

## **Suggestion and Comments on Draft Indian Post Office (Amendment) Bill 2006**

The members of **Gamya Foundation** undoubtedly agree with the Department of Posts (DoP) that, the century old Indian Post office Act 1898 needs to be amended to liberalize mail industry, to bring accountability, to encourage competition, to establish qualitative improvements in postal service, to safeguard the interest of consumers, to introduce e-enabled services etc. in the present globalised scenario.

**Gamya Foundation** while welcoming the desired initiative to equip the Postal Department to newer challenges and opportunities would like to voice the following suggestions and comments from the general public to the proposed amendment bill:

**Amendment to Section 4 of Indian Post Office Act 1898:** “The Central Government may, liberalize and bring down its exclusive privilege to carry letters up to 300 grams.”

☞ To the above said amendment, The general public expressed their deep displeasure to the members of the organization stating that; “Presently the courier companies charging Rs.5 to Rs.7 for ordinary local letter mails and Rs.10 to Rs.15 for the outstation letters and the couriered mails, will reach in same day or the next day to the desired destination. On the other hand, the regular postal mail may cost varying in between Rs.4 to Rs.8 but the big problem is the delay in the delivery. It may take 3 to 4 days. If the communication needs to be reached quickly, one has to avail Speed Post, which will cost Rs.20 for the local and Rs.30 to Rs40 for the out station mails. Once the Bill is passed in the present Draft condition, then customer has to pay 4 times higher than the present charges. **This is against the spirit of liberalizing the mailing industry.** In this liberalized and competitive era customer should get the option to choose between the standard of service and the price for the service depending upon his/her affordability and requirement. More over, the **courier companies** gained popularity over the decade because of **their standard of service** and **quick delivery** over Postal department services. It is sad to mention that, even after 20 years of competition from courier companies; the postal department has not woke-up to the competition and the standard of service and image of the department has seen no-improvements in the eyes of the public.”

- **Gamya Foundation** voices the above feeling of the public and expresses its deep dissatisfaction to this desired cap. And urge the government, not to bring any cap in this regard.

***Establishment & incorporation of MAIL REGULATORY & DEVELOPMENT***

**AUTHORITY:** “Central Government may, establish, for the purposes of this Act, an Authority to be called the Mail Regulatory and Development Authority”

☞ To the above said amendment of establishing an independent regulating and development authority, the general public expressed their satisfaction with the members of Gamy Foundation stating, “In this competitive era to safe guard the interest of public and bring accountability & professionalism to the mailing industry, there is a need to set-up an autonomous body to regulate and develop the mail industry in the country, upholding both the interest of the customers and the service providers.”

- Gamy Foundation welcome the insertion of Chapter II A to the proposed amendment and hope the new regulating authority will address the issues such as, liability for liquidated damages for negligence in delivery of letters and irregular price practices effectively.

***Sec 4 sub Sec-4D- Compliance to Universal Service Obligation (USO):***

“Any registered service provider with annual turnover of rupees twenty-five lakh or over shall deposit ten per cent of his annual turnover with the registering authority for meeting universal service obligation in such manner as may be prescribed: provided that the Central Government may, by notification, reduce such percentage of the annual turnover from time to time.”

☞ To the above said amendment of compliance to the Universal Service Obligation, the general public expressed their opinion as; “any body who is residing in the country, irrespective of cast, creed, position or area of living, should get equal options in selecting the services available in mail at affordable prices in line with the people living in the other part of the country. We acknowledge the great work done by the Department of Posts in this field. If the private couriers are not ready to operate in the remotest places of the country, they should bear some cost. If this is implemented in the new bill, naturally the courier companies will pass on this charge to the customer. This leads to 10 to 15% price hike (i.e., 50ps to 1Re) in the courier charges. When considering the interest of fellow citizens in the remotest villages of the country, vis-à-vis the affordable urban ready to bear the courier charges. More over, if any body offers still at cheaper price, customer is at will to opt such service, thus creating a level playing field.”

- Gamy Foundation, supporting the compliance to Universal Service Obligation defined by the Universal Postal Union, wishes, the proposed regulating authority will act effectively to ensure qualitative mailing standards be available to every Indian in the country.

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**The List of Citizens who expressed their Suggestions & Comments to**

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