

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI SUKH RAM): (a) No, Sir. The old and life expired exchanges are being replaced in a phased manner.

(b) and (c). Does not arise in view of (a) above.

**Complaints, on excess billing by MTNL
Delhi**

1914. SHRI BHAGABAN MAJHI : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) the number of complaints of excess billing of telephone received by MTNL, Delhi during the last year and till June 1994;

(b) the various reasons found for excess billing;

(c) how many of these complaints have been attended and settled so far; and

(d) the details of the measures proposed to be adopted to put an end to the excessive billing?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI SUKH RAM): (a) The number of excess billing complaints received during 1993-94 and 1994-95 (upto June, 1994) is as under:—

| Year | No. of complaints |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------|
| 1993-94 | 11581 |
| 1994-95 (upto June, 94) | 3124 |

(b) Reasons for excess billing noticed during the course of examination of such complaints are as under:—

1. Misuse of telephone with or without the knowledge of the subscriber;
2. Clerical error.
- 3 In rare cases technical fault may also lead to excess billing.

(c) Almost all the complaints received have been attended. 10386 complaints have since been settled and action on others is in hand.

(d) Besides issue of bills on computer, following steps have been taken to reduce the incidence of excess billing complaints;

Subscribers having STD/ISD facilities are brought on electronic exchanges to the extent possible, which provides dynamic STD/ISD locking facility.

Indoor equipment and outdoor plants are regularly checked to ensure that there is no technical fault.

All DPs, Pillars are put under lock, to avoid misuse by any unscrupulous persons. Entry to the exchanges has been restricted.

Vigilance unit also conducts surprise checks with regard to possible misuse or diversion of line.

Criteria for opening of New Post Offices

1915. SHRI BHAGABAN MAJHI: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) the criteria for opening of new post offices;

(b) whether Government have opened new post offices in Orissa during the Eighth Five Year Plan; and

(c) if so, the number of new *post* offices opened, branch post offices upgraded and postal division created in the State during the aforesaid Plan period?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI SUKH RAM): (a) Criteria for opening new post offices is annexed as Statement (*See* below).

(b) Yes Sir.

(c) The number of new post offices opened' during the year 1992-93 and 1993-94 are below :—

1992-93

Extra Department Branch Offices 76
Departmental Sub-Offices 8

1993-94

Extra Departmental Branch Offices 42
Departmental Sub Offices 4

3 Extra Departmental Branch Offices were upgraded to Departmental sub-Offices. No new division was created.

Statement

Criteria/Norms fixed for opening of new Branch Post Offices in Rural Areas including Tribal Areas,

(1) *Population:*

(a) *In Normal Areas;* 3000 population in a group of village (including PPO Villages).

(b) *in the Hilly, Tribal, Desert and Inaccessible Areas;*

300 population in an individual village or 1000 population in a group of villages; .

s2) *Distance*

(a) *In' Normal Areas*

The minimum distance from the nearest existing Post Office will be 3 Kms.

(b) *in the Hilly, Tribal, Desert and Inaccessible Areas:*

The distance limit will be the same as above except that in Hilly Areas, the minimum distance limit can be relaxed by the Directorate in cases where such relaxation if warranted by special circumstances which should be clearly explained while submitting a proposal.

(3) *Anticipated Income:*

(a) *In Normal Areas:*

The minimum anticipated revenues will be 33 1/3 per cent of cost.

(4) *The norms for opening Departmental Sub-post Officers*

(a) The minimum of work load of the Extra Departmental Branch Post Office should be five hours per day.

(b) The permissible annual loss should be not more than Rs. 2400/- in normal rural areas and Rs. 4800/- in Tribal and Hilly areas. However in Urban Areas, the Post Office should be initially self supporting and at the time of the first annual review it should show 5 per cent profit to be eligible for further retention.

(c) The minimum distance between two post offices should be 1.5 Kms. in cities with a population of 20 lakhs and above, and 2 kms in other urban-areas. No two delivery offices however, should be closer than 5 kms from each other. Heads of Circles have powers to relax the distance condition in 10 per cent of the cases.

(d) A delivery post office in Urban Areas should have a minimum of 7 Postmen's beat.

Telephone connections to Every Gram .. Panchayat in Orissa

1916. SHRI BHAGABAN MAJHI: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government had a proposal to provide telephone connection to every Gram Panchayat in the country;

(b) if so, the progress made in this regard in the State of Orissa;

(c) whether the rural telephones in the State of Orissa are out of order most of the time; and

(d) if so, the details of the steps taken to improve these telephone services?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI SUKH RAM): (a) Yes, Sir.