

engineers. Developing the appropriate methodology is important also for providing better guidelines for similar efforts in future, for other urban cities in the country. Admittedly, the efforts for microzonation of Jabalpur are only a beginning and the

voluminous data generated will help refine the present state of understanding of the seismic risk in this urban centre. The methodologies followed in this project, to be refined with time, will undoubtedly ease future efforts in this direction.

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## FROM THE ARCHIVES



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### The Department of Indian Posts and Telegraphs

An unofficial publication describes the story of communications as set against a background of vast distances, varying climatic and geographical features, of hundreds of languages and dialects, of illiterate persons who have incomplete addresses written out for them, of 400 million people, more than 85 per cent of whom live in 700,000 villages, of how one-fifth of the human race spread over an area as large as Europe, excluding Russia, keep in touch with one another. It is learnt that though

the generation associating its mails with runners has long passed, runners and boats still convey mails over 84,000 miles out of a total of 157,000 miles. The Department disposes of 1,475,000,000 unregistered articles in a year and the number of complaints received is said to be 1 for every 100,000 articles. This would lead one to believe that the people are averse to complain and that the machinery for receiving and accounting for complaints needs overhauling.

Owing to the growing needs of the Defence Department in 1942, an extensive scheme estimated to cost 17 crores of rupees, of erecting telegraph and telephone channels was put in hand and is scheduled to be completed in 1944–45. The Department was called upon to manufacture communication equipment in very large quantities for the Armed Forces. Vast expansion of existing workshops was undertaken and a new workshop was established in Central India at a cost of over 30 lakhs of rupees. Even this was found insufficient and 91 other workshops large and small were employed in the manufacture of stores.

The cost of these was Rs 61,95,720 in 1938–39 and it rose to Rs 48,346,000 in 1943–44.

The acquisition by the Department, of telephone systems owned by private companies at Calcutta, Bombay, Madras, Karachi and Ahmedabad is an event of considerable importance from the point of view of long-term planning and development. One can only hope that the red-tape associated with the Government machinery will not be allowed to impair the efficiency of service.

The Department is run on commercial basis and it is stated that the increased rates and surcharges are not a part of Department's financial policy but are aimed at raising revenue for the war effort. It is heartening to note that it is first and foremost a public utility service whose principle objectives are cheapness and efficiency. One would in this connection suggest the grant of a bonus to the workers out of the profits, or the introduction of co-operative principles in any other form so that the workers may feel that they stand to benefit both by economy and efficiency.

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