cost of provision thereof with the income that would be derived, may be considered so that these post offices can also serve as telegraph offices for booking and delivery of telegrams through telecommunications.

Reply of Government

With the limited availability of financial and material resources the Department of Telecom. as a priority has planned to provide atleast one telecom facility in all the 50280 inhabited hexagons in the country. After this objective is achieved the department may consider the possibility of providing telecom. facilities to all the departmental and extra-departmental post offices within 5 kms of any exchange or such like other permises.

[Ministry of Communications, Department of Telecom. O. M. No. 3-52/
88-TPL (P) dated 16-12-1988.]

CHAPTER IV

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

Recommendation Serial No. 7 (Para 1.30)

The Committee feel unhappy to be informal that out of 4,954 rural telephone exchanges envisaged to be opened during the seventh plan, only 1,451 telephone exchanges were opened in the first two years of the plan. The Committee do not think that with this pace of work, the deptt. would be able to achieve the said target. The Committee find that generally the development work in the first two or three years of a Plan is carried on a snail's pace and it is only towards the last two or three years that it gains momentum. Such un-healthy practice not only results in frittering away of resources and escalation of costs, but also result in lopsided development. The Committee would expect the Department to streamline the system to ensure even annual performance during the plan period and also to ensure that the targets set for the Seventh Plan are achieved and that there are no shortfalls in this connection.

Reply of Government

The number of rural exchanges opened during a year depend primarily on the supply of 25 line MAX-III units by M/s. ITI. It was found that ITI was able to supply around 600, such units during a year. However, it is anticipated that during the last two years of the plan in addition to the strowger units, ITI will also be supplying some electronic Mini ILT exchanges and it will also step up the production of 25 line strowger MAX-III. Therefore, more exchanges are likely to be opened during the last two years of the plan. It is proposed to open 1000 new exchanges during 1988-89 and approximately 1200 new exchanges in 1989-90.

[Ministry of Communications, Department of Telecom. O. M. No. 3-52/
88-TPL (P) dated 16-12-1988.]

Recommendation Serial No. 10 (Para 1.46)

The Committee note that due to difficulties in establishing morse omnibus circuits at all places with adequate volume of work or facilities for training, the telegraph facilities are being extended through phonocom and as a result, development of telegraph facilities has been merged with the policy of extension of LDPTs. The Committee, are, however, constrained to note that development of telegraph facilities has failed to keep pace with the development of telephones facilities because for every year

there has been a backlog in provision of telegraph facilities as against the number of LDPTs opened in the same year; the backlog being as high as 1538 places for a period of 4 years ending 85-86. If the policies for telephone and telegraph facilities are totally merged, the Committee do not feel convinced by the clarification that inability to open telegraph facilities in private premises and administrative delays with the Deptt. of Posts in organising the telegraph facilities contribute to the absence of telegraph facilities at a large number of places. As resort to telegraph facilities is more frequent for communication by the Public the Committee consider it imperative for a review of the existing policy for provision of telegraph facilities so as to ensure that growth of telegraph facilities is extended at a faster pace than provision of LDPTs. The Committee further recommend that a policy decision may also be taken for provision of telegraph facilities wherever LDPTs are located even if some of the are in privated premises. The Present policy of merger does not provide for any solution of this problem.

Reply of Government

LDPTs are provided at the rate of one per hexagon in rural areas irrespective of remuneration considerations. It is seen that most of these LDPTs are used only for a short spell and that too once in a few days. In order to exploit the investment fully, telegraph facility is also permitted to be provided on LDPTs located in Post-offices. The Case for providing telegraph facility on LDPTs located in private premises is under consideration and approval of the Telecom. Board.

[Ministry of Communications Department of Telecommunication O. M. 88-TPL (P) dated 16-12-1988.]

Recommendation Serial No. 21 (Para 3.38)

The Committee note with great distress that in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and North Eastern Circles, as many as 32%, 20.38%, 14.5% & 10.5% respectively of telegrams are sent by post and in other States also, the position is non too good. The Committee also feel that the divided responsibility of Postal Department and Telecommunication Department, the former for receipt and delivery and the latter for Communication, has been one of the major contributory factors for the poor attention given to telegrams. This situation calls for urgent remedial action.

Reply of Government

The instances of posting of telegrams between CTOs and DTOs are negligible. The posting of telegrams is mostly resorted to between DTO and C. Os. The main reasons for posting of telegrams are :

- (1) non-availability of postal signallers against vacancies caused by leave, transfer or promotion and

- (2) unreliability of open wire media. Quarterly co-ordination meetings between officers of Department of Posts and Deptt. of Telcom. have been introduced at Divisional Area and Circle level and at these meetings the above problems are discussed and corrective action taken.

[Ministry of Communications Department of Telecommunications O. M.
No. 3-52/88-TPL (P) dated 16-12-1988]

CHAPTER V

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

Recommendation Serial No. 9 (Para 1.40)

The Committee note that the existing rules framed under the Indian Telegraph Act do not cover the essential aspect relating to the principle to be adopted for allotment of telephone to subscribers and the existing instructions in this regard are administrative in nature and hence not available for the common subscribers. The Committee recommend the necessity to frame appropriate rules and notify the same for the guidance of the public.

Reply of Government

The Telephone allotment rules made under the Indian Telegraph Rules, 1951 are being redrafted. The comments on the points raised by the Estimates Committee of Parliament in 59th Report will be furnished after the Rules are formulated.

[Ministry of Communications Department of Telecommunication O. M.
No. 3-52/88-TPL (P) dated 16-12-1988]

Recommendation Serial No. 11 (Para 2.10)

The Committee are surprised to note that in the present system of accounting, the expenditure incurred on the various schemes in a Plan Period cannot be identified. The Committee wonder how, in the absence of accounting of expenditure under respective plan schemes, a proper estimation of cost of each plan scheme can be made and the physical progress related to financial outlay from year to year. The Committee feel that if individual works of establishment of LDPTs, rural exchanges and telegraph offices are sanctioned separately, there should be no difficulty in accounting for all such works under consolidated account heads like Establishment of new LDPTs, Establishment of new rural exchanges., etc. The Committee recommend that a review of accounting procedure may be made in consultation with the Comptroller and Auditor General of India, so as to evolve a system of accounting duly related to schemes under execution.

Reply of Government

This issue is under examination of a Committee constituted for the purpose.

[Ministry of Communications Department of Telecommunication O. M.
No. 3-52/88-TPL (P) dated 16-12-1988]

Recommendation Serial No. 22 (Para 3.39)

Considering the large difference in cost of Communication by telegram and by post. The Committee find no justification either morally or ethically, for the Department to pocket the telegram charges for telegrams sent by post or delayed beyond normal postal delivery period. The Committee recommend that in such cases, the Deptt. must ensure automatic refund of difference between telegram and postal charges by suitable amendment to the rules.

Reply of Government

A scheme for granting automatic refund for all the private personal category telegrams where express and ordinary telegrams have been delayed by over 24 and 48 hours respectively, has been introduced on an experimental basis in CTOs at Bombay and Calcutta. The refund is proposed to be given irrespective of whether the telegram has been sent by post or otherwise (provided no delay intimation is given to the booking party). The scheme is now under review and valuation.

[Ministry of Communications Department of Telecommunication O. M.
No. 3-52/88-TPL (P) dated 16-12-1988]

NEW DELHI;
28 March 1989
7 Chaitra 1910 (S)

ASUTOSH LAW
Chairman
Estimates Committee

ANNEXURE I

(Please see Recommendation Sl. No. 5 Para 1-19)

First priority hexagons without Telecom. facility as on 31-3-1988.

| | DHQ | SDN | Teh. | S. Teh. | Block | Population of more than 5000 in normal & more than 2000 in tribal/hilly/backward areas. | Police Stn. | Tourist Centre | Total 31-3-88 | Total 31-3-87 | Planning | | Remarks |
|---------------------|-----|-----|------|---------|-------|---|-------------|----------------|---------------|---------------|----------|-------|--|
| | | | | | | | | | | | 88-89 | 89-90 | |
| 1. Andhra Pradesh | — | — | — | — | — | 14 | — | — | 14 | 58 | 4 | — | 10 Progressively by 1992. |
| 2. Assam | • | 1 | 2 | 1 | — | 125 | 10 | 9 | 158 | 198 | 10 | 1 | Dist-147 BHQ Progressively upto 1992. |
| 3. Bihar | • | — | — | — | 2 | 1005 | 150 | — | 1157 | 1157 | 300 | 300 | Balance 557 progressively upto 1992 |
| 4. Gujarat | • | — | — | — | — | 102 | 4 | 2 | 108 | 114 | 105 | 3 | |
| 5. Haryana | • | — | — | — | — | 22 | — | — | 22 | 22 | 23 | — | |
| 6. Himachal Pradesh | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | |
| 7. Jammu & Kashmir | — | 3 | 3 | 12 | 8 | 26 | 2 | 5 | 59 | 165 | 31 | 1 | 27 subject to availability of new technology eqpt. |
| 8. Karnataka | — | — | — | — | — | 5 | — | — | 5 | 39 | 5 | — | |

ANNEXURE II

(Please see Recommendation Sl. No. 17, Para 3-21)

Effective Trunk Calls efficiency April 87 to Dec. 87

| Telecom. Circles | 1986 | 1987 |
|-----------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| 1. Andhra Pradesh | 78.5 | 81.6 |
| 2. Assam | 60.1 | 65.8 |
| 3. Bihar | 66.2 | 66.7 |
| 4. Gujarat | 75.6 | 79.3 |
| 5. Haryana | 78.4 | 80.6 |
| 6. Himachal Pradesh | 78.4 | 85.7 |
| 7. J&K | 79.6 | 84.2 |
| 8. Karnataka | 78.7 | 81.4 |
| 9. Kerala | 73.8 | 76.7 |
| 10. M. P. | 70.6 | 75.6 |
| 11. Maharashtra | 76.3 | 81.1 |
| 12. North-East | 60.1 | 66.9 |
| 13. Orissa | 68.7 | 74.3 |
| 14. Punjab | 78.4 | 81.2 |
| 15. Rajasthan | 71.0 | 74.6 |
| 16. Tamil Nadu | 79.8 | 83.7 |
| 17. U. P. | 61.6 | 65.7 |
| 18. West Bengal | 66.4 | 70.0 |
| Telephones District; | | |
| 1. Bombay | 65.3 | 63.4 |
| 2. Calcutta | 48.9 | 55.7 |
| 3. Delhi | 57.5 | 68.0 |
| 4. Madras | 63.3 | 70.5 |
| 5. Ahmedabad | 71.2 | 80.0 |
| 6. Bangalore | 65.2 | 75.5 |
| 7. Hyderabad | 71.8 | 77.0 |
| 8. Kanpur | 61.7 | 66.7 |
| 9. Pune | 71.9 | 73.0 |
| 10. Jaipur | — | 70.9 |

APPENDIX

(Vide Introduction of the Report)

Analysis of Action Taken by Government on the 59th Report of Estimates Committee (8th Lok Sabha)

| | | |
|------|---|-----|
| I. | Total number of Recommendation | 23 |
| II. | Recommendations/Observations which have been accepted by Government (Nos. 1, 2, 5, 8, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 23). | |
| | Total | 14 |
| | Percentage | 61% |
| III. | Recommendations/Observations which the Committee do not desire to pursue in view of Government's replies (Nos. 3, 4, 6) | |
| | Total | 3 |
| | Percentage | 13% |
| IV. | Recommendations/Observations in respect of which Government's replies have not been accepted by the Committee (Nos. 7, 10, 21) | |
| | Total | 3 |
| | Percentage | 13% |
| V. | Recommendations/Observations in respect of which final replies of Government are still awaited. (Nos. 9, 11, 22) | |
| | Total | 3 |
| | Percentage | 13% |