

Postal, Telegraph and Telephone communications in Rural areas during Fifth Plan

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*558. PROF. NARAIN CHAND PARASHAR :
SHRI TARUN GOGOI :

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government have made any special provision to provide better Postal, Telegraph and Telephone communications in the rural areas of the country during the Fifth Year Plan; and

(b) if so, the main features of these provisions ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (PROF. SHER SINGH) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) I. *Postal Services* :

It is proposed to provide post offices at Gram Panchayat Villages which are at distance of over 2 miles from the nearest P.O. in normal rural areas and very-backward Hilly areas during the 5th Plan. This would provide better postal facilities in rural areas including increased frequency of delivery of mails.

II. *Telecom Services* :

It is proposed to open 5000 public call offices and 7000 telegraph offices during the fifth Five Year Plan.

The detailed policy to be observed for opening such offices is under examination.

PROF. NARAIN CHAND PARASHAR. In view of the Government's desire to provide better facilities in the rural areas, may I ask for specific information whether the P&T authorities consider it desirable to declare the community development block head quarters as cate-

gory station for providing a public call office ?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS SHRI K. BRAHMANANDA REDDY): That matter is under examination.

PROF. NARAIN CHAND PARASHAR : It is very essential for the development of rural areas and communication facilities that smaller units of administration and development are created there. May I know whether in the hilly and especially the backward areas, Government would consider it desirable to give some relaxation of the criteria for creating these subdivisions, divisions etc. ?

PROF. SHER SINGH. We do give relaxation and we have given relaxation in some cases. We have recently started a telegraph division at Dharmasala in relaxation of the normal standard

SHRI TARUN GOGOI : The postal telegraph and telephone facilities still continue to be urban-oriented. May I know the total allocation for the rural areas for the development of postal, telegraph and telephone facilities ?

PROF. SHER SINGH : I cannot give just now the exact figure of expenditure that is to be incurred. I have indicated that 5000 public call offices and 7000 telegraph offices are to be opened in the rural areas during the Fifth Plan.

SHRI TARUN GOGOI : How many in the urban areas ?

PROF. SHER SINGH : It will be about 7 lakh odd telephones.

In the rural areas, there is not much demand.

AN HON. MEMBER : Not much demand ?

PROF SHER SINGH As regards PCOs, we open PCOs if we get 25 per cent of income of the expenditure we incur. Even, if only 25 per cent return is got we open a PCO. But sometimes even 25 per cent is not recovered. For backward areas, we have decided to insist on only 15 per cent recovery and for hilly areas only 10 per cent recovery. Even that is not coming.

SHRI KRISHNA CHANDRA HALDER The hon. Minister said just now that in the Fifth Plan period 5000 public call offices and 7000 telegraph offices will be opened in rural areas. Out of these how many will be opened in West Bengal in each category?

AN HON. MEMBER For Kerala also.

PROF SHER SINGH We have not yet finalised how many PCOs will be opened in each State.

श्री श्रीकृष्ण चन्द्रचाल मंत्री महोदय ने कहा है कि पाँच हजार टेलीफोन एक्सचेंज खोल जायेंगे। देश में जो आर्गनोमेटिक एक्सचेंज चल रहे हैं, उनका कार्य ठीक तरह से नहीं चल रहा है। मैं यह जानना चाहता हूँ कि उसमें सुधार करने के लिये क्या प्रयास किया जा रहा है।

श्री श्रीहर सिंह कई जगह में जिबायन घाली है कि गांधी से जो करन एक्सचेंज है उनकी सविम ठीक नहीं है। उनका ठीक करने के लिये हम उनका ध्यान बना रहे हैं। उनकी देख-भाल करने के लिये हम एक इंजीनियरिंग सुपरवाइजर और उनकी मरम्मत करने के लिये मैकेनिक, रखेंगे ताकि उनकी सविम ठीक तरह से हो।

SHRI TRIDIB CHAUDHURI Most of the post offices in the rural areas are extra-departmental. Is there any proposal under consideration for the reorganisation and improvement of emoluments and other

service conditions of the extra-departmental staff so that postal services in the rural areas really become efficient and useful?

SHRI K. BRAHMANANDA REDDY You will have noticed that recently the emoluments of these extra-departmental employees have been increased.

श्री श्रीहर सिंह महोदयार क्या यह सही है कि देश में क्षेत्र में जो पोस्ट ऑफिस खोल जाते हैं, गवर्नमेंट उनका यह कह कर बन्द कर देता है कि उनसे बाटा जाता है यदि हा ना क्या सरकार कोई ऐसी स्कीम चलाना चाहती है जिससे प्रत्यक्ष ग्रामीण क्षेत्रों में पोस्ट ऑफिस पब्लिक की फंडिंग के लिये खोल जाये ता कि नफा कमान के लिये।

श्री श्रीहर सिंह नफा कमान के लिये पोस्ट ऑफिस नहीं खोल जाते हैं। जैसा कि मैंने अभी PCOs के बारे में कहा है अगर 25 प्रतिशत ग्रामदानी हो जाये, तो हम पोस्ट ऑफिस खोल देते और अगर बैंकवर्क एरियाज में 15 प्रतिशत भा ग्रामदानी हो जाय, तो हम वहाँ पोस्ट ऑफिस खोल देते हैं। धुनापा कमान की बात नहीं है। यह सेवा का काम है। हम ध्यान रखते हैं कि जहाँ भी जरूरत हो वहाँ नकमान होना पर भी पोस्ट ऑफिस खोलें और लोगों का सुविधा दें।

SHRI VIKRAM MAHAJAN How do they calculate the cost supposed to be recovered from the people of a particular village? Does it include the total overhead cost or only the recurring cost of running the telephont service? Secondly, in the Fifth Plan, how many post and telegraph offices are going to be opened in Himachal Pradesh and Punjab?

SHRI K. BRAHMANANDA REDDY We expect to open about 31,000 post offices in the Fifth Plan in the country. The financial outlay is roughly Rs 85 crores. We are also thinking of rationalising it. Some States have more post and telegraph offices and some have not. Therefore, we want to see that every State is served better.