

Postal Services

9.30 India possess the largest postal network in the world with 1.54 lakh post offices spread all over the country as on March 31, 1999. More than 90 per cent of these post offices are in rural sector. On an average a post office serves an area of 21.32 sq. km. and a population of 5477. During 1998-99, the second year of the Ninth Five-Year Plan, a total of 598 Extra-Departmental Branch Post Offices (EDBOs) and 50 Departmental Sub Post Offices (DSOs) were opened. The Panchayat Sanchar Sewa Kendras (PSSKs) have been given a new thrust, and orientation, as a result 200 PSSKs, were opened in the year, 1998-99. The VSAT centers set up by the Department have improved the speed and volume of money order transmission. Today the department has 77 VSAT centers, which in turn are connected, to 610 Extended Satellite Money Order Stations. More than 10 lakh money orders are transmitted through this network every month.

9.31 Postal Life Insurance (PLI) has continued to expand and by March 31, 1999, it garnered 23.9 lakh PLI policies with an aggregate assured sum of Rs. 8001 crore. Rural PLI (RPLI) which was introduced in March 1995 also gathered momentum and by March 31, 1999, 6.8 lakh, RPLI policies were assured with an aggregate assured sum of Rs. 2037 crore.

9.32 The Department of Posts has given a new thrust to its program of modernization and computerization to heighten customer satisfaction. Thus during 1998-99 the Department installed 1429 Multi Purpose Counter Machines (including SB Local Area Network for Saving Bank operation) and

modernized 98 post offices. Today, there are 5007 computer-based machines installed in 1100 post offices in the country aimed at providing efficient services through a single window. During 1999-2000, it is proposed to modernize 60 post offices and install 1000 Multi Purpose Counter Machines in the post offices. The Department has also embarked upon projects of computerization of other segments of postal operations like mail processing, savings bank and materials management. During 1998-99, 6-Transit Mail Offices (TMOs), 22 registration sorting offices and 43 mail offices were computerized.

9.33 The emphasis on social objectives has outweighed other considerations and, therefore, notwithstanding the revision of tariff, the postal services continue to run into a deficit. In 1998-99, the postal deficit was Rs. 1591 crore.

9.34 The Business Development Directorate offers premium products and special professional services to the corporate sector in tune with the emerging needs in the communication market. The revenue generated by this Directorate has been steadily rising, from Rs. 54 crore in 1994-95, to Rs. 142 crore in 1998-99. The Business Development Directorate 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 Post, Corporate Money Order and Hybrid Mail. In 1998-99, Speed Post Service carried 196 lakh articles and generated revenue to the tune of Rs. 91 crore. The Business Post, which was introduced in 1996, generated a revenue of Rs. 44 crore.