

Postal Services

22. There has been an expansion of the postal network on a gigantic scale from about 22 thousand post offices at the time of independence to 1.53 lakh post offices as of end-March, 1998. Nearly, 90 percent of post offices are located in rural areas. On an average, a post office serves an area of 21.48 sq. km and a population of 5518. In 1997-98, 402 Extra Departmental Post Offices (EDPOs) and 52 Departmental Post Offices were opened. The active cooperation of the Panchayats have been enlisted for strengthening the rural postal structure. In this connection, the Panchayat Sanchar Sewa Yojna (PSSY) scheme was launched in 1995. The scheme has been given a new thrust and orientation during the last six months and at present, 613 Panchayat Sanchar Sewa Kendras (PSSKs) are functioning in the country. Postal Life Insurance (PLI) has continued to expand and by end-March, 1998 it garnered 23.3 lakh PLI policies with an aggregate assured sum of Rs. 7065.4 crore.

23. Taking advantage of major strides made in the field of information technology, the Department of Posts has given a new thrust to its programme of modernisation and computerisation for better customer satisfaction.

During 1997-98 the Department installed 918 Multi Purpose Counter Machines and modernized 205 post offices.

24. The postal services in India continue to fulfil their universal service obligations of making basic services available for all. In fact, the emphasis on social objectives have outweighed other considerations. Therefore, notwithstanding the revised tariff in respect of eight services, which was made effective from 31-08-98, the system continues to operate with a deficit. In 1997-98, this deficit amounted to Rs. 998.1 crore.

25. The Business Development Wing of the Department is constantly striving to create new and better services for enhancing the revenue/profit earning potential of the Department. Some of the new products and services being offered are Express Parcel Service, Corporate Money Order and Hybrid mail. It is proposed to introduce some more value added services in the near future. Speed Post service introduced in 1986, carried 141 lakh articles in 1997-98 generating revenue to the tune of Rs.78 crore. Business post handled a traffic of 5.9 crore during 1997-98 and express parcel service handled 1.9 lakh, generating a revenue of Rs.20.2 crore and Rs.66.8 lakh, respectively.