

Please give us details of those recommendations.

SHRI NITISH KUMAR: *The team which went there had made some recommendations in its report. The hon. Member had raised this point when discussion on I.C.A.R. was held. Subsequently these investigations had been conducted. Main recommendations made by that expert team were: 5 metre distance should be kept between two trees, fertilisers and organic manure should be used annually which includes 5 kg. oil cake of neem, irrigation should be done particularly in summer season, anti-fungus insecticide should be sprayed and after that physic sanitation should be used.*

SHRI ARVIND NETAM: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Indian Council of Agricultural Research or the Central Government had forwarded the report to the Department of Horticulture and Farm Forestry of the State Government and a copy thereof was also sent to the Collector of Bastar. But according to my information proper publicity has not been given among the farmers regarding its preventive measures. I would like to request the hon. Minister that a small team should be sent there and under its supervision, the work of its publicity among farmers may be done. Will the hon. Minister consider this suggestion? In my opinion, the department of the Horticulture of the Madhya Pradesh Government is not an efficient department. Therefore, I would like that a team should go there to collect information on all these aspects.

SHRI NITISH KUMAR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is a localised problem and it is a popular drink of that area. As toddy is popular at various places, this tree is similar to toddy tree. According to a survey, the number of trees there is only 30,000. It is the responsibility of the State Government and district administration to undertake this work. On the request of the hon. Member, a team was sent there and they had conducted investigations also. The Collector has also been asked to publicise all these measures so that it could be controlled. It is a local problem

and keeping in view the limited resources, a specific and wider research is not possible.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: *Shri Janardhanan. I think you know the main Question.*

SHRI KADAMBUR M.R. JANARDHANAN: Yes, I know the Question and that is why I want to put a Supplementary. The Palmyra trees are grown in Tamilnadu. Fish Tail trees and Palmyra trees come under the same species, according to the botanical terms. I want to know from the Minister whether the Ministry is aware, that a disease has attacked the Palmyra and coconut trees also and whether the Government is coming forward to rectify that. We are getting toddy from the Palmyra trees. The Palmyra workers are affected in Tamilnadu. I would like to know whether the Central Government has received any news about the disease attack in the Palmyra trees and whether they have any proposal, under the head 'Palmyra Welfare Scheme', to rectify that disease.

[Translation]

SHRI NITISH KUMAR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, its botanical name is 'Kanyota' but I do not know its name in Tamil.

[English]

Opening of Post Offices in Villages of Maharashtra

*107. **SHRI SUDAM DATTATRYA DESHMUKH:** Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of village in Maharashtra with Gram Panchayat Centre but without a post office, district-wise;

(b) the ranking of rural Maharashtra in the matter of facility of Post offices on all-India basis;

(c) whether government have prepared any perspective plan for open-

ing of Post Offices in villages during the Eighth Plan period;

Maharashtra, during the Eighth Plan period to improve postal service?

[*Translation*]

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) what new technologies are to be provided in Post Offices, particularly in

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE
MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI
JANESHWAR MISHRA): (a) to (e). A State-
ment is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT

The number of Gram Panchayats in Maharashtra not having a Post Office, district-wise is as follows:

<i>Sl. No.</i>	<i>District</i>	<i>No. of such Panchayats</i>
1	2	3
1.	Malvan	90
2.	Kolhapur	473
3.	Nasik	732
4.	Pune	626
5.	Sangli	262
6.	Ratnagiri	230
7.	Satara	67
8.	Raigarh	333
9.	Sholapur	497
10.	Thane	534
11.	Latur	393
12.	Osmanabad	272
13.	Nanded	897
14.	Parbhani	846
15.	Jalgaon	554
16.	Dhule	568
17.	Beed	606

1	2	3
18.	Jalna	391
19.	Aurangabad	414
20.	Ahmed Nagar	563
21.	Akola	624
22.	Wardha	336
23.	Yeotmal	794
24.	Amrawati	404
25.	Bhandara	735
26.	Nagpur	506

(2) Maharashtra with 10,321 rural post offices ranks fourth in the country in that respect after Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh and Bihar though in terms of rural population, the State occupies the fifth position.

(3) The Department has taken up an evaluation of Seventh Plan programme in association with the Institute of Rural Development on the basis of which the norms to be followed during the Eighth Plan are to be determined. As apart of this exercise, a longer-term plan is also likely to be considered.

(4) The draft Eighth Plan of the Department which would also cover upgrading of postal technology is in the process of finalisation. However, an automated mail sorting project in South Bombay to be completed during the Eighth Plan period has already been sanctioned by Government.

SHRI SADAM DATTATRYA DESHMUKH: Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is clear from the details given that a number of

villages in Maharashtra are without post offices. A private postal agency is functioning there. Other people are running postal services there because Government has not provided these services there. It is a blot on our postal services. The hon. Minister said that the Government was providing facility of television in villages in order to remove the disparity between villages and cities. But the postal services are not being provided there even now. My question was about the perspective plan in this regard during the Eighth Plan period, but the same has not been replied to. My question about the number of post offices Government propose to open during the Eighth Five Year Plan and the arrangements made in this regard has also not been replied to.

MR. SPEAKER: PLEASE ASK THE QUESTION.

SHRI SUDAM DATTATRYA DESHMUKH: The reply to my question is not there. I want to know the number of villages in Maharashtra with population of more than one thousand, where delivery service is available?

SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA: Mr.

Speaker, Sir, the question has been asked about Gram Panchayats. The norms of population and area for Gram Panchayats vary from State to State. In Maharashtra the norms are very low, as there is a Gram Panchayat for a population of just 1600. Accordingly, we have given the list and there is no need to repeat the names. We have given the list of Gram Panchayats of 26 districts where there are no post offices, but the post offices which have been opened there are working efficiently.

SHRI SUDAM DATTATRYA DESHMUKH: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether the Government will make arrangements to provide postal services in all these villages?

SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA: A scheme is being formulated to evolve norms with the help of the Institute of Rural Development for the Post Offices to be opened during the Eighth Five Year Plan. The information will be given after the scheme is formulated.

SHRI UMA BHARATI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, in hundreds of villages of Chhatarpur, facility of post offices is not available.

MR. SPEAKER: This question relates to Maharashtra.

KUMARI UMA BHARATI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, please give me permission for asking question. Sir, population of some villages ranges between 3,000 and 4,000 and in some villages it is about 5,000. When I asked about it from the concerned officers they replied that the villages were not in a position to bear the expenditure on running the post offices and, therefore, post offices had not been opened there. I would like to know whether provision of relaxation is there in case of villages in backward area where facility of post office is not available? If so, will the hon. Minister kindly give the list of the names of those places where such facilities have been provided?

SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, there is a provision to open post office in hilly and backward area for a group of villages whose combined population is about 1500 and if expected income from the proposed post office is 15 per cent of the total cost, a post office can be opened there.

[English]

SHRI UDAYSINGRAO GAIKWAD: According to the statement laid on the Table

of the House, 473 gram panchayats are not having post offices in the district from where I come. There are two or three villages under each of these 473 gram panchayats. Mostly they are in the remote, economically backward and hilly areas.

Will the Government give top priority to these villages so that the gram panchayats can have post offices there?

[Translation]

SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have already told in reply to the supplementary question put by Kumari Umaji that norms regarding opening of post offices in backward and hilly areas are very liberal. If Gram Panchayats are not having post offices in the area mentioned by the hon. Member, I shall consider the matter.

SHRIMATI JAYAWANTINAVINCHANDRA MEHTA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, in the context of the reply given by the hon. Minister, I would like to submit that keeping in view the increasing population of Bombay metropolitan city, some areas like Andheri, new Lokhandwala complex, whose population is about 60000, do not have post offices. The hon. Minister told us about the difficulties in opening post offices in the villages in backward and hilly areas but what is he going to do to open post offices in some areas of metropolitan city like Bombay where population is more than 60,000?

Another question related to it is that 50 per cent post offices in Bombay are functioning in rented old buildings. At some places repair work or even white-washing is not done regularly. I would like to know whether improvements will be brought about in this situation during the Eighth Five Year Plan so that post offices could function efficiently?

SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the rule for metropolitan cities and cities having population of 20 lakhs is that a post office can be opened there at a distance of 1 1/2 kms. The case of the area mentioned by the hon. Member will be looked into. Rather the matter is under examination. It is a fact that white-washing of some rented buildings is not done. The Department of Posts is running in loss. It provides services like Post Card and Inland Letters. The cost of post card starting from printing stage till it reaches the addressee comes to 92 paise but it is being sold at the rate of 15 paise. That is why we cannot white-wash our buildings. The Departments which run in loss cannot bear all such expenditure.