

Lesson 13

Postal Services

Are you facing any difficulty while studying this course material? Have you been able to comprehend the lessons you have studied so far? If not, please feel free to write to National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) about your specific problems. The NIOS will definitely find out a solution to your problem. But the question is how will you convey your problems?

In the previous lesson, you learnt about various means of communication. By using any of those means you can communicate with us. In that lesson, you also learnt that letters are very common and convenient means of written communication. If you write a letter to us, then how will it reach us? Who will bring it to us? Well, it is the post office, which will do it. It acts as a middleman between the sender and the receiver. The sender posts the letter at the post office and the post office takes all necessary steps to deliver the letter to the person concerned. In addition to this, the post office also performs some other services. In this lesson we shall learn more about various services offered by the post office.

13.1 Objectives

After studying this lesson, you will be able to:

- explain the meaning and nature of postal services;
- state various services provided by postal department;
- describe the importance of postal services; and
- recognise the role of private courier services.

13.2 Meaning of Postal Service

You must have been to a Post Office. What did you do there? You may have purchased

stamps or posted a letter. Sometimes, you may also have sent money or parcels, or you may have deposited your savings in the post office. The services of carrying letters and parcels, arranging remittance of money, accepting deposits of money, etc. are the various services offered by the post office, which the public can avail of. All these services are known as postal services.

Nature of Postal Services



Postal services originated with the necessity of communicating written messages. In the past also, one could exchange messages in writing. But, then there used to be the practice of some individuals known as ‘runners’ being engaged to go from place to place to deliver the messages. Even trained pigeons were used to carry letters from one place to another. The postal system, which we have today, became effective with the spread of roadways and railways as means of transport. In India, until 1837, the postal service was used solely for sending official mail. After 1837, the postal services were made available to the public. In course of time, Post Offices offered several other services including remittance of money, delivery of parcels, banking, insurance and many other such services.

As you know, a Post Office serves a variety of functions, thereby making the nature of postal services divergent. Let us look into the nature of postal services. Postal services are administered by Government of India throughout the country and the charges for all these services are minimal, which the common man can afford. It is viewed as the most dependable means of written communication. It is also used by the common man as the most reliable means of sending money through money orders to persons staying at far off places. It is also the most commonly used means for delivery of articles of value. The banking services provided by Post Offices attract a large number of people both from rural and urban areas due to easy accessibility and wide network of post offices. One of the most interesting feature to note is that all these varied postal services give us several options, which we can use according to our need and convenience. For example, to write a letter, we may use a post card or inland letter or an envelope.

13.3 Types of Postal Services

Indian postal services are mainly concerned with collection, sorting, and distribution of letters, parcels, packets, etc. Besides, a number of other services are also provided to the general public as well as business enterprises. Let us classify all those facilities under the following main headings.

- i. Mail service**
- ii. Remittance service**
- iii. Banking service**
- iv. Insurance service**
- v. Other services**

13.4 Mail Service

You send letters to your friends and relatives on different occasions. Similarly, you make correspondence with NIOS regarding your problems. On special occasions, you may send greeting and gifts to your friends. In all these situations, post office helps you in sending your

message and also in bringing messages for you through a type of service known as mail service. Mail service is one of the main services of post office that deals with collection of letters and parcels from the sender to distribute among the receivers. Indian Postal service deals with both inland and international mails. An inland mail is one where the sender and receiver of the mail reside within the same country. On the other hand, where the sender and receiver of the mail reside in different countries it is called and International Mail.

Inland mail and
International
mail

While sending a written message, the sender can make use of a post card, inland letter card or envelop. For sending an article in a packet or parcel, a wrapper (thick paper or cloth) can be used. These are the alternative means of sending any mail through the post office. Let us know more about these means of mail service.

i. Post Card

Post card is the cheapest means of written communication. It is a card on both sides of which we can write our message. It has a specified space to write the address of the receiver. In the post office, two different types of post cards are available. One is 'ordinary post card' and the other is 'competition post card'. While ordinary post cards are used for writing letters, competition post cards are used to send reply to questions asked in various competitions announced through radio, television, newspapers and magazines. Although the size of both the post cards is same, they differ in terms of colour and price.

While writing on the post card one important point you should remember is that, if you print your message in words or picture on any side of the post card then you have to pay additional postage. This type of card is called a printed post card. You must have seen a greeting card of post card size on one side of which a picture or a message is printed. This is also a printed post card.

In post offices reply post cards are also available, which are attached with the post cards to send a message. By sending those you can get a reply from the addressee (receiver). Actually they are two ordinary post cards joined together. One post card is to be used for sending the message and the other for getting the reply. The sender writes his/her own address in the reply post card and sends both without detaching them. The receiver detaches the post card with the message and sends the reply to the sender on the reply post card.

Types of post cards

- Ordinary post card
- Competition post card
- Printed post card
- Reply post card

ii. Inland Letter Card

Like post card, written messages can also be sent using inland letter card. This card is sold by post offices and is commonly used for sending messages within our country. Unlike post card, the written portion of the inland letter card is folded and sealed. Only names and addresses of the receiver and the sender remain open. Thus, these ensure secrecy of the message. However, no enclosure is allowed inside the inland letter cards. A special type of card just like inland letter card is used for sending messages to foreign countries. It is known as "aerogram".

Inland letter cards were introduced on October 2, 1950, i.e., the birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi

iii. Envelope

You have learnt that messages can be written on the post card or on the inland letter card. But post cards are not suitable for sending confidential messages. Again in inland letter card it is not possible to send any enclosure although it ensures secrecy of the message. Now, suppose you want to send your application or bio-data seeking employment in any

organisation. Can you send it through mail? Yes, for sending these, you need a postal envelope or an ordinary envelope with postage stamps affixed on it. It is a small size paper packet having one side open. After keeping your enclosure in it, you need to close it and sent it to the receiver.

Postal Envelopes are available at all post offices. These are widely used for mailing letters and other documents in all government and private offices as well as in business firms. Besides sending letters we can also mail certain lightweight enclosures like photographs, greeting cards through envelopes. In a post office you can find different types of envelope like, ordinary envelope, envelope for registered mail, etc. In these envelopes there is no need to affix any additional postage if the weight of your enclosure is upto a certain limit. If it exceeds that limit, then additional postage will have to be affixed according to the postal rates. In case the size of your enclosure does not fit those envelopes available at the post office you can prepare your own envelope or purchase it from the market and affix postage according to the weight. Even otherwise, there is no compulsion of using the envelopes available at the post offices.

iv. Parcel Post

Suppose you want to send a book to your friend who is staying in the nearby town. Can you send it through post? Yes, it can be sent through the parcel service of Post office. Let us learn about it. The postal facility through which articles can be sent in the form of parcels is known as Parcel Post. It provides reliable and economical parcel delivery service. Under parcel post services, parcels of specified size and weight can be sent across the country as well as outside the country. Postal charges vary according to the weight of the parcel. Separate postage is to be paid for inland and foreign parcel post.

v. Book Post

Articles in the form of printed materials, printed books, periodicals, greeting cards can also be mailed as book post. Under book post, envelopes containing books or documents should only be closed but not sealed. It should be mentioned on the face of the envelope as “Book Post”. The postage on Book post mails is less than the postage on sealed envelopes.

Intext Questions 13.1

Fill in the blanks with appropriate words

- i. Areogram is used to send written message to _____.
- ii. Ordinary post cards and competition post cards differ with respect to _____.
- iii. Postal charges on ordinary inland parcels vary according to _____.
- iv. The postage on Book Post mail is _____ than that on sealed envelopes.
- v. Inland letter cards should be used instead of post cards when the sender of a message wants to convey any _____ message.

13.5 Specialised Mail Services

For convenience of people post office also offers various mail services having some extra

advantages like sending mails faster, ensuring certainty of delivery of mails, compensating the sender in case of loss or damage to the mail during transit etc. You can avail of the benefit of all these facilities by paying additional postage. Let us learn the details about these services.

i. Certificate of Posting

When ordinary letters are posted, the post office does not issue any receipt because we generally drop them in the letterbox of the post office or in our locality. However, if a sender wants to have a proof that he/she has actually posted the letters, then a certificate can be obtained from the post office on payment of prescribed fee. This is called 'certificate of posting'. In order to have such a certificate you just need to write the complete address of the receiver and sender on a plain paper and affix the required postage on it. This paper along with the letters is handed over to the post office. The post office will put its seal on that paper and return it to you. This paper now serves as an evidence of posting the letters. But remember to write UPC on the face of your mail. UPC stands for 'Under Postal Certificate'. It may serve as an evidence of posting in case of any dispute about communication.

ii. Registered Post

Sometimes we want to ensure that our mail is definitely delivered to the addressee otherwise it should come back to us. In such situations, the post office offers registered post facility through which we can send our letters and parcels. These mails are handed over to the post office after affixing additional postage as registration charge. On receiving the mail the post office immediately issues a receipt to the sender, which also serves as a proof that the mail has been posted. Remember, the post office will never accept your letters unless you write your complete address on the letters. To distinguish them from ordinary mail, all registered mails are super scribed as "Registered Post" on their face.

Do you want to confirm that your letter has been delivered to the addressee? Here post office provides another facility. Normally registered posts are handed over to the addressee after getting their signature on some postal documents. But it is not intimated to the sender unless he specifically asks for it. But if the sender wants to have intimation then an "Acknowledgement Due Card" can be sent along with the registered mail. This form is signed by the receiver (addressee) on delivery of the article and returned to the sender by post. The Acknowledgement Due Cards are available at all post offices on payment of specific charges. The sender of the registered post is required to buy one card, write his complete postal address on it and tag it to envelope. The envelope must be superscribed as 'Registered post with AD'.

iii. Insured Post

While mails are in transit they can get damaged or lost, resulting in a loss to the sender. Can the post office be held liable for the loss or damage of the article in postal transit? In case of ordinary letters, registered letters or parcels, post office cannot be held liable for any loss or damage to the article. However, there is a provision that a sender can insure the letter or parcel, so that, incase of any loss or damage to the letter or parcel, the post office shall compensate for it. Thus, insured post is a type of mail service through which valuable articles may be sent after insuring these upto a specific amount. The insurance premium is paid to

the post office according to the value for which the mail is insured. Here post office acts as the insurer and is liable for the loss or damage to the extent of the value insured for. Only registered mails are allowed to be sent through insured post. Remember, your letter or parcel will not be accepted for insured post unless it is packed and sealed as required by the post office.

iv. Speed Post

Sometimes because of some urgency or to avoid delay we want that our mail should reach the addressee at the earliest. Here post office provides time-bound as well as guaranteed mail delivery through its Speed Post Service. Under this service, letters, documents and parcels are delivered faster i.e., within a fixed time frame. This facility is available at specific post offices. The post office charges relatively more postage for speed post than that of ordinary mail and it varies according to distance.

- Speed post service was introduced on 1st August 1986.
- This service is available 24 hours at specific speed post centers.
- Post office picks up speed post mail from the doorstep of the senders who sent bulk mail on a regular basis.

v. Post Restante

When it is necessary to send letter to a person whose exact address is not known you can send it to the postmaster of that area in which the receiver resides. These letters are called Post Restante Letters. While sending such letters you have to specifically mention ‘post restante’ or ‘care of postmaster’ on the face of the letters. With this indication the letter will be retained at the post office at the receiving end and delivered to the addressee on his calling the postmaster concerned. The post office at the receiving end retains such letters for a maximum period of 14 days. Then it is returned back to the sender or to the Return Letter Office. This facility is particularly suitable for tourists and travelling salesmen who are not sure about their address in a particular place, or for any other person looking for a fixed address at a new place.

Intext Questions 13.2

Which of the following statements are true and which are false?

- i. Speed post service is available in all post offices.
- ii. Only registered mail is allowed to be sent through insured post.
- iii. Post Restante mail is retained by the post office at the receiving end only for a week.
- iv. For insured post service, additional postage is payable depending on the distance between the two post offices.
- v. Certificate of posting does not entitle the sender of mail to claim compensation if the letter is lost in transit.

13.6 Mail Transmission

Post office collects letters and parcels either through its counters or by installing letterboxes. People drop letters in these boxes at any time according to their convenience and post office collects these once or twice everyday during office hours. You may find these boxes outside every post office and also at some specific places for the convenience of the public. But have you ever noticed that in some places there may be letterboxes with different colours like red, green, blue and yellow. Why are they so? Actually the main purpose of installing letterboxes with different colours is to segregate mails of different destination at the time of receiving them. This facilitates quick sorting and delivery of letters. Let us see which box collects which type of mail:

- Red boxes are meant for collection of mails, which are not local.
- Green boxes are meant for collection of local mail.
- Blue boxes are meant for collection of mails addressed to metro cities.
- Yellow boxes are meant for collection of mails addressed to all capital cities.

What happens when you hand over your letters to the post office or drop your letters in the letterboxes?

- Post office collects those letters;
- Verifies the amount of stamp affixed on it and defaces the stamps by putting its seal;
- Sorts the letters according to their destination (i.e., the areas where these are to be delivered);
- Puts mails in different packets or bags as per their destination;
- Sends those packets to different post offices at the receiving end;
- The receiving post offices then open those packets and put their seal on the letters.
- Sort the mails on the basis of locality of the addressees;
- Finally the postmen personally deliver the letters to the respective addresses.

You might be thinking how the postbags or packets are conveyed from one post office to the other. Let us get to know about this. For short distance, mailbags are carried through roadways with the help of motor vehicles, auto rickshaws and cycles etc. But for long distance mails, the most convenient mode is railways. In our country Railway Mail Service (RMS) facilitates sending and receiving mail by railway. You might have seen the offices of the RMS inside the premises of almost all big railway stations all over the country. The mails that move through railways, motor vehicle, cycles etc., are called **Surface mail**. Besides sending mails through roadways and railways, Indian Postal Department has also made necessary arrangement to send mails through airways wherever air linkage is available. All international mails are forwarded through airways. So the mail carried on by air transport is known as **Airmail**.

13.7 Postage for Mail Service

You might be thinking, how a post card or inland letter card moves across the country at the

Is it always required to affix postal stamp on all types of mails before you dispatch them?

The postal stamps used for Government mails are different from those used for household and corporate mails.

same postage irrespective of the distance it travels? In our country you will find uniform rate for all types of mails (except speed post) that move within the country. The postage generally varies according to the weight of the mail. In case of sending mail outside the country or by speed post, the postage varies on the basis of weight as well as distance.

The payment to post office for the service of carrying mails is made through postal stamp. It is required that we should buy postal stamps from the post office and affix them on our mails. But this is not the only way to pay for the service we avail of from the post office. Let us know the various ways of paying postage while sending our mails through post office.

- i. Postal Stamp:** While sending envelopes and parcels we buy postal stamps from the post office and affix them on our mail before we drop them in the letterbox or handover at the counter in the post office. But in case of post cards, inland letter cards and envelopes, which are available at post offices there is no need to affix stamps separately as the postage is already included in the price of these items. You might have noticed printed postal stamps on the face of these items. Remember, the postage you pay while buying these items is only for the minimum permissible weight of your documents. If the weight of your letters or parcels exceeds that limit you have to affix additional postage.
- ii. Franked postage:** In large offices where hundreds of letters have to be stamped everyday, the post office provides another facility to affix stamps through a machine known as 'franking machine'. This machine can print postage of different denominations, which are called franked postage. The letters to be stamped are inserted in the machine and by operating different buttons of this machine impression of required amount of postage can be made. A franking machine prints postage in brick red ink. These machines can be hired under a license from the post office. The post office gives it to the license holder after setting the machine according to the value of postage paid by the latter. The machine will stop printing when the total value of the postage is used up. It can be again reset by the post office on further payment for its use.
- iii. Payment without affixing any stamp:** You might have noticed that in some mails no postal stamp is affixed. Then how do they come to you? Actually these are certain types of mail where the postage is paid by the sender either well before dispatching the mail or by the receiver after receiving the mail. For example, in case of newspapers and periodicals the sender pays the postage before dispatching the mail and in case of business reply cards the addressee pays the postage after receiving the mail. The Postal Department carries braille literatures free of charge.
- iv. Computerised Slip:** In some post offices now-a-days computer generated slips are pasted on the mails. There is no need to affix any postal stamp separately. The amount of postage paid, date and time is mentioned on the slip. This facility is available for registered letters, speed post letters, etc. and not for ordinary letters.

13.8 When we commit a mistake

While sending any mail it is required that one should write the complete address of both the sender and the receiver on the face of the letter, envelope or any other mail. But sometimes, either we forget to write our address, or we write wrong or incomplete address of the

receiver. Sometimes, it may happen that we send letters, envelopes or other mail without writing the address of the receiver. Although we commit such mistakes unintentionally, the post office takes all necessary steps to deliver the mail to the addressee or return the same to us. Let us see the various common mistakes committed by us and the action taken by post office in these situations:

What happens if-

i. We write wrong or incomplete address of receiver

The postman tries to find out the correct or full address of the receiver. If he fails, the letter is sent back to the sender's address as mentioned in the envelope. But, if the address of the sender is also not there, the letter is sent to 'Return Letter Office'.

ii. We do not write address of the sender

In case of registered letters the post office will not accept the same unless the sender writes his/her complete address. However, in case of ordinary mail, giving sender's address on the envelope is not so important if the address of the receiver is written correctly. Otherwise, it is sent to Return Letter Office.

iii. We affix inadequate postage on our letters

Before sending any mail, the sender should ensure that the mail has been properly stamped. If registered mails are not properly stamped, then the post office does not receive it from you. But in case of ordinary mail, which is dropped in the letterbox and not properly stamped, these will be either returned to the sender mentioning as "Under stamped" or postman will charge double the deficiency in postage from the addressee while delivering them.

RLO stands for Return Letter Office. This office deals with mails that could not be delivered because of any reason.

You have learnt how the post office takes a number of steps to facilitate delivery of mails despite incomplete address or adequate postage. There could be other situations also where the post office takes all necessary steps to ensure safe delivery of mails to the addresses. Sometimes the postman does not find the addresses. What does the postman do in such situation? Let us see what happens if:

(a) The postman does not find the addressee

In case of ordinary mail, the postman drops the same at the residence of the addressee. But in case of registered mail, if the postman does not find the addressee on first visit, then he revisits and keeps the mail for a particular period. If it is not delivered within that period, the same is returned to the sender.

(b) The addressee has shifted to another place

We know that ordinary mails are dropped at the place of the receiver. Sometimes it may happen that the original addressee has shifted to another place and the person who lives at that place receives the ordinary mail. In such a case, if the receiver knows the new address of the addressee, he/she may rewrite it and drop the same in the letterbox after specifically mentioning the word "Redirected" on the face of the letter. This is called Redirected Mail. Remember, in the redirected mail, you have only to change the address and not the name of the addressee. No additional postage is required for such mails. In case of registered and speed post also the mail it can be redirected.

Intext Questions 13.3

Match the phrases in column A with those in column B:

Column A	Column B
i. Green Letter Box	(a) Return letter office
ii. Franking Machine	(b) No postage is paid by the sender
iii. Affix inadequate postage	(c) Double the amount of deficiency in postage payable by addressee
iv. Business Reply Card	(d) Local Mails
v. Wrong address of receiver on letter	(e) Printing of postage

13.9 Remittance Service

Suppose, you are working at a place far away from your home and you want to send money to your family. You can send it through the remittance service offered by the post office. It provides Money Order and Postal Order facility with the help of which people can transfer money from one place to another within as well as outside the country. Let us know more about money order and postal order.

a. Money Order

Money can be sent through post office under money order service. Money order is an order issued by one post office to another post office to pay a certain sum of money only to the person named therein. If you want to send money then first you have to fill up a money order form which is available at all post office on payment. The duly filled in form along with the money to be remitted is then handed over to the post office. In a single money order form we can send a maximum amount of Rs. 5,000/-. The money order form also contains some space where you can write down your message for the addresses. The filled in form is then sent to the post office where payment is to be made. The postman carries the form with him and after obtaining the signature from the addressee, handed over the money to him. For this service, post office charges a specific commission from the sender, which varies according to the amount of money sent.

For the convenience of customers, post office offers different types of money order services like Ordinary Money Order, Telegraphic Money Order, Satellite Money Order, Speed-post Money Order, etc. For the convenience of businessmen it also offers Corporate Money Order service.

b. Postal Order

Like Money Order, we can also send money through postal order i.e., Indian Postal Order (IPO). It is a convenient method of sending money from one place to another and is mainly used for remitting examination fees or while applying for any job. Postal Orders are available at all post offices in different denominations like Re. 1/-, Rs. 2/-, Rs. 5/-, Rs. 7/-, Rs. 10/-, Rs. 20/-, Rs. 50/-, and Rs. 100/-. We can buy Postal orders on payment of prescribed charges and send it to the payee after mentioning his name and specifying the name of the post office

where it is intended to be encashed. The payee after receiving the postal order produces it for payment at the post office mentioned there in. To ensure payment to the right person, we can cross the postal order by putting two parallel diagonal lines on its top left hand side corner just like crossing a bank draft or cheque. The effect of crossing a postal order is that the payment can be collected through the payee's account at the post office or bank. This method of remittance is mostly used for official purposes.

13.10 Banking Service

You know that banks deal with money. A bank accepts deposits from the public and grants loans and advances to those who are in need of funds. Besides accepting deposits and lending money, a bank also helps the customers keeping their valuables under safe custody, sending money from one place to another, providing business information, etc. Post offices undertake some of these services like accepting deposits from the public and withdrawal of deposits. Thus, we may say these are the banking services offered by post office. Under this service it offers various schemes to encourage the savings and motivate people to save. Let us learn about some of the important savings schemes offered by post office.

- i. **Post Office Savings Bank Account:** It is a type of account in which we can deposit our savings in post offices and withdraw it whenever required. A minimum amount of rupees twenty is required to open the account and we can deposit a maximum of rupees one lakh in our account. The account can be jointly operated and in that case the maximum limit of deposit is raised to rupees two lakh. Money can be withdrawn from the account by using withdrawal slips or cheques. Post office pays interest on our deposits, which is totally exempted from income tax.
- ii. **5-Year Post Office Recurring Deposit Scheme:** A Recurring Deposit account can be opened for any amount, which is a multiple of Rs.5/- without any maximum limit. The deposit is to be made every month for a period of 5 years. After one year, 50% of the deposit can be withdrawn only once during the five year period. There is no restriction to open more than one recurring deposit accounts in the name of a single individual.
- iii. **Post Office Time Deposit Account:** Any individual can open this account with a minimum balance of Rs.50/-, without any maximum limit. The depositor makes deposit in lump sum and that amount matures after the expiry of a fixed period like one, two, three or five years. Interest on this account is given on annual basis but computed quarterly. This account can also be opened by a Trust. The deposit amount as well as interest income is exempted from tax.
- iv. **Post Office Monthly Income Scheme:** Under this scheme a fixed sum of money is deposited for six-years and the depositors get the interest on it every month. A minimum amount of Rs.1,000/- and maximum of Rs.3 lakh in individual account and Rs.6 lakh in case of joint account can be deposited. In addition to interest the deposit amount also earns bonus at the rate of 10% which is payable on maturity. Both interest as well as bonus is exempted from tax. This account is suitable for retired employees or any body who wants a regular income just like pension or salary.
- v. **6-Year National Savings Certificates (VIII Issue) Scheme:** National Savings Certificates (NSC) can be purchased from the post office by - (i) an adult for

himself or herself or for any minor or by any minor; (ii) two adults jointly; or (iii) a trust. Minimum amount of deposit is Rs. 100/- and there is no maximum limit of deposit. These certificates are available in denomination of Rs. 100/-; Rs. 500/-; Rs. 1, 000/-; Rs. 5, 000/-; and Rs. 10, 000/-. Interest is compounded half-yearly and payable also half-yearly. After 6 years, these certificates can be encashed from the post office. Interest income is treated as re-investment and is subject to tax rebate. This deposit scheme is very popular among the income tax payers.

- vi. **15 Year Public Provident Fund Account (PPF Account):** Individuals can open this account in their own name or in the name of their minor child. In this account at least one deposit is required in every year. An account holder can deposit maximum Rs. 70, 000/- in a year, which can be deposited either in lump sum or in maximum of 12 instalments. A minimum deposit of Rs. 500/- is required to be made each year. The amount of each deposit should be in multiple of Rs. 100/-. That means you cannot deposit any amount like Rs. 1,250/- or Rs. 3,785/-, rather it may be like Rs. 1, 200/- or Rs. 3,700/-. Loan facility is available after 3 years whereas withdrawal of money from the account is allowed from the 7th year onwards. The deposit amount gets rebate under income tax and the interest income is fully tax-free.
- vii. **Kissan Vikas Patra Scheme:** In this scheme a fixed sum of money gets doubled within a certain period. Money can be deposited in Kissan Vikas Patras by- (i) any adult for himself or herself or for any minor; (ii) two adults jointly; or (iii) a trust. These are available in the denomination of Rs. 100/-, Rs. 500/-, Rs. 1,000/-, Rs. 5,000/-, and Rs. 10, 000/- at all post offices while Kissan Vikas Patra of Rs. 50, 000/- denomination is available only at general post offices (GPO). There is no maximum limit of investment. Money can be withdrawn before its maturity but there is a minimum period called lock-in period within which your money cannot be withdrawn.

Intext Questions 13.4

Fill in the blanks.

- (i) The maximum amount of money one can deposit in a Post Office PPF account during a year is Rs _____.
- (ii) In a single money order form we can send a maximum amount of Rs. _____.
- (iii) To ensure payment to the right person we can _____ the postal order.
- (iv) Loan facility is available to PPF account holder after completion of ____ years.
- (v) After completion of _____ years a NSC can be encashed.

13.11 Insurance Services

In addition to dealing with mail and remittance of money, post offices also provide life insurance coverage to individuals. Do you know what is insurance? Insurance is a contract between two parties whereby one party agrees to pay a fixed sum of money to the other party on the happening of any event that causes damage or loss to that party. The party who agrees to pay money is called insurer, and the other is called assured. As per the contract, the insured contributes a fixed amount (called premium) either in lump sum or in instalments

to the insurer for a fixed period. If any such event happens during that period and the insured or assured suffers a loss, then the insurer has to pay the agreed amount to him or his family members.

Post offices offer life insurance under two schemes; (i) Postal Life Insurance (PLI), and (ii) Rural Postal Life Insurance (RPLI). Let us learn the details about these schemes.

i. Postal Life Insurance

Postal Life Insurance (PLI) was initially introduced for postal employees. Over the years it has been extended to the employees of central and state governments, public sector undertakings, universities, government aided institutions, nationalised banks and financial institutions. The post office allows the employees of these organizations, who are below 50 years of age, to insure their life on payment of a fixed premium for a particular period. It undertakes to pay a certain sum of money either on the death of the insured or on the expiry of a specified period.

ii. Rural Postal Life Insurance

Just like postal Life Insurance, the Post Offices also provide life insurance coverage to the people living in rural areas and the weaker sections of society, which is known as Rural Postal Life Insurance (RPLI). Under RPLI, the insured person pays a very low premium for the insurance coverage.

13.12 Others Postal services

So far you have learnt about the several postal services like mail, remittance, banking and insurance services. Apart from these services, post office also provides various other services like-

- i. Sale of stamps:** In addition to postal stamps, various other types of stamp like revenue stamp, share transfer stamps, recruitment stamp etc. are also sold at post offices. Revenue stamps are used while getting a receipt from the receiver if the amount of transaction exceeds rupees five hundred. Share transfer stamps are used for transferring shares or other securities in the name of others. Similarly, recruitment stamps are required for paying fees for various examinations conducted for recruitment of candidates.
- ii. Sale of Forms:** Post office facilitates sale of different forms like passport forms, UPSC (Union Public Service Commission) forms, SSC (Staff Selection Commission) forms and forms of other national level competitive examinations.
- iii. Bill Payment:** Post office also collects payment of telephone, electricity, and water bills from the consumers.
- iv. Pension payment:** For the convenience of pensioners, Government of India has made necessary arrangement for payment of pension through post office. Military, railways, coalmines, telecom pensioners can avail of this facility from the nearest post offices. Post office also provides the facility of old age pension to senior citizens. Ministry of Social Welfare and State Governments grant this old age pension.
- v. Post shoppes:** Post shoppes are the small retail shops established for sale of postal

stationery items, greeting cards and small gift items to the customers. These shops are found within the premises of some post offices.

- vi. **Philately:** Special and commemorative postage stamps as well as special covers (envelopes) are issued by the Postal Department that cover a wide range of themes reflecting the rich natural and cultural heritage of the country. Important national and international events, famous personalities and institutions are honoured through the medium of commemorative postage stamps and envelopes. These stamps enjoy wide popularity in the world of philately.
- vii. **Gramin Sanchar Sewak Scheme:** With a dream to provide telephone facility to every home, *Gramin Sanchar Sewak* Scheme has been launched. It is a joint effort of Department of Post and Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) Under this scheme, the postmen while delivering mails from door to door will also carry a mobile phone with them. People can make use of that phone by paying the specified charge to the postman. This facility is available only in rural areas of our country.

Intext Questions 13.5

Indicate whether the following statements are 'True' or 'False':

- (i) A Government employee who is 52 years of age can insure his life at post office.
- (ii) A financial transaction involving an amount of Rs. 600/- does not require any revenue stamp to be affixed on the receipt.
- (iii) In post shoppe ready-made garments are sold.
- (iv) Post office offers Rural Post Life Insurance facility for the benefit of weaker sections of our society.
- (v) Gramin Sanchar Sewak Scheme is only available in rural areas.

13.13 How does post office facilitate business transactions

Besides carrying mail through various means as discussed earlier, post office offers some special services to the business firms like:

- facilitating selling of goods through **Value Payable Post**;
- carrying letters from the customers without any pre-payment of postage through **Business Reply Post**;
- facilitating advertisement of the products through **Media Post**;
- providing reliable and time-bound parcel service through **Express Post**;
- offering various pre-mailing services to big mailers through **Business Post**.
- allowing transfer of huge amount of money through **Corporate Money Order**;
- making special arrangement to collect mails through **Post-bag and Post box** facility.

Let us know further about these facilities.

i. Value Payable Post (VPP)

Sometimes we want to buy certain goods, which are not available in any local shop. In such a case we can always make a request to the seller located at a distance to send the goods to us. Here post office gives a very good option to the seller to use its Value Payable Post (VPP) service. Under this service post office receives the properly packed goods from the seller and carries those to the customers. After receiving the total amount (that includes the price of the goods and the VPP charges) from the customer it delivers the goods. Then the post office sends the money to the seller.

ii. Business Reply Post

We know that creation of customers is one of the important economic objectives of every business. To achieve this objective businessmen always look for prompt reply and reaction from their customers if customers' opinion is sought for. In this regard post office allows the customers to send their reply through business reply post, which does not require any postage from the sender. The post office recovers the postage from the addressee later on. To avail of this facility businessman can obtain a licence from the post office after paying a prescribed fee for it. That licence number should be clearly printed on the card or envelope along with phrases like- "Business reply card/envelope, No postage will be paid by the addressee, No postage stamps necessary if posted in India". The address of the receiver must be printed on the face of the card or envelope.

iii. Media Post

Under this service, the postal department allows the corporate and government organizations to reach the customers through advertisement on post card, inland letter card, aerogramme and other postal stationeries. Public awareness messages may be printed by government on postal stationery.

iv. Express Post

Post office offers a reliable, speedy and economical parcel service to the corporate and business customers through its express post. It provides a time bound door-to-door delivery of parcels upto 35 kgs. in weight.

v. Business Post

Post office gives another opportunity to the business customers by undertaking their pre-mailing activities through business post. Pre-mailing activities include collection from sender's doorstep, insertion of goods in packet, pasting and addressing as well as franking of mails, etc.

vi. Corporate Money Order

Like individuals, business organizations can also transfer money through money order. For them, the post office offers Corporate Money Order Service. It enables business organization

to transfer upto Rupees one crore to any part of the country. This facility is available at post offices connected with satellite.

vii. Post-box and Postbag

You know that postman delivers different types of mail at the doorstep of the addressee. In addition to this, post office also provides post box and postbag facilities to the receivers of the unregistered mails. Under this facility a particular number and a box or a bag is allotted at the post office to the receiver on payment of a specific rent. Post office keeps all mails addressed to that number in those boxes or bags. Then the addressee makes necessary arrangement to collect the mails as per his convenience. Incase of post box the addressee needs to collect the mails from the post office by opening its allotted box, but incase of postbag the addressee can carry the bag to his/her office and open the bag there. Any firm or individual may hire such a box from the post office. This facility is mostly suitable for:

- business firms which want to receive their mail promptly;
- bulk mail receiver;
- mail order business;
- those who do not have any fixed address; and
- those who do not want to disclose their names and address.

Intext Questions 13.6

Fill in the blanks

- (i) Post office offers pre-mailing services to the business enterprises through ____ post.
- (ii) Advertisement of products and services can be done through post office by using the facility of ____ post.
- (iii) Business _____ post does not require any postage to be affixed by sender.
- (iv) In corporate money order, money can be sent upto Rs. _____
- (v) Through _____, mails can be received without disclosing receivers the identity to the sender or public.

13.14 Importance of Postal services

Postal services are important for the public in general and business in particular. The following points highlight the importance of Postal Services:

1. **Cheaper means of communication:** Postal mail services are available at relatively much lower rates than any other means of communication. Newspapers and journals have large circulation and reach the people even in remote villages because of postal services. This is made possible because newspapers and magazines can be sent at concessional rates.

2. **Encourage Savings:** People of ordinary means are encouraged to make small savings through the various small savings schemes run by the post offices. Besides, savings through the post offices are allowed tax concession, e.g. savings in National Savings Certificates and Public Provident Fund. There is also provision for prizes to be given to people saving in post offices.
3. **Safe remittance of money at lower rate:** The cheapest and most common means of remitting money is by money order through post offices. If money is to be sent urgently, it can be done by Telegraphic Money Order. Postal order is another mode of transfer of money.
4. **Promotion of trade:** Availability of postal services has facilitated the growth and expansion of both internal as well as external trade. Trade enquiries are made and business deals are finalised through correspondence. Placing order, intimation of sending goods, reminders for payments are mostly communicated by post. Cheques, drafts and valuable documents are also sent by post. The registered mail containing valuable documents can be insured for specified amounts to cover the risk of loss in postal transit. Mail order business totally depends on postal mail and parcel delivery service.
5. **Facilitate distant learning:** Open Schools, Open Universities and other institutions offering distant and correspondence education, educate learners by sending instruction materials through post. They also make all correspondence with the learners through post office. Thus, students in far off places can get the advantages of learning their lessons without the necessity of attending regular classes.

13.15 Indian Postal Network

Indian Postal Network is the largest postal network in the world having more than 1.5 lakh post offices all over the country. The system is managed, operated, and controlled by the Department of Post under the Ministry of Communication, Government of India.

The postal network consists of different categories of post offices, viz., General Post Offices (GPO), Head Post Offices, Foreign Post Office, Sub-Post Offices etc. To facilitate sorting and delivery of mails, India is divided into eight postal zones. Each zone is then subdivided into many postal circles. Under each circle, head post offices and sub-post offices are there. To speed up the sorting and delivering process and also for identification, a specific six-digit number is allotted to each post office of our country. This number is called Postal Index Number (PIN). Each digit of postal index number has a meaning and serves a specific purpose. Let us take one example. Suppose it is 759001. Here, the first digit (here it is 7) represents the zone in the country; the second and the third digits (here it is 59) represent the sub zone and the manner of routing the mail; the first three digits (here it is 759) together indicate the sorting district; the right three digits of the PIN Code (here it is 001) indicate a post office of delivery within a sorting district. All the six digits together (here it is 759001) identify an individual post office or a delivery unit.

7	5	9	0	0	1
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The following are the zones and their jurisdiction.

Zone	States and Union Territories
1	Delhi, Haryana, Punjab, Chandigarh, Himachal Pradesh and Jammu & Kashmir
2	Uttar Pradesh and Uttaranchal
3	Rajasthan, Gujarat, Daman & Diu and Dadra & Nagar Haveli
4	Maharashtra, Goa, Madhya Pradesh and Chhatisgarh
5	Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka
6	Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Lakshadweep
7	West Bengal, Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Orissa, Arunchal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Nagaland and Tripura
8	Bihar and Jharkhand

Why do we write PIN while writing the addresses on the mails

Although it is not compulsory to write PIN while writing the address on the mails, it is advisable to mention the number because it facilitates quick and easy sorting of mails. For example, if you have written PIN as 854325, then just by looking at the first digit the sorting assistant will come to know that the letter will go either to Bihar or Jharkhand state. Again if he goes further i.e., the number 854, then he will come to know that the addressee belongs to Purnea district of Bihar. This way the sorting process is speeded up.

13.16 Private Courier Services

There are some private operators who provide mail services to the public. They are known as private couriers. They collect letters and parcels and deliver them at the place of the addressee. Private couriers provide quick service in collection and delivery of letters, parcels, packets etc. No postage is required to be affixed on letters and parcels if sent through couriers. The charges payable for private courier service are generally higher in comparison to post office. Again these charges are also not uniform. Private couriers are popular in big cities and towns. OVERNITE EXPRESS, DHL, BLUE DART EXPRESS are some of the private carriers operating in our country. The main features of private couriers services are as follows:

- i. It provides a quick means of communication.
- ii. It provides facilities for national as well as international communication.
- iii. All kinds of articles are handled by it except gold and jewellery.
- iv. Besides using railways, roadways and airways for carriage of articles, some agencies use telephone, telex and fax services for transmission of messages.
- v. It undertakes full responsibility of safe and timely delivery of articles.
- vi. It collects articles from the doorstep of senders and delivers them to the receivers.

Intext Questions 13.7

Which of the following statements are True and which are False?

- i. PIN facilities quick and easy sorting of mails.
- ii. Department of post works under the Ministry of Finance, Govt. of India.
- iii. Post office does not help in distant learning programme.
- iv. Cheques and valuable documents can be sent to people by post.
- v. Private couriers do not carry parcels.

13.17 What You Have Learnt

- The various services offered by Post Office are called Postal Services. These services include carrying of letters and parcels, arranging remittances of money, accepting deposits, insuring life of the people etc.
- Collection of letters and parcels from the sender to deliver them to the receiver is called mail service. Post office offers mail service through post card, envelope, inland letter card, parcel post, book post etc. It also provides specialized mail services through certificate of posting, registered post, insured post, speed post, post restante.
- Money can be transferred from one place to another through remittance service of post office. It offers money order or postal order facilities through which people can send money to distant places.
- Post office encourages saving habit among people by offering various saving schemes like post office savings bank account, 5-years post office recurring deposit scheme, post office time deposit account, Post office monthly income scheme, 6-years National Saving Certificate (VIII issue) scheme, 15-years Public Provident Fund Account, Kissan Vikas Patra Scheme, etc.
- Individual's Life can be insured through Post Office through Postal Life Insurance as well as Rural Postal Life Insurance schemes.
- Post office facilitates business transactions by offering VPP, Business Reply Post, Media Post, Express Post, Business Post, Corporate Money Order, Post Bag or Post Box.
- Importance of Postal service - it provides cheaper means of communication, encourages savings, helps in sending money at lower rate, promotes trade and facilitates distance learning.
- Private couriers with the help of their own network also provide mail services in our country. They provide quick service in collection and delivery of letters, parcels etc.

13.18 Terminal Exercises

1. What is meant by 'Post Restante Letter'?

2. Distinguish between inland mail and international mail.
3. What is meant by Gramin Sanchar Sewak Scheme?
4. State the features of 15 years Public Provident Fund Account.
5. What purpose does PIN serve in mail services?
6. Distinguish between surface mail and airmail.
7. What are the different colours of letterboxes available in Post Offices? What purpose does they serve?
8. State the different types of Post Card available in Post Offices.
9. Distinguish between money order and postal order.
10. Explain the different schemes of Life Insurance available at Post Offices.
11. State the features of Private Courier service.
12. Describe suitability of Post Bag facility offered by Post Office.
13. Describe the remittance services offered by Post Office.
14. What is meant by Postal Service? Explain any two services provided by Post Office.
15. Explain any four Saving Schemes operated through Post Office.
16. How does Postal Service facilitate business transactions?

13.19 Key to Intext Questions

13.1 i. Foreign countries; ii. Colour and price; iii. Weight; iv. Less; v. Secret/confidential

13.2 i. False; ii. True; iii. False; iv. False; v. True.

13.3 i. - d; ii. - e; iii. - c; iv. - b; v. - a

13.4 i. Rs. 70, 000/-; ii. Rs. 5, 000/-, iii. Cross; iv. Three; v. Six.

13.5 i. False; ii. False; iii. False; iv. True; v. True.

13.6 i. Business; ii. Media; iii. Reply; iv. One crore; v. Post bag or post box

13.7 i. True; ii. False; iii. False; iv. True; v. False.

Activity For You

1. Visit the nearest post office and get the prevailing postal rates for ordinary posts in envelope, registered post, money order fees, charges for postal order competition post card, certificate of posting etc.
2. Go to the nearest post office and enquire about the benefits of National Saving Certificate and Kissan Vikas Patra.

Your Attention Please

In this lesson various information provided for postal facilities and schemes is applicable for the year 2003. For latest information regarding these you are advised to contact your nearest post office.