

POSTS

9.108 With 1,55,035 post offices — 1,39,173 rural and 15,862 urban — as on 31.3.2008, India Post is credited with the largest postal network in the world. One post office serves 7,174 people and covers an area of approximately 21.12 sq. km.

Project arrow and launch of new logo

9.109 Department of Posts launched a pilot project "Project Arrow" with the objective of making a tangible difference in the post office operations that matter to the common man. It was launched in two phases; Phase I : proof of concept phase — in 50 post offices, and Phase II : a pilot phase — in another 450 post offices in different postal circles. The project aims at providing fast, reliable and efficient postal services to the customers. Having been widely appreciated, the project is now proposed to be extended to another 4,500 post offices in Phase III.

9.110 Franchisee outlets have been introduced to cater to growing demand, where it is not possible to open departmental post offices. So far, 328 franchised outlets have been opened.

New mail paradigm

9.111 The mail profile in India Post has changed substantially with increase in volume of mail in business-to-customer (B2C) and business-to-business (B2B) segments. In line with this, India Post has designed a new mail paradigm whereby technology would be leveraged to create focal points for expeditious delivery of mails. Mail Business Centres (MBCs) with the state-of-the-art technology and modern mailing tools are being designed as an integrated mail business hub for collection, processing and delivery of (bulk) mail. Up to March 2009, 161 mail business centres have been designated in the country. Besides, to set up automatic mail processing at Delhi and Kolkata, global tender has been invited for installation and commissioning on turnkey basis and maintenance. The dedicated freighter aircraft, wet leased in August 2007, for carriage of mail, parcel and logistics to and from the North-eastern region on Kolkata-Guwahati-Imphal-Agartala-Kolkata, is now carrying a payload of approximately 14 tonnes. The proposal to wet lease two more freighter aircraft has been approved.

Computerization and networking

9.112 By the end of 2008-09, a total of 9,674 POs — including rural — have been computerized. 1,233 offices have been networked with the National Data Centre. The strong IT-base has enabled a range of e-enabled services. The on-line domestic money transmission service, iMO, launched in 2006, that enables customer to receive money in minutes from the post offices providing this service is functional over 1,000 locations. Electronic Clearance Service (ECS) is offered all 15 locations of RBI and 21 locations of the SBI for payment of monthly interest under Monthly Income Scheme. The electronic money order (eMO), launched in October 2008, facilitates transmission of ordinary money orders through electronic media in the same tariff structure as the existing money order service. e-Payment under which different bills are paid by customers in post offices which are then electronically consolidated and paid to the service provider is now available in about 5,700 post offices and will soon be extended to all 9,693 computerized post offices. Under e-Post service started in 2004 to bridge the digital divide physical messages are transmitted through electronic system as an e-mail and the message is printed and delivered anywhere in India as a letter.

Premium services

9.113 The revenue from premium services grew from Rs. 425.74 crore in 2003-04 to Rs. 2,141.48 crore in 2008-09. Speed Post, covering more than 1,200 towns, has a market share of 27 per cent in the courier segment. Its revenue has increased from Rs. 152.23 crore in 2002-03 to Rs. 690.09 crore in 2008-09. Bill Mail Service, introduced in 2004 to meet the requirements of financial and services sectors, increased its revenue in four years from Rs. 19.35 crore to Rs. 178.30 crore in 2008-09. Business Post was introduced to provide complete mailing solutions, including pre-mailing activities of printing, folding, addressing, inserting and franking. Its revenue has increased from Rs. 120.36 crore in 2002-03 to Rs. 1,013.33 crore in 2008-09.

Active partner in financial inclusion programme

9.114 The total number of live accounts with the post office increased from 14.23 crore in 2003-04 to

20.95 crore upto March, 2009. The outstanding balance in post office savings bank accounts in 2007-08 was Rs. 3,54,434 crore. The number of rural postal life insurance policies increased from 26.66 lakh in 2003-04 to 74 lakh in 2008-09.

Leveraging the postal network

- The payment of wages to National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS) beneficiaries is currently operational in 19 postal circles comprising of 21 states, through 90,000 post offices (including HOs/SOs/BOs). Nearly 2.92 crore NREGS accounts have been opened up to 31 March, 2009 and the amount disbursed is approximately Rs. 3,907 crore.
- India Post has tied up with the State Bank of India to sell its products through identified post offices. Started in five states of Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Maharashtra and Jharkhand, the scheme was later extended to 10 states on a pilot basis. Nearly 1.25 lakh accounts have been opened under the liability products. The total asset products sold so far amounts to Rs. 10.3 crore.
- NABARD in collaboration with the Department of Posts is providing micro-credit to self-help groups (SHGs) through identified post offices. The corpus fund for implementing this project is given by NABARD. The pilot project is in operation in five districts. So far, 777 SHGs have been provided with a loan of Rs. 1.85 crore.
- The Department of Posts has signed an agreement with ICICI Prudential Life Insurance Company Ltd. in September 2008 to retail their pension products through select post offices on referral model. The company has equipped the postal staff and the identified post offices for the scheme. Till now, about 90 head offices have started distributing the pension products of ICICI.
- Sale of gold coins has been launched in October 2008 by tying up with the Reliance Money Limited. The scheme is available in 262 post offices. Revenue earned as commission up to March 2009 is 57.80 lakh.
- Old-age pension is being paid through post office savings accounts in Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and Madhya Pradesh, and through money order in Himachal Pradesh, Gujarat, Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu.

- Posts has been assisting the Central Government public authorities in implementing the Right to Information (RTI) Act by providing services of its designated Central Assistant Public Information Officers (CAPIOs). For this, sub post masters at tehsil level act as the CAPIO for accepting RTI requests and appeals. The department has designated 4,000 post offices as receipt points. During October-December 2008, 2,270 applications were received and forwarded.
- An MoU was signed between India Post and the Ministry of Railways for sale of railway tickets through post offices. The scheme is presently operative at 34 locations, and will be extended to rural areas also.

International relations

9.115 All foreign post offices and sub foreign post offices have been computerized. International parcel post hubs have been established at Delhi, Mumbai and Kochi for specialized handling of parcels. The paper-based international money order service is being replaced with electronic international money order service to ensure speedy and secure transmission with up to date accounting. As per the agreement signed between India and UAE in January 2008, the electronic service was launched in April 2008. Initially, the service is being offered from UAE to India through all head post offices in Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, Kolkata, and the state of Kerala covering 97 head post offices.

9.116 Launch of World Net Express : A bilateral agreement has been signed between India Post and Deutsche Post AG in November 2008 for providing new services to domestic and international customers. The article would be booked by selected post offices for delivery in about 200 countries around the world using the DHL network.

Global business

9.117 A Global Business Division has been set up in the Department of Posts to help India Post emerge as an organization with worldwide capabilities. The alpha version of the India Post Global Business portal was launched in May 2008 to offer efficient and modern postal services to its customers.