

## 5.3 Social Welfare Potential of India Post

*Ms. Taruni Pandey*

### Abstract

Many of us tend to look at posts as “messengers of mail” but we often forget that posts are a “deliverer of multitude of services”, especially social services. With about 656,000 post offices and 5.23 million staff, it is the world’s largest physical distribution network that runs across the length and breadth of nations. It’s the most omnipresent yet the most underutilized institution, especially when it comes to bridging logistics gap between providers and people. Time and again, Posts have proved to be an invaluable asset in carrying messages, themes, awareness and products to the last mile and to the last person- an asset that no new technology can boast of even in the 5G and satellite communication generation.

India Posts has been a historical institution that employs more than 4 lakh people and boasts of more than 1.5 lakh post offices. It has witnessed the colonial era, the struggle of independence, the wounds of partition and the development of India as the fifth largest economy in the world. With countless savings schemes and agency services, India Posts has serviced the poorest of the poor, the most vulnerable, and those sections of society that were considered unreachable by modern means of communication. Today, India Posts stands at a loss of Rs. every year with questions being raised on the future of this magnanimous institution. In this paper the author presents various ideas that can be implemented by Department of Posts in the domain of social services along with various self-sustaining financial models that can be built to alleviate the burden of the ongoing deficit. The author advocates for analysing social services not from the standards of economics, but from the economic benefits that are derived from a social development arc. The author has used global case studies of successful postal best practices that can be emulated by India Posts and which have the potential to become flag bearers for the postal department in the coming future.

### Keywords

Posts, Social Service, Models, Development, Logistics.

## Postal Social Services

Postal social services, as defined by UPU, are those specifically designed to impart tangible benefits to the public, and that are delivered regularly, reliably, and are widely accessible (Universal Postal Union, 2021). The objectives of these services include reducing inequality, poverty; catering to the vulnerable and the ageing population; offering educational, health and employment benefits and making government services accessible to the farthest and the furthest. According to S. Eckert, postal offices constitute among the long-established institutions on a nation state's territory. Historically, they have been among the biggest domestic employers, and have often provided critical social services (Eckert, 2017). Article 3 of the UPU Convention states that all users/customers should have access to quality basic postal services across the entire nation, at affordable prices (Universal Postal Convention n.d.).

Post's core business is letter and parcel and some social services are a by-product of this core business for example, connecting the remotest communities that are un-serviced by telecommunications hence bridging human relations and contact. Then there are other social services that are intentionally created by Posts to create a better ecosystem for social development. For example, in India, various savings schemes like Kisan Vikas Patra, Sukanya Samriddhi Yojna, Senior Citizens Savings Scheme and others directly influence millions of people across the country. These social services possess intrinsic value that not only has the ability to advance social progress but also the capacity to generate revenue for Posts- an area that has a huge potential for expansion.

## The Need for Postal Social Services

Social services are an obligation of the government and a virtue to be adopted by the private sector. These services improve the overall health of a community and the nation by adding onto the economic and sustainable development models, ushering in a comprehensive advancement of the society as a whole. Social services are aimed at minimizing deprivation and providing equal opportunities to all sections of the society, thus fostering better education, health, employment, growth and fraternity amongst citizens, which in-turn add onto the GDP and per capita income of the country. The need and potential for postal social services hence, are justified and are enumerated below:

1. **Recognition of Target Population:** Postal social services have the capacity to provide multitude of benefits not only to the society but to the

institution of posts. Social service schemes can be strategized and adopted for target populations to deliver specific products and services in a self-sustaining model. Every Posts and the particular demography it serves is distinctive and no fixed template of a universal social development model can be provided for all nations and all communities. But this uniqueness aids in creating specialized designs that can service key user groups and can sustain and prosper in specific niches.

2. **Recognition of Benefits:** Postal social services dispense various advantages by creating value for development actors, generating revenue for Posts and by enhancing social capital and social progress. Posts offer wide-ranging physical, digital and social infrastructure that serve as entry points for citizens to access various social services.

In a technologically driven era where disruptive innovations are wiping out classic enginery, these benefits hold ultimate significance for the future of a historical institution like Posts.

3. **Assessing Existing Capacity:** Posts have an existing historical capacity in the form of its services, products, partnerships, competency and physical assets that can be reviewed and recalibrated to offer new social services. This recalibration must not be treated as mere fixation or improvement but as a fundamental necessity to close the existing gaps to create profit generating and efficient services with a social compass.
4. **Retaining and Building Trust in Posts:** Historically, Posts has been used to dispense sensitive information, acting as a trusted agency for the public. In South Asian countries like India and Nepal, postmen have been reading out letters for the uneducated sections and an unsaid agreement for the privacy of the said information has been maintained. Even during modern times, majority of the rural sections in developing nations trust posts with their finances and savings more than banks. This historical legacy can be leveraged to provide social services that require trust, privacy and confidence like distributing social payments and working with the vulnerable sections.
5. **Last Mile Connectivity:** A greater part of the world is still untouched by modern communication and in such areas, Posts provides connectivity and reaches not only to the public but also to the service delivering agencies. Posts, all across the globe and especially in India, have established

themselves as trusted government agents at the grass root level and their postmen have become the flag bearers of 'barefoot service delivery'. The wide network of the post offices and the sheer number of staff provide an incomparable edge to the department of post in executing any scheme at the grass root level like 'har ghar tiranga campaign' or the *'postcard campaign to commemorate 75 years of independence.'* Be it the highest post office in the world at Hikkim, Himachal Pradesh or the one of its kind 'floating post office' in Dal Lake, Srinagar; India Posts has its reach in places that other agencies be it private or government can only aspire to have. In isolated communities mail carriers provide the only link for social connection to the residents and this legacy of posts can be utilized to cement the core schemes and themes of the government in such areas that have been left unattended due to lack of other forms of logistics and connectivity.

6. **Recognition of Potential of Secured Information Delivery:** In the era of cybercrimes and network hacking that can render any information at risk, letters provide a conventional mode of transmission of sensitive information to areas of conflict, to and fro from the intelligence agencies and the people working at ground level. This secured transmission of sensitive data can aid in peace building mechanisms in sensitive zones like Naxalite hit areas of Jharkhand, border areas of Kashmir and Arunachal Pradesh and other areas with issues of internal security like Nagaland and Manipur. Such secured channel of information provides a route to dispense information and link the furthest and farthest citizenry without compromising on national security. Even the presence of a government agency like posts in a far-flung area can give its residents a sense of security, thus enabling productivity.
7. **Partnership with Technology:** In an era of e-commerce and m-commerce and an ever-increasing volume of parcels, the focus of posts needs to shift to regain its historical significance and to become an important component of the global digital economy. This new digital age has brought changes in consumption patterns of end users and by repositioning itself posts can rebrand its image and value. This association with the digital economy can then be leveraged to instil partnerships with key development players like government, NGOs, multilateral institutions and so on to generate socially responsible services and services under the umbrella of CSR.

## UPU and Postal Social Services

1. **Istanbul World Postal Strategy:** To create more revenue, boost competitiveness, and remain relevant, UPU supports the branching out of postal operations as a strategic response to the rapid pace of technological and social change (Universal Postal Union n.d.).

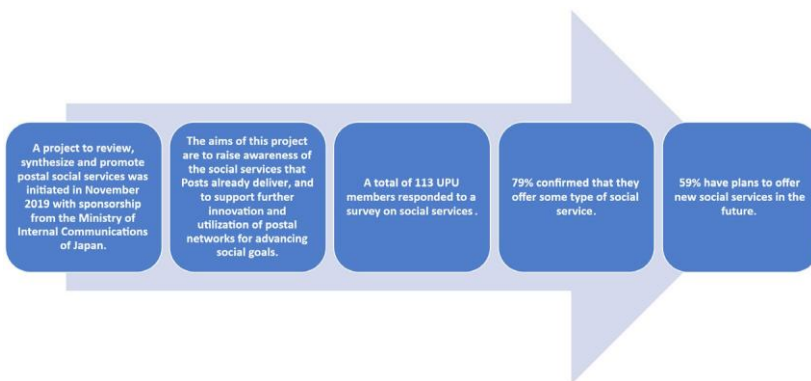


*Fig 1- Istanbul World Postal Strategy 2017-2020 (Page- 15)*

2. **Abidjan Postal Strategy:** One of the four key areas of action outlined in the Abidjan Postal Strategy 2021–2025 is that through increased investments and targeted policies, governments should focus on reducing gaps in postal development, and promote various ways to utilize the postal network for socio economic development” (Universal Postal Union n.d.).
3. Completion of postal social services questionnaire by UPU member countries between December 2019 and February 2020.

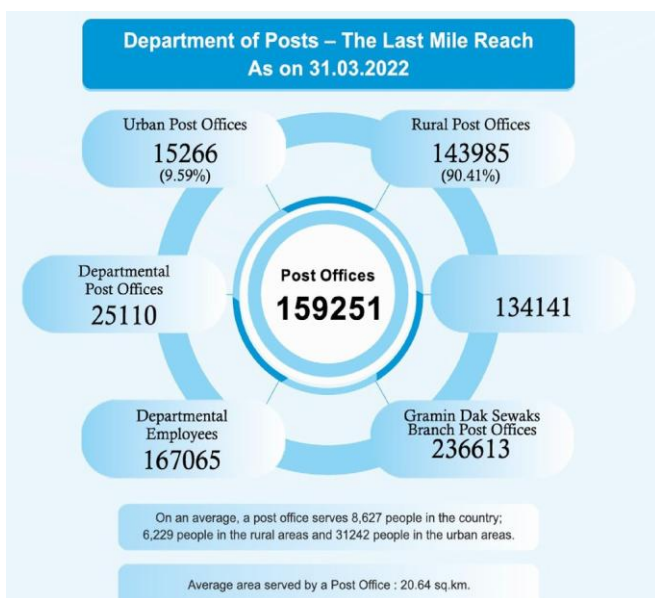
A questionnaire was prepared by UPU with qualitative questions about the provision of social services with a broad pre-incorporated definition of ‘postal social services’ without an exclusive list of said services. 113 UPU

members took part in the survey and a data base was created regarding the present status of social services provided by posts in all these countries.



*Fig 2- Results of the Postal social services questionnaire completed by UPU member countries between December 2019 and February 2020*

## India Post: An Overview



*Fig 3- Overview of India Posts (India Post 2023)*

With more than 159251 post offices, department of posts in India is the world's largest postal network. Its historical legacy can be traced back to 1727 when the first post office was established in then Calcutta, following which GPOs were

established in the three presidency towns of Calcutta, Bombay and Madras and the India Post Office Act of 1837, 1854 and 1898 were enacted to bring about uniformity in postal operations. Communications is listed at entry number 31 in List 1 of the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution of India, making it a Union subject and giving the Parliament exclusive powers to make laws on it. Recently, the Government has passed the new “Post Office Act of 2023” which came into effect from June 18, 2024 superseding the erstwhile “India Post Office Act of 1898”.

The procession, transmission, and delivery of mail and money remittance throughout the nation constitute the core activities of the postal department. These activities are supported by a diverse range of other services like insurance and banking.

The vision of the department is to make the products and services of India Posts the first choice for customers by sustaining the world’s largest postal network, by providing services on value for money basis and with speed and reliability. The following mission of India Posts includes two very important aspects that sheds light on the social inclination and duties enshrined for the department (India Post 2023):

- As a platform of the Government of India, to continue to deliver social security services and enable last mile connectivity
- To ensure that the workforce takes pride in its main strength and serve its customers genuinely and empathetically.

The new act of 2023 aims to streamline the delivery of public-focused services and ensure government benefits reach the country’s most distant areas, therefore improving the quality of life of its citizens (India Post 2023). This mandate narrates a clear message of the significance of the social service delivery domain of India Posts, thus highlighting the increasing reliability of the government on this department for its last mile service connectivity.

Till date, India Posts has successfully completed and is still undertaking a multitude of social service schemes panning across banking, insurance, pension disbursal, direct benefit transfer, railway reservation and more.



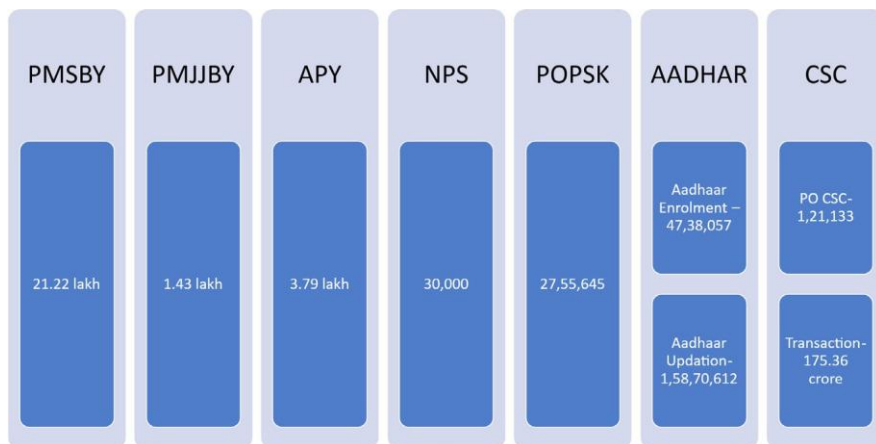


Fig 4- Success of various schemes of India Posts (India Post, 2023)

## Global Best Practices of Posts in Social Service Delivery:

1. **Logistics and Reverse Logistics:** This includes delivery and collection of medical materials to and from the public.

The COVID-19 pandemic brought global innovation and revamping in various sectors that were better suited to deal with the emergency at hand. Countries across globe found newer ways of service delivery that would reduce the potential of exposure to the coronavirus, buying time for developing herd immunity in populations.

### *Medical Supply Chain:*

A next-day pharmacy home delivery service was implemented by Australia via its postal network for vulnerable citizens thus helping them stay at home.

Posts in Costa Rica purchased handwash directly from the manufacturer and offered it for sale on a dedicated website. To prevent hoarding, resale, or speculation, it also limited each customer to two bottles per month. Therefore, Posts was able to maintain low prices during a period when alcoholic handwashes were being sold for significantly more than their original price by controlling the product's sourcing, sale, and delivery. They have also established a revenue generating door-step medicine delivery system that became so popular that private cars had to be rented out to increase the fleet of delivery vehicles.

The United States has developed a process that allows clinics to offer a



medicine mail-back service for their patients using their postal network which leads to safe disposal of expired, over-the-counter and unwanted drugs.

*Reverse Logistics in Waste Recycling, Energy and Utilities:*

Australian Posts collects larger items like cardboard, glass, plastic and others and delivers them to recycling centers that it has partnered with.

Benin Posts directly sells solar-powered products like solar energy LED lamps with restricted bulk purchase to prevent hoarding and resale. This facilitates easy public access to renewable and clean energy.

In Ireland, An Post has created a portal called Green Hub to aid the public in improving energy efficiency of their homes by providing information on clean energy, associated grants, low-cost finance options via Post and a one-stop service solution that assigns a local contractor to manage the entire home upgradation project. This has multiple social benefits like easing a complex process, improving sustainability and economics of a household by reducing electricity bills.

The Macao Post and Telecommunications Bureau has partnered with Environmental Protection Bureau, a local department and is providing boxes at designated post offices to collect batteries for recycling, which if disposed improperly can expose people to corrosive and toxic substances.

2. **Partnership with Private Players and NGOs:** To enable same or next-day doorstep deliveries in Norway, the Post teamed up with a private grocery chain. Customers use the grocery chain's website to place their orders, which are then forwarded to the closest store, where staff members prepare them and the Post picks them up and delivers them to the public.

China Post has partnered with various charitable organizations like China Foundation for Poverty Alleviation and China Women's Development Foundation, for 'Love Parcel' and 'Mother Parcel' initiatives. Citizens can donate funds through the postal outlets and then charitable institutions use these funds to curate specialized kits that will aid young and vulnerable mothers and school going kids. These parcels are then collected by China Post that has established dedicated warehouse units for the same and these kits are delivered across the country at universal service price. According to China Post, the Love Parcel project has collected 780 million yuan in donations and has supported more than 7.12 million students, covering 892 counties in 31 provinces (Universal Postal Union, 2021).

In Netherlands, Post has partnered with an organization to collect donated birthday presents and deliver them to children of low-income families.

In Myanmar and Colombia, the Post collects books donated by public and then delivers them to public libraries free of charge to facilitate access to reading material and to promote literacy.

### **3. Utilization of Postal Infrastructure:**

- Sensors have been mounted on postal infrastructure to collect data on various parameters like monitoring of physical condition of roads in France, air pollution levels in Belgium and collecting information on weather in Finland.

Such data can be used by government and private safety actors to combat diseases and to ensure preventive steps. This data also possesses economic value as has been illustrated by La Poste's survey subsidiary group 'Geoptis'.

- In countries like Mauritius and UAE, health camps and blood donation drives are conducted in postal offices.
- Posts in Switzerland, Tanzania and Bhutan operate regional or national bus routes building on their ability and competence in managing a vehicle fleet.

### **4. Community Cohesion and Inclusion:**

- In Japan, Watch Over service (Mimamori) was started in 2019 across 20,000 post offices wherein after charging a monthly fee of 2500 JPY, postal staff visit elderly people once a month to check on the well-being of its elderly population. Japan has a super-ageing society and this has presented its own unique set of problems like isolation, depression, loneliness and lack of support for the elderly. To overcome these issues, the post provides for these regular visits that can be booked by both the elderly and their families. A questionnaire is prepared and the answers are recorded and sent to the families electronically or via mail. Post has also added value to this service by issuing a monthly magazine on extra subscription basis that contains puzzles, exercises and other activities for the elderly.
- In France, cluster of services are being marketed especially customized for the elderly population that includes home visits by mail carriers (up to

six times a week), home and garden maintenance and meal and medicine delivery.

### **Proposals for Augmentation of Social Service Delivery by India Posts:**

1. According to Statista Market Insights, the revenue in Over the Counter (OTC) pharmaceutical industry in India is estimated to reach US\$ 27.47 bn by 2024 (Statista, 2024). These OTC products can be purchased without a prescription. This leads to hoarding of medicines and many of these drugs remain unused, get expired and are disposed off without proper precautions. India Posts can build upon its expertise in nationwide connectivity to offer mail back services of such unused medicines and products like saline bottles, syringes, insulin strips and others. By partnering with government and private hospitals, pharmacies and NGOs, India Posts can establish a logistics chain that can deliver usable medicines to the needy and also help in proper disposal of the expired products. This can be built in a self-sustaining model that allows incentivization of customers and revenue generation for posts along with recycling and reuse of medicines. This will in turn cut down medical waste, healthcare costs and thus reduce the environmental burden of the healthcare sector of India.
2. India Posts can partner with pharmaceutical companies like Netmeds, PharmEasy and others for door-step delivery of medicines and other healthcare and sanitation related products. For this, Posts needs to strengthen its delivery data systems to improve upon its efficiency and information updation system. Such upgradation can lead to an increase in its brand value and can aid in augmenting customer satisfaction.
3. The serological testing market in India has been projected to grow at a CAGR of 16.1% reaching \$813.6 million in 2030 (Fortune India Insights, 2020). This potential pool of market can be exploited by posts by establishing cold chain logistics that will allow collection of samples from patients and their delivery to test centres.
4. Multiple services if offered in the domain of public health will lead to collection of anonymized data that holds immense value for commercial health and insurance companies. Sale of such data will lead to revenue generation for the department and augment its resources.
5. Cold chains once established can be recalibrated and used in other sectors that rely on temperature sensitive logistics like industries dealing with fruits, dairy,

beverages, frozen food and others. Such diversification in the product delivery can provide shelter against collapse of a particular sector thus, securing financial cushioning.

6. India Posts can mimic successful models of posts of Ireland, Macau, Australia and Benin and establish dedicated chains for recovery of recyclable materials. Building on its ubiquitous presence, postal department can establish special collection counters of recycled materials in its post offices. This can be started as a pilot project in select cities and if successful, this model can be expanded accordingly. With global warming and pollution reaching newer heights, sectors of renewable energy and recycling and reuse industries are bound to grow exponentially and India Posts must create a self-sustaining model that will support environmental sustainability for the country and financial sustainability for posts.
7. India Posts can create a one stop solution website or an app that will provide information on renewable energy in both English and vernacular languages. This app should have an easily navigable and user-friendly interface so that its use can be popularized even in the rural sections. This app will have a list of registered local contractors (on the lines of the GeM Portal) that specialize in services in the renewable energy domain. Also, the full list of government subsidies and schemes will be displayed, along with an overall cost benefit analysis of renewable services, to create awareness amongst the public of the incentives received when switching to clean energy. This can be created by teaming up with multiple partners like Ministry of Environment Forest and Climate Change, Universal Postal Union, UNFCCC and many other multilateral institutions that provide aid and incentives in the domain of green energy. The technological operations can be built in-house with the expertise of CEPT, Mysuru thus saving costs on outsourcing.
8. India Posts can partner with Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) to create delivery networks that connect resource-rich fragments of society to resource-deficient sections thus enabling easy access to aid and reducing the loss of resources. A project can be developed where firstly high priority vulnerable sections of the society should be identified. The funds then can be collected via donation by public either at postal branches or electronically via the postal website. NGOs can then be brought in to create specially curated parcels for the targeted vulnerable sections of the society like “Amma Baba ki Potli” for elderly, “Paalna” for newborns, “Bacchon ke Baste” for school going kids and so on. These parcels can then be collected and re-distributed by

posts using dedicated warehouse distribution centres for nationwide coverage.

9. According to Indian Textile Journal, in India more than 1 million tonnes of textiles are discarded every year, majority of which comes from household waste thus making it the third largest source of municipal solid waste (Falavia 2021). To reduce these kinds of disparities (between tons of textile waste generation on one hand and lack of clean clothing on the other) posts can establish direct collection models where citizens can donate used clothes, books, bags and so on directly to postal branches. Post offices can establish small sections to collect such donations and local school going teens can be incentivised to volunteer every weekend for segregation and maintenance of the stock. Temporary counters can be opened fortnightly where students can help with the distribution. To incentivise students, schools should be encouraged to provide grace marks to inculcate in them the spirit of community service. Such kind of a multi-stakeholder model will work on a myriad of social issues and help in the establishment of community cohesion and inclusion.
10. Postal infrastructure can be leased for mounting of different kinds of sensors aiding in collection of data on pollution (urban cities), cloud bursts (Himalayan and Northeastern states) thus helping agencies in prevention and control of pollutant related health issues and disasters, along with revenue generation for posts. These sensors can also be self-owned and as the data generated from these sensors have economic value, they can then be sold to respective agencies for monetary benefits.
11. Postal infrastructure can also be repurposed for public utilities on pay per use basis, like storing of luggage in unused warehouses, public use of postal broadband to support digital inclusion, leasing of parking spots and more. This will augment the government's efforts of asset repurpose and asset monetization.
12. As postal department has existed historically in the remotest of areas, they become the entry point for a citizen inside the domain of government services. Thus, postal infrastructure can be utilised to hold various events like medical health camps, blood donation camps and others, specifically in Left Wing Extremist and tribal areas as they have well-established trust and familiarity with the local population. In the rural areas, postal buildings can be provided to Gram Panchayats and Self-help groups on availability basis in exchange of minimal fees. For comparison, out of 2.48 lakhs Gram panchayats in India, more than 52000 do not have a building and in four of the states, this figure

stands at 40% (Dubbudu , 2018). Postal offices in remote areas can also be used as community focal points for organization of cultural events like film screening, puppet shows, katha kahani and others to induce harmony, patriotism and social awareness.

13. A new GPS enabled village map app can be developed by India Posts that will collect data for infrastructure mapping of villages like ponds, sewers, canals and others and which can further be linked with MGNREGA. The app must be enabled to take inputs from public (in terms of grievances supported by picture proofs) that can help in real-time monitoring of rural assets. In order to eliminate costs of outsourcing, postal department should take adequate steps to strengthen in-house technological units like CEPT, Mysuru.
14. According to secondary data based on a study conducted by Longitudinal Ageing Study in India (LASI) in 2017-18, 20.5% of adults aged 45 years and above reported moderate loneliness and 13.4% reported frequent loneliness (Srivastava & Srivastava 2023). According to National Statistical Office (NSO)'s Elderly in India 2021 Report, India's elderly population is set to rise 41% over the next decade and hence these issues of lonesomeness and solitude are going to increase manifolds (Mishra 2023). Most of the youth from rural and urban areas are migrating to other states and countries for job opportunities, leaving their parents and grandparents in their native towns and villages. To counter this problem, India Posts can provide a Watch Over Service for the elderly on a monthly subscription model that can be subscribed by both the elderly and their families. Using the postal staff capacity of more than 4 lakh employees, India Posts can provide services like – subscription-based visits, delivery of food and medicine, home and garden maintenance along with access to government services like Aadhaar enabled Payment Services (AEPS), Aadhaar updation and so on. The status of the visits can then be updated with picture proofs to the families bringing them peace of mind and the commission thus generated can be apportioned to the specialized staff as incentive.
15. Mail carriers work at the ground level and are well-versed with the local population. Hence, they can be trained to act as specialized information conduits for delivery of information like school drop outs, child labour, child marriage and domestic violence to the block, sub-divisional and district administration. Department of Women and Child Development in cooperation with India Post has launched a one of its kind project called 'Rakshadoot' that aims to facilitate the filing of complaints of domestic violence by women and children. Both the

victims of domestic abuse and their representatives can visit their nearest post-office and say the code “Thapal” to the postal staff. The postmaster/mistress will then help them write their full address on a white paper and put it in the letter box without any stamp and without further questions. This can also be done without informing the postmaster by posting the letter anonymously with the code ‘Thapal’, only with the address of the victim. These letters are then scanned and sent to the Department of Women and Child Development, for further action. Projects like ‘Rakshadoot’ that ease the filing of complaints of social crimes faced by the suppressed and vulnerable sections of the society can be replicated across ministries and crimes like sexual abuse, dowry, untouchability, child labour and more can be brought under its umbrella. The component of anonymity against the societal prejudice of shame and the fear of the abuser are tackled effectively in such a set up thus empowering victims and guaranteeing their safety. Various departments can be brought under a single project that will give impetus to the broader vision of easy, accessible and faceless registry of complaints. In Left wing extremist and border areas, specialized training can be provided to mail carriers by onboarding Ministry of Home Affairs for sensitive information collection which will strengthen the intelligence of our forces, advancing India’s strategic interests.

16. Philately, the collection and study of postage stamps, is of considerable importance in India, offering a unique lens through which the country’s rich cultural and historical tapestry can be explored and through which awareness for various social issues can be generated. Government is trying to re-introduce philately as a hobby for the younger generation with various initiatives like letter writing competitions on mygov.in or by organizing National Philatelic Exhibition- AmritPex 2023 in New Delhi. This exhibition saw a footfall of 25,000 students, stamp lovers and tourists from across India thus indicating the potential of revival of this lost hobby as a ‘digital detox’. In this technologically driven era of social media and influencers, where young kids are becoming increasingly susceptible to ‘scrolling reels’ and having shorter concentration span, philately can be used to bring back interests in hobbies that involve the sensory and motor systems using the tangible rather than being lost in a digital loop. Such small changes in daily habits can improve mental balance, intelligence, concentration and emotional quotient of the younger populace. India Posts had also organized “75 Lakh Postcard Campaign to PM” as a part of the Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav celebrations. It was estimated that around 75 Lakh postcards would be sent but eventually 1.37 crore postcards were received from across India. These postcards can now be re-sent back to the



students with a signed note from the Prime minister and a stamp as a gift, further encouraging these young kids to pursue philately as a hobby.

## Conclusion

The need for India posts to enhance its role as a social service provider is critical as this not only provides the opportunity to the department to advance social development but also garners benefits for posts in terms of revenue generation, engagement with multiple stakeholders, revival of brand and augmentation of customer base. An important question to address is whether India Posts has the capacity to implement new services using existing resources and if not, then can the existent gaps be met via innovation and training. For any project to be undertaken size, competition and value of the market should be researched along with setup and operational costs followed by the launch of pilot projects. These pilot projects must have policy inputs and policy evaluation systems in-built for better monitoring. Any new social scheme should be incorporated only after taking inputs from postal staff since they are the points of contact and delivery and without their consent and co-operation, such projects become ineffectual. India Post has had a unique standing in the Indian society as a historic social service deliverer and just like the Armed Forces and Police, India Post too should be viewed and analysed from the perspective of social cost benefit while incorporating provisions of financial value. The “Human Wide Area Network” capacity of India Post should thus be leveraged to provide socio-economic benefits to the Indian Citizenry and guide the country to Mahatma Gandhi’s ideals of *Sarvodaya*.

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Only ICT combined with innovative ideas for skilling can unlock new lively

### Author's Profile

**Ms. Taruni Pandey** is an officer of the Indian Post & Telecommunication Accounts and Finance Service (IP&TAFS), 2022 batch, presently serving as Assistant Chief Accounts Officer (ACAO) at the National Communications Academy – Finance (NCA-F), Ghitori, New Delhi. In her current role, she is actively engaged in capacity building, policy documentation, and training initiatives related to telecom finance, ICT regulation, public procurement, and digital governance.

She is the co-author of the book titled “A Practical Guide to Writing ITU Contributions,” which was unveiled by Member (Finance), Department of Telecommunications and published by NCA-F. The guide was launched during the Workshop on “AI Standards for Increasing the Efficiency of Telecommunications and ICTs”, held in collaboration with the ITU Local Area Office for South Asia. The workshop witnessed participation from senior officials of ITU Headquarters, Geneva, and delegates from BIMSTEC countries, among others. The book aims to introduce officers and stakeholders to the structure and processes of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and to encourage effective contribution writing in global standardization efforts.

Her work reflects a strong interest in the intersections of governance, international ICT standards, financial reform, and institutional innovation in the telecom and digital sectors.