Chapter II

EVOLUTION OF POSTAL INSPECTION SYSTEM IN INDIA

Postal Inspection in India has a long history of more than 150 years. Its origin can be traced to the period when the post was thrown open to the members of the public. As early as 1854 a well-established inspection system was in place. It was introduced to ensure proper accounting of postal revenue and compliance to rules and procedures. In this chapter an attempt is made to understand the growth of the inspection system.

AnandGopalSen, in his book *History and Administration of the Post Office of India* (1875) makes the following observation. "The facility of frequent, punctual, speedy and cheap communication, which the institution of Post Office was calculated to secure, may be justly classed among the elements of profitable commerce. It is essential to the purposes of Government, and subservient to all the ends of national policy."1 This explains the importance of post office and its revenue contribution in 1875. Inspection of post offices to ensure the correct collection of revenue and prevention of leakage of revenue was considered important. Today the situation has much changed due to other sources of revenue for the government.

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1Sen, Anand Gopal, *History and Administration of the Post Office of India*, Roy Press, Calcutta, 1875
2.1 The Origin of Post

"The word post from French Poste and derived from the Latin word posta, is so called from horses being placed at certain stations or posts, where they might be hired by individuals, at their pleasure. The application of the word post and post-master as well to the transmission of letters and the persons to whom this business was entrusted, as to stations where post-horses were kept, and the persons who owned or had the care of them was the cause of much confusion, and it frequently cannot be understood in reference to which branch early writers intended these terms to be applied. The ambiguity is not confined to the English language only, the Latin for post-man or runner as he is called in India, is veredarius."\(^2\)

The Arabs used the term Barid for post and it appears to be very close to Veredus. Herodotus and Xenophon mention that among the ancient Persians, stations were appointed at intervals along the great roads of the empire where couriers were constantly kept in readiness to bear the despatches and intelligence. The couriers were state messengers engaged for the transmission of government or official communications. There was no regular machinery for the receipt and delivery of letters, so essential to the modern Post establishment. "It is indeed probable that wherever the posts or couriers were appointed to

\(^2\) Ibid p.2
perform the journeys at stated periods which, as soon as the occasions for employing them became more frequent, would be found at once the most economical and effective mode, such a convenient means of conveying correspondence, though primarily intended only for State purposes, would soon come to be used by individuals. Houses of call for the receipt and delivery of letters would in process of time be established by custom if not by regular appointment."³ "In 1481 Edward IV, during the Scottish war is stated to have established at certain posts, 20 miles apart, a change of riders, who handed letters to one another, and by this means expedited them, 200 miles in 2 days."⁴

The above excerpts explain in a simple manner the development of postal system for the use of the common man. Only after the postal network and infrastructure was thrown open for the use of the common man it became robust and a beneficial organization.

In the words of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru "Among the many things, good and bad, that the modern world has produced, surely the postal system, which covers the world is one of its most beneficent activities. There is nothing bad about it, it is all good, and it affects every individual, wherever he may be in this wide world, connecting him with millions of others." ⁵

³Ibid, 2 ⁴Ibid, 6 ⁵AnandMulkraj, The Story of the Indian Post Office, Department of Post, 1954
Although in India we are familiar with the British Postal history, many are not aware that the Post offices were first established in Paris in 1479. The University of Paris had its own permanent establishment of messengers for the conveyance of letters in the 13th Century. This arrangement continued in existence as a parallel organization to post till its abolition in 1719. The Kingdom of England established its first post office in 1591. The post office was established in Germany in 1641, in Scotland in 1685 and in the Turkish dominion in 1740. The post office was established in India by the East India Company in 1727.

Post office came to be regulated by Parliament of England in 1656 and was made available for general use. The word Post owes its origin to Horse couriers. In England the Mail coach system supplanted horse carriers in 1794. Ocean Mail between England and India was introduced in 1836. East India Company started its first post office in 1727 in the European residential area of Calcutta. It was shifted to the court House building in the old court House Street in 1762. This office was later merged with the Calcutta GPO which was started in 1774. The General post office of Madras was set up in 1786 in Fort St. George. In Bombay, a postmaster was appointed in 1787 for the purpose of organizing regular communication with Fort St. George Madras.6

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Beginning of Postal Administration

To manage the conveyance of letters, there was an office called the Establishment of Nunci in England and its expenditure was a large item in the charges of the royal household. "Nuncii also formed part of the establishment of the more powerful nobles." The royal messengers of the King of England were called by different designations like nuncius, cokinus or garcio around 1252 AD. In the supervision of these royal messengers, lies the germ of the office of the Post-Master General. The first of such officers we can give a distinct account is Sir Brian Tuke, who is described in the records as majistemuncirumcursorum, sivepostarum. In other words he was the postal officer in charge of both England and in other parts of the King’s dominions beyond the seas.

Long after the appointment of a Postmaster general, the details of the service were frequently regulated by proclamations and by orders in Council in England. In 1567 Thomas Randolph was mentioned by Camden as the Chief Post-master of England. It is believed that his duties were to superintend the posts and had no immediate connection with letters. This distinction between posts and letters is important because the word ‘post’ here refers to the various post-stations or post-stages set up at fixed distances for horse riders (despatch riders) who were carrying

\[Sen, AnandGopal, Supra 1, p. 5\]
official communications. As late as 1644 it appears that the Post Masters duties were not connected with letters but management of posts or stations for horse riders.

A Parliamentary resolution entered in the journals of the Commons, states that “the Lords and Commons, finding by experience that it was most necessary to keep good intelligence between the Parliament and their forces, and to erect Post stages in several parts of the kingdom, and the office of the Master of the Posts and Couriers happening to be void, ordained that Edmund Prideaux Esquire, a member of the House of Commons, shall be constituted Master of the Posts, Messengers and Couriers.”8. This resolution makes it clear that the posts came to be headed by a member of House of Commons (or Member of Parliament) showing its importance and there was distinction between post, messengers and couriers but all were under the Master of Posts and Couriers. In addition to the Master of Posts and Couriers, there was another office of Post Master of England in existence since 1619, set up by James I. He was not controlling foreign territories of his dominions. This office was merged with the office of Master of Posts and couriers in 1653.

In 1653, the postal function was given to John Manley on contract for £ 10000 to be paid to the King annually and the system was known as

8Sen, AnandGopal, Supra 1, p. 9
farming. It was a kind of outsourcing of postal functions to the person who could pay the highest revenue to the King.

In 1656, the office of Postmaster of England and comptroller of the Post Office was set up to head the only one General Post office set up to control the postal requirements of England, Scotland, Ireland and several parts beyond the seas. The Government of Restoration (1660) appointed Henry Bishop (1661-91) as the first Postmaster General. Henry Bishop introduced the postal cancellation to ensure payment of postage on letters carried by post which came to be known as the bishop-mark. The Postmaster General was the master of Posts and Couriers and was also responsible for the revenue from the postal service.

The office of the Postmaster General of America was created in 1692. Benjamin Franklin who was appointed as Postmaster at Philadelphia in 1737 became the last colonial Post Master General of American colonies. He had forty years of experience of working in the post when he became Postmaster General.

Thus we see that a proper postal supervision and governance system developed in England over many centuries. The post office came to be headed by a Minister or member of the House of Commons. The office of the Postmaster General was also created for supervision of the postal functions. Postage collection by impressing cancellation known as Bishop mark was also started. Outsourcing of the post office work in
return for fixed annual revenue was also tried in the management of postal organization. These are some of the earliest governance practices in the history of the post office.

2.2 Development of Postal Inspection System in India

To understand the development of postal system, we can divide the period into pre East India Company and Post East India Company. The post office as we find it today in India is mainly based on the rules and regulations developed during the East India Company.

Indigenous Postal Inspection System

In India, during the Maurya period, trained pigeons were being used to carry written messages. Although the Mauryan administration had a vast network of Serais on the Imperial highways, they were not used for private communication. Post houses were set up by the Arab rulers after the invasion of Mohammed Bin Qasim in 712 AD for conveying official mail. Horses were maintained at these post houses. According to Feristha after the arrival of Mohamed of Ghazni, the postmaster or the Master of the Posts at the provincial headquarters was known as Sahib-I-Barid and was responsible for superintendence and maintenance of the postal services. He was reporting to the Sahib-i-Risalat, head of correspondence department. Barid means post and it is closely connected to veredus, the Latin word for post. The first recorded history of the Dakchowki is
available from ZiauddinBarani, a traveller, during the reign of AllauddinKhilji. IbnBatuta who visited India during the reign of Mohammed Bin Tughlaq described the postal system which was known as Barid. His system was almost similar to the Roman post.

Sher Shah Suri established Serai-cum-dakchowki at intervals of every two miles on the length of 3000 miles of Grand trunk road from Sonargaon(Dakha, Bangaladesh) to the bank of Indus in Sind. He constructed 1700 post houses employing 3400 postal messengers and horses, according to Tarikh-I-SherShahi. All these postal staff not only had the duty of conveying royal mail, but had to act as spies and also do police work of keeping watch on the entry of strangers. The Mir Munshi acted as secretary of the Imperial Farmans, the correspondence and also of the postal system under the supervision of the Darogah-I-Dawk. The department of correspondence was known as Dewan-I-Insha. Letters and royal farmans were issued from this department and forwarded to the Darogah-I-dakchawki (the superintendent of the postal department for transmission). At every post two clerks called Tarikh-navis were stationed with the duty to record the time of arrival and departure of mail carriers. These hierarchical systems and monitoring mechanisms show that there was a good and efficient postal administration during these

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9Mazumdar, Mohini Lal., Early History and Growth of Postal system in India, Riddi India, Calcutta, 1995, p. 17-22
days.

Emperor Akbar, is said to have established a courier system by placing two swift horses and some mewais (runners) at a distance of five kos (ten miles) for the carriage of government letters. They also carried private letters.10 "Besides this official post, there existed in the Mughal domain, private post, but it is difficult to establish how far it was available for use by people in general."11 A hundred miles were covered by these couriers in a day and night making it possible for a letter to reach from Agra to Ahmedabad in Gujarat in five days. Emperor Jahangir developed a fully trained pigeon post during Moghul period.

The supply of horses and runners was the responsibility of local chieftains and zamindars. The dak system managed by the Zamindars was known as Zamindari Dak. Dak system managed by the Bengal Nawab, Nazim was known as the Nizamatdawk. Nizamatdawk used to function between Calcutta and Murshidabad "as a matter rather of state than of convenience and is said not to be available except for his Highness, the members of his family and those connected with the palace."12 Parallel to this was the courier system developed by the bankers for carriage of bills of exchange between banking centres which later came to be known as Mahajandawk and the Brahmanidak as it was

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10 Sen, Anand Gopal, Supra 1, p. 62
11 Mazumdar, Supra 9, p. 38
12 Sen, Supra 1, p. 63
managed by Brahmins.

Various Princely States had their own postal systems. Mysore Anchal was started by Chikka Deva Raja Wodeyar in 1612 AD and it functioned up to 1889 till its amalgamation with Imperial Post. The postal staff had the duty of spying also like other contemporary postal organizations in India and elsewhere. The origin of Travancore Anchal is traced back to 1760 and Cochin Anchal to 1791. A Department for Posts was set up by the Nawab of Hyderabad in 1857.

**East India Company and Thereafter**

The proposal to set up a post office in Bombay was mooted in 1688. The original proposal was to introduce the postal service on farming basis in India like in England. The proposed farming rate was £500. In the Letter of East India company dated 27 August 1688, the following instructions are found:

"We likewise require you to erect a post office for all letters to be brought to and delivered at, setting such rate upon each single letter and so proportionately upon double and treble letters, as may in a few years bring in insensibly a vast revenue to the company and much greater convenience to the merchants and trade in general than ever they yet had or understood. For which purpose you must order flitting stages and

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*Inamdar, M.M, Supra 6, footnote 2 on p.4*
passage boats to go off and return on certain days, and proper stages by
land to Surat and other places to convey letters with great security and
speed; and you much make it highly criminal to send letters to any place
where you have established a Post Office by any other conveyance than
by the Office erected for the purpose. 14

According to the Consultation of Fort William of 20th March 1712,
regarding the Calcutta-Madras dak line, there were four dak stations on
this mail route at Vizagapatnam, Ganjam, Balasore (Orissa) and Calcutta.
In 1727, the East India Company first established a post office in the
‘white’ area (where the present High court of Calcutta stands). Bengal
Postal regulations were issued in 1736. 15

Beginning of the modern post office in India is traced to the
Minutes of 1766 of Lord Clive who is given the credit of making the
first improvement to post office regulations which is also called as Clive
Post. The English took over the revenue administration (dewani) of
Bengal, Behar and Orissa in 1765. The Minute of 1766 was issued for
establishment of a regular postal system for carriage of Company’s dak
and private letters of the company’s servants. “All letters should be
despatched from government house; a postmaster, (then termed as postal
writer) and his assistant, were to be at government House every night to

14Shivanath, An approach to History of Post Office in India and Other Essays, Army Postal Service
Association, New Delhi, 2001, p. 3
15Postal Training Centre,Postal History, Mysore, 1995, p. 57
attend the receipt, scrutiny and despatch of dak.” Clive ordered that Postmaster for Calcutta be appointed from the subordinate rank of the Company’s servants to look after the postal business of the Government from the Calcutta Headquarters of the company. ¹⁶

Government house became the main hub instead of the post office on the “old post office street” in the white town of Calcutta. Six mail routes were connected to Calcutta. Zamindars and landlords were made responsible for the supply of runners to carry the mails and for this service provided they were compensated by allowing a deduction of the rents due to the company. However after the departure of Lord Clive in 1767, the post of postmaster was abolished perhaps to reduce the expenditure on dak management, and in that place an assistant or sub secretary of the Public department was appointed to work as ex-officio postmaster. ¹⁷ As a result the work got neglected which was noticed by Warren Hastings and he took steps for its improvement.

The credit for extending the services of the official postal service to private communications, in addition to Company’s servants, goes to Warren Hastings. When the post became a service accessible to the common people, superintendence and inspection took birth to ensure an efficient service. On 31st March 1774, a regular postal system “for carriage of private person’s letters on payment of postage” was set up

¹⁶Mazumdar, Supra 9, p. 50
¹⁷Ibid, p. 52
with the establishment of Calcutta GPO. The office of the Postmaster General first came into existence in India in 1774 with the creation of Calcutta GPO during the period of Warren Hastings. Postage was charged for the first time by way of two anna copper tokens per hundred miles in the areas under the control of the Company.

Under the 1772 Regulation, work of collection of revenue and revenue administration was taken away from the Naib Dewan of Nawab’s government and was given to British servants called Collectors and English officers were put in charge of districts. The institution of Collectors was very important in the initial stages of postal evolution as the collectors also functioned as postmasters whenever there was need for the same and were responsible to make the necessary mail arrangements using resources at their disposal, These provisions are found in the India Post Office Act 1898 which are in force even to this day.

“Receiving houses for the receipt and delivery of letters were established and by Act xvii of 1837, the exclusive right of conveying letters by post within the territories of the East India Company were vested in the Governor General.” 18 The private post continued till the carriage and distribution of letters became a monopoly of the Government

18 Sen, AnandGopal, Supra 1, p. 63
under the 1837 Regulations.\textsuperscript{19}

The duties of the Post office were formerly with the Collectors and other heads of the department who functioned as ‘ex-officio’ postmasters. As they could not pay adequate attention to the postal management due to other responsibilities which were considered by them as more important in 1843 this system was altered and stipendary officers were engaged on the principal lines of the post to manage postal work. The postmaster-ship of the chief towns and stations, the general superintendence of all the Post offices under them, periodical visit, inspection of the post roads, to see that the overseers and runners employed were efficient, and the means for crossing rivers and nullahs in the rainy season kept in a serviceable condition etc. duties were entrusted to these stipendary officers.\textsuperscript{20} This development explains the beginning of the in-house superintendent system in the Postal administration replacing the Collectors and other ex-officio officers for carrying out the post related duties.

Each presidency had its own Postmaster General at Madras, Calcutta, Bombay and North western Circles till the system was brought under a unified command of the office of Director General of Posts in India in 1854. The Director General, Posts was under the Department of Commerce and Industry in the Imperial Government. “The former isolation of the Post Offices of one presidency from those of all the rest,

\textsuperscript{19}Anand, Mulkrarj, Supra 5, p. 7
\textsuperscript{20}Sen, Anand Gopal, Supra 1, p. 64-65
and want of one competent controlling authority over the whole gave rise to diversity of practices highly injurious to the public service and inconvenient to the public, while some parts of the Empire had been deprived of the object of improvements introduced successfully in others, the remedy appeared to consist in the appointment of a Director General of the Post who should be in direct communication with and subordinate to the government of India, and exercise the same degree of control over the Post-Masters general of the several Presidencies, that was theoretically exercised by the local governments who are now relieved of all responsibility in connection with the department." 21 Although the postal system is more than 150 years old, as a Department it traces its birth to the year 1854. "The Indian Post Office has, therefore, to look back upon the year 1854 in the same way in which the English Post Office looks back upon the year 1840 when the penny postage was introduced." 22

**Imperial Post Office System after 1854**

In 1854, the post offices in the Presidencies of Bengal, Madras, Bombay and the North West Provinces, were grouped into convenient circles, for the purpose of inspection. To each circle an Inspecting Post master was appointed whose duty it was to travel constantly from Post office to Post Office, and exercise a vigilant supervision over the Deputy Post Masters

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21 Ibid., 67
22 Ibid., 63
and their offices, and road establishments. Every Deputy Post Master and everyone connected with the Post Office Road establishment were placed under the direct surveillance of the Inspecting Post Master. This was done to ensure proper accountability and responsibility. “It is obvious that the successful working of the department depends on the energy and intelligence of the Inspecting Post Masters and the vigilance, with which they exercise supervision over the proceedings of the Deputy Post Masters and Road Establishments. It is also worth notice that since the Inspecting Post Masters commenced their tour of inspection, many irregularities noticed and corrected by them, and complaints from the public against the Department became much less frequent.” These observations made in 1875 by AnandGopalSen, a postmaster himself, are important for the student of inspections in the Department of Posts. These observations bring out vividly the role played by inspections in postal governance in the past. This is true to a large extent even today.

From the records in the Bombay Archives it is seen that the tour of inspection of the post master General had to be approved by the Governor of the Presidency. Duncan Davidson, PMG Bombay proposed a tour of inspection and submitted it to the Secretary to Government on 16 February 1854 and the letter reads as follows: “Sir, I have the honour to request the permission of the Right Hon’ble the Governor in Council to proceed on duty of inspection of Guzerat.” When he sought the
permission to proceed on the tour of inspection of Poona, the Governor-in-Council in letter dated 15 May 1854 wanted to know the duration for which the PMG would be out of station for approving the tour. “The G-in-C would agree to the PMG’s remaining at Poona but not to his making a tour of Inspection. He is therefore, requested to state what places he proposes to visit and the probable length of his stay.” On receipt of a satisfactory reply the tour of inspection was approved on 29 May 1854. From the above we can see that the PMG was required to take approval of the Governor General in Council. It is also seen that the Postmaster General was doing the inspection of post offices.

During one such inspection on 22 December 1853 on Satara post office he reported as follows:

“I have the honour to report that on my last tour of inspection I found the Post office accommodation at Satara most inconvenient and wretched. A shed near the magazine has for some time been occupied by the establishment but as no lights are permitted in it by night...” These are cited just to prove that Postmaster General had the inspection work also.

The Postmaster General, Bombay in his letter dated 17 May 1854 reported that “I would like to take this opportunity of stating that under the new Postal Law, the special connection of the PMG with the Bombay

\[23\] Bombay State Archives, GAD, Post Office, 1854, Vol. 64, p. 95
\[24\] Bombay State Archives, GAD, Post office, 1854, Vol. 65, p. 45
Post office will cease and will become same as with any other subordinate office, of course as the most important office under his control, it must always be entitled to a chief share of attention.”

The new postal Law referred here is the Post Office Act 1854. The duties of Postmaster GPO and Postmaster General came to be separated in 1854.  

Inspecting Postmasters  

The Deputy Postmasters were postmasters of an important office having the duty of inspection of offices under them. There were 5 Dy. Postmasters at Poona, Belgaum, Thana, Gujarat and Candesh in Bombay Circle in 1853 and the PMG observed that “the postmasters headquarters generally speaking are at the most important office (while on their tour of inspection of accounts and return is crippled) and adds to their inefficiency for their own proper duties.” Again he has recorded that “want of due supervision in the Deccan is in a great degree accounted for by the fact that the Dy. Postmaster’s time is necessarily for the most part devoted to the Poona post office, one of the most important in India. He is in reality the Postmaster of Poona much more than Deputy Postmaster in the Deccan.”

From this we find that the Deputy Postmasters were required to attend to their own office duties of postmaster in addition to inspection of accounts of other post offices under their charge in 1853.

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25 Ibid., Vol. 64, p.100  
26 Ibid. p.100  
27 Bombay State Archives, GAD, Post Office, Vol. 64, 1854, p.12
This required separating inspection work from their regular postmaster duties.

Mr Parker, Postmaster Candesh, who was an inspecting postmaster, in his letter dated 4 October 1853 observed that “I trust you will take into consideration that the tour of postal inspection involves besides the actual cost of travelling, additional expense on account of servants, permanent means of carriage and tents, the actual pay of the appointment is too small to admit of a Postmaster’s keeping more than a very limited household. The expenses on account of tents is also of late much increased by the order of withdrawing from Postmaster’s on duty, the privilege of living rent free at Travelling Bungalows on the post lines.” As observed by Duncan Davidson in November 1853, the postmasters were being paid Rs. 5 per day while on tour of inspection in addition to other fixed allowances. (Fixed allowances paid were Rs.150 to Poona postmaster, Rs. 120 to Belgaum postmaster, Rs. 100 to Gujarat postmaster, and Rs 100 to Thana postmaster. 28

Mr Davidson, PMG Bombay in his letter dated 18 Nov 1853 wrote saying “I would beg to say a few words regarding our means of supervising the post offices throughout the Presidency and securing that improvement in the system of management and business which is so

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28 Bombay Archives, 1854, Vol. 64, p. 48
desirable." In reply to this letter the Governor-in-Council observed in his letter dated 27 January 1854 as follows: The Governor-in Council is of the opinion that a Postmaster should be appointed to the charge of each of the great trunk lines of postal communications in the Presidency with a moderate establishment and allowances of pay for an English writer and peon and without any fixed local duties to detain him long and often, at any of the stations in his charge. Government will be willing to consider any matured and specific scheme of the kind embarking the whole Presidency and meeting anticipated charges in the new Postal Act. But the arrangements should be brought forward in a separate report."

These are the observations of Governor-in-Council on the inspection report submitted by the PMG dated 18 November 1853. This new proposal was to appoint an inspecting officer known as inspecting postmaster who was required to be on the move inspecting offices free from the post office duties.

"The posts of Inspecting Postmasters were created to inspect post offices and their number was 47 in 1858-59. Till 1917 Railway Mail Service worked as a separate organization divided into 4 Circles headed by four Inspector Generals." There were 40 postal Divisions in the entire undivided India including Burma each headed by an Inspecting

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29 Ibid. p.20
30 Ibid., p. 38
31 Shivanath, Supra 14, p. 12
Postmaster. In course of time they came to be known as Superintendents.\textsuperscript{32} The use of the word ‘Inspecting’ clearly shows the role of these Superintendents. Their main job, till the introduction of other duties like business development, was inspection of post offices and even now in spite of many other multifarious activities they cannot escape from the inspection duty.

In 1866-67 a new circle under the control of the Chief Inspector, exercising the powers of a Post Master General was formed in the Central provinces. Prior to this arrangement, the four Postal circles namely Bengal, Bombay, Madras and North West Provinces shared the jurisdiction of the central provinces. In 1871-72 the province of Oudh under N. W. Provinces became a separate Postal circle under the control of a Chief Inspector. In 1872-73, Rajpootana postal circle was created. The Chief Inspectors who were in charge of minor circles were later called as Deputy Postmaster General.\textsuperscript{33} “For the purposes of administration, the whole of India and Burma is divided into eight circles corresponding with Presidencies and Provinces as far as possible.”\textsuperscript{34} This shows that the Head of a smaller circle was called Chief inspector. This shows the importance given to the inspection work.

\textsuperscript{32}Ramachandiran, Indian Postal History: focus on Tamilnadu, AmaayaPublicaiton, Chennai, 2011, p. 47-48
\textsuperscript{33} Ahmed Noor H., India Post Through the Ages: A Saga of Communications, Postal History Society of India, Kurnool, 1995, p. 140
\textsuperscript{34}Clarke Geoffrey, The Post Office of India and its Story, John Lane company, London, 1920, p. 3
At the top of the hierarchy there was the Director General Posts and other officers known as Deputy Director General, Posts. The following officer ranks are found in 1873.

a) Postmasters General of Bengal, Bombay, Madras, Northwest Provinces, (Rs.1500-2000).
b) Chief Inspector of Post offices, Central Province, Oudh, British Burmah, Scinde and Persian Gulf, Rajpootana circles (Rs.600-1000). They exercise the powers of the Postmasters General being head of a circle.
c) Postmaster, Calcutta, Madras and Bombay Presidency: Independent postmasters i.e. those Postmasters who correspond direct with the Post Master general. They are not subordinate to the Inspectors. (Rs.600-1000)
d) Chief inspector of Frontier Travelling Post Office, Allahabad (Rs.600-1000)
e) Inspecting Post Master, Rawalpindee division and Superintendent, Punjab Military Van Dak (Rs.600-1000)
f) Chief Inspector, Assam (Rs.600-1000) created in 1874

g) Inspector of Post Offices and superintendent of Mails (Four grades: First, Second, Third and Fourth grade in descending order of pay) (Rs.200-500)
h) Sub Inspector (four grades in descending order of pay)(Rs.60-120)

In the letter of Duncan Davidson, PMG Bombay Circle dated 22 September 1854, it is seen that there was no post of Inspector in Bombay GPO till 1854. Mr Duncan Davidson recommends the creation of the posts of inspector. "In Calcutta inspectors are employed to overlook and watch the delivery peons, visiting them on their beats unexpectedly and reporting all irregularities. I am of the opinion that three inspectors ought to be approved to this office one on thirty and two on Rupees twenty each per mensem."35

He proposed three inspectors one at thirty Rupees and two at twenty rupees at a total proposed establishment cost of Rupees Seventy. Appendix mentioned in parathirteen of this letter gives the present and proposed establishment of various branches of Bombay GPO as in September 1854. Under this post of inspector (present establishment) is shown as none and proposed establishment as three.36 From this it can be concluded that exclusive inspector posts were created after 1854 in Bombay.

Supernumerary inspectors were provided at the headquarters of Postal Circles namely Bengal, Madras, Bombay, NW Provinces and the

35 Bombay State Archives, GAD, Post Office, Vol. 68, 1854
36 Ibid.,
Punjab, to be available for deputation on special duty to any part of the province. Mr Alpin, anexperienced Inspector from the Punjab was selected for the duty to study the reasons for the ‘prevailing laxity, slovenly performance of work, and want of discipline in various parts of the Bengal Postal circle and he found that “the circle was unwieldy in size, and that to this cause the bad results adverted to, might in a measure be ascribed.” An additional supernumerary Inspector in the first grade was added to the Bengal Establishment with the hope that a more vigorous administration of the large and important circle of Bengal would ensue.”

The inspector, as explained by AnandGopalSen, was responsible for every detail of the Post office placed under his control. He was expected to visit post offices under him frequently as necessary and inspect thoroughly every post office and every mail line in his division at least once in twelve months. A sub inspector was directly subordinate to the Inspector of the division, being in immediate charge of minor non-disbursing offices as well as the Branch and district Post offices, the rural messengers and the District Dak lines. He was required to visit the post offices under him when necessary and inspect the offices every quarter or once every half year as may be ordered by the Post Master General.

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37Sen, AnandGopal, Supra 1, p. 70
"Amongst the chief causes of the increase in the number of service covers, we have to include the reorganization of the Postal Department in 1854. This has arisen chiefly by the establishment of a large number of new offices and by the appointment of Inspecting Post masters and to some extent in other ways."38 This excerpt shows that the number of Inspecting officers started increasing after 1854. The passage cited above (Mr, Alpin etc.) explain how and why the structure or cadre of Inspectors was created. The basic function of the Inspector was to exercise supervision and vigilance, detect irregularities and correct them, in order to ensure the best postal service. There were 127 post offices in Madras Presidency and 400 in Imperial India in 1834. As per the annual report 1855-56, there were 645 post offices and 55 Receiving Houses in the four Presidencies. Receiving Houses were offices which did not have mail delivery functions but powers only to receive postal articles.

Over the years three types of offices namely Disbursing Head Post offices, Non-disbursing post offices and Branch Post offices came into existence. Branch office system was started in 1866-67 by H. B. Riddell, first Director General of Posts. The Branch post offices were under the Head post offices. Non disbursing post office was subordinate to disbursing Head Post office for the purpose of accounts. In 1920, then Director General, Geoffrey Clarke, refers to the Head Post office, sub

38 Ibid. p. 110
post office and Branch post office.\textsuperscript{39} Even to this day the three level post office system, namely Head Post office, Sub Post office and Branch post office is continuing. The Branch post office is sometimes attached to head post office but mostly to the sub post office. All sub post offices are attached to one or other head post office invariably for accounting and pay purposes. The increase in the number of Branch post offices resulted in the increase in the number inspections and also the number of Inspecting officers.

The role of inspectors became very crucial when the Imperial Post office started taking over the management of the district Post which was hither to managed by the local or district government namely the Revenue Collectors or judicial authorities(Magistrates) of the Districts. The District Post had its own rural messenger or District Letter Carrier establishment supplied by the zamindarsat various stages of the route and they couriered the official mail of the police, revenue and judicial offices to and fro the rural stations within the district. The collection and delivery of official correspondence was in the hands of Police subordinates and village watchmen. Making the use of district post for the conveyance of private mail was started in North West Provinces in 1838. This was later followed by Bombay and Madras in 1844 but partially in some districts. Bengal Circle was the last one to adopt this system.

\textsuperscript{39}Clarke G., Supra 34, p. 3
Gradually, the district governments came forward to handover the management of the district Dak system to the Postmaster General and wherever this experiment was conducted it was found to be beneficial. This also helped Imperial Post to expand by using the available and well established district post mail routes and gradually absorb them into one’s own network. Wherever post offices of both these systems came to function side by side, one of them was closed. In Bengal postal circle alone, in 1872-73, 18 post offices were closed or relocated to open 25 new post offices.

In Madras presidency there was one more system called the TalookTappal under which the Tahsildars were keeping a register of letters received and sent by them and were giving a receipt in vernacular language of the district. The post office Writers were also required to keep a register of all letters received from and sent to the Tahsildar daily. “The registers kept by the Tahsildars shall be kept open for the inspection of the Magistrate and the Post master of the district, whenever either of those authorities may deem proper to do so.”

“The transfer of the control of district post and the increase in the number of small and branch offices in the interior of the districts necessitated increase in the posts of inspectors of post offices. In 1867-68 A.D. there were forty one inspectors. With the gradual taking over of

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the management of the district posts, their strength rose to 170 by 1874-75. The officials in charge of the postal matters under the district post, who were known as sub inspectors, were allowed to continue in their posts, on taking over of the management of the Imperial posts." This further increased the strength of the inspector establishment. The Sub-Inspector was assisted by the mail overseers. This is an old institution which was in existence prior to 1854 and is primarily intended for supervision over runner lines. The mail overseer was and is the last officer in the hierarchy of postal administration.

**Duties of Inspecting Officers**

Sensays that introduction of the facility of conveying cash and currency by post lead to increase in cases of abstraction due to a strong temptation to dishonesty putting more responsibility on the post office to ensure the compulsory registration of valuable items. Introduction of postage stamps gave rise to counterfeiting of stamps which needed vigilance, detection and punishment. Expansion of mail routes, introduction of Travelling Post Offices (later called Railway Mail service), management of DakBunglows, introduction of bullock (cart) trains for passengers, goods, mail and parcel conveyance requiring maintenance of time bills and supervision of the mail contractors and verification of the bills raised by the mail contractors added to the

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41Ahmed. Noor H. Supra 33, p. 172
responsibilities of the officers. In 1855 Madras had 160 horses for the conveyance of mail between Madras and Ellore. Increase in the number of letter boxes required supervision on their prompt clearance. Increase in the number of post offices lead to increase in staff and rural messengers requiring greater control and supervision of mail lines and performance. Introduction of money order system required cash supply and this gave rise to highway robberies and thefts. Introduction of Savings bank, money orders, and value payable services, inland and overland parcel service, registration of newspapers for concessional postage, licensing of services like Broadcast Receiver Licenses, etc. required more complicated rules and procedures and monitoring. Compilation of these rules issued from time to time came out in the form of a revised Post Office Manual in 1872-73.

The Manual of the post office rules and Order published for the guidance of the postal officials extended to four volumes by 1889, the first and second volumes contained the rules and orders relating to the several departments of post office. The third volume dealt with the duties of the supervising officers, superintendents and inspectors of post offices. The fourth volume contained the rules and orders for the railway Mail service. Rules for the passenger service and the Bullock train were
published separately. These manuals have been the bible of the Inspector as well as of the postmaster and staff of the post office.

**Re-designation of the Posts**

Re-designation of the posts has taken place over the years. The erstwhile Inspecting Officers are now known as Superintendents of Postal Divisions, and the sub-inspectors are now known as Inspectors or Assistant Superintendents. They are in charge of Sub divisions, and are answerable to the Superintendent of the Division. They are appointing authorities of lower level functionaries in the Branch Post offices like the Graemedakspeaks. The Graemeen DakSavaks were known as Extra departmental employees prior to Fifth Pay Commission. The Superintendent is the appointing and disciplinary authority of the Branch Post master and all other clerical cadres, from peon up to the postmaster. Above the Superintendents there are Regional Directors of Postal Service. Earlier the Postal Circles were headed by the Postmaster General. Now they are headed by the Chief Postmaster General. The Regional Head is now known as Postmaster General. All these officers namely, Inspectors, Superintendents, Directors, Postmaster General and Chief Postmaster General are inspectors in the broad sense of the term and they do control, administer, govern, supervise, visit and inspect offices under their charge.

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42Ahmed., Noor H. Supra 33, p.162
This historical sketch of the development of inspection system in Department of Posts provides a good background to understand the evolving role of inspectors in governance. The various offices like the Nuncii, postmaster, chief postmaster, master of posts and couriers, postmaster general, Inspecting Postmaster, Chief Inspector, Superintendent, Assistant superintendents, Inspectors, Directors, Director General came into existence to govern, administer, control and supervise the postal organization. Even the posts of Collector and Fouzdar were a part and parcel of postal system once upon a time and played a crucial role in the evolution of post in India.

2.3 The Present Inspection System

The Department of Posts in India is at present headed by the Director General who is also Secretary to Government of India. He is assisted by the Postal Services Board consisting of six Members of the Board. The Department is divided into 22 Circles headed by Chief Postmaster Generals and 37 Regional postmaster Generals. There are 442 postal Divisions and 70 RMS Divisions. Each Postal division is divided into three to seven postal sub divisions under the charge of Inspectors or Assistant Superintendents.

Officers from the office of Director General inspect the office of Chief Postmaster General. The Head of the Circle inspects the office of the Regional Director and Regional Postmaster General. The Postmaster
General and Directors inspect the office of Superintendent. The Superintendent inspects the office of the Sub divisional Inspector. Post offices of all categories are inspected by the Superintendent and the Inspector. The inspector inspects post offices allotted to him by the Superintendent. The inspection reports are submitted to the controlling authority and reviewed by them. Inspection reports provide a good feedback about the functioning of the postal service. All these officers play a very important role which is crucial for good governance.

**Inspection Machinery: Recruitment Methods**

The officers in the Junior Administrative Grade which is the feeder cadre for the posts of Director, Postmaster General etc. are recruited by UPSC through open competitive Civil Service examination. They start their career as Senior Superintendents of Post Offices in Junior Time scale. Some posts in the JAG cadre are filled up by means of promotion from Group B officers. The posts of Superintendents are filled up through promotion of Assistant Superintendents (75%) and Departmental Competitive Examination (25%). The posts of inspectors are filled up on the basis of examination, 25 per cent from open market through Staff Selection Commission and 75 per cent through in house departmental examination. The Assistant Superintendents post is a promotional post for the Inspectors and filled up only by promotion.
"The inspecting postmasters' posts were created in 1854 to inspect post offices. The Superintendents of Mail carts, were with few exceptions, Europeans and were selected as such on account of former good service in the post office and other departments."

With the increase in the number and volume of work of the post office for effective supervision all the imperial and district post offices in a district were placed in charge of an Inspector of Post offices. Selection of Inspector through annual departmental examination was started in 1904. The subordinate staff of the postal department appeared for these examinations. Prior to 1938, the candidates for the qualifying examination were nominated by the Divisional officers. In 1943 the method of recruitment by written competitive examination was replaced by qualifying written examination and interview. A selection board interviewed the candidates. This was again changed in 1948. Under the new system both written examination and interview had independent marks and merit was determined on the basis of total marks scored.

This system was replaced later by the introducing of the competitive written examination. Interview system was given up. Selection was based on merit in the examination. All the candidates for the post of Inspector were from within the Department as this was limited competition method. There was no direct recruitment till 2001.

43Ahmed, Noor H. Supra 33, p. 175
44Ibid, 172
Cadre and Recruitment Rules for Inspectors of Posts were notified in April 2001. With this the recruitment of 25 percent inspectors through the staff selection commission was introduced for the first time.

Superintendents (Gazetted officers in Group B cadre) are selected from the Inspector cadre on the basis of promotion and 25 percent through competitive examination. In due course of time they are promoted to Group A (Indian Postal Service). The Indian Postal Service officers are selected by UPSC through Civil Service Examination. They join as Junior Time Scale officers at the rank of Sr. Superintendent and move upwards in course of time.

**Inspection Mechanism and Periodicity**

There are five categories of post offices namely Head post office (Gaz.), Head Post office (HSG-I), Head Post office (HSG-II), LSG Post Offices, A class, B class and C class offices besides the Branch post offices.

A single day is allowed for inspection of Branch post offices. Inspection of the single handed (or C class) offices is also done in a single day. All other offices except Head post offices have to be inspected in two or three days. Every post office is inspected at least once annually. Head post offices are inspected twice in a year. Four days are permitted

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46HSG means Higher selection Grade, LSG means Lower Selection Grade.
for accounts verification of Head post Office and eight days are permitted for inspection of Head Post Office. Post and Telegraph Manual volume VIII (1979 Edition) is the basic manual which regulates inspections. The periodicity of inspection of each office has been laid down very clearly. This is a very important aspect of governance. Various studies of regulatory inspections cited in the literature review point out the lacunae of periodicity in inspection in other organizations as a source of corruption.

The Head post offices are also inspected annually by the AO(ICO)47 who is in charge of Savings bank Control Organization. The Postal Accounts Internal Check teams inspect selected post offices every year mainly to check the service matters and accounts. The Post and Telecom Audit, which is a part of the office of Comptroller and Auditor General of India also inspects the post offices in a selected manner.

Every inspecting officer of a sub division, is required to be on inspection for a minimum of 80-100 days. Earlier the inspector had to spend not less than 120 days on inspection of the offices spread over in the remote and interior areas of the country.48 The inspection programme for the next year is approved in advance in December or January. Inspection year is the calendar year. Every office should be inspected

47 AO(ICO) means Account Officer Internal check Organization
48 Ahmed Noor H. Supra 33, p.149
before completion of 12 months from the date of last inspection. The progress of inspection is monitored through a monthly report, quarterly report, and half yearly report. As a rule no inspection should be carried forward to the next month and the Inspection reports should be released within 15-30 days of inspection.

**Role of Inspection in Vigilance**

Inspection of an office is done to check the adherence to rules and procedures. Inspecting officials make use of an Inspection questionnaire issued by the Department of Posts. If the functioning of the office is not found to be in order that office is identified as a bad office and is inspected a second time during the same year. This inspection is done by an officer other than the one who inspected it earlier. According to Noor Ahmed, the discontinuation of second inspection system in 1920 gave rise to increased frauds by the post office officials. When it was reintroduced in 1925 there was improvement. Therefore second inspection system was restored. Inspection of the post office annually and from a vigilance point of view is a very important part of the duty of an inspecting officer. A vigilant inspector will be able to detect financial irregularities. According to one analysis of inspection questionnaire done in 1991 by Postal Training Centre, Mysore in the Head post office questionnaire containing 147 questions, 39 percent questions were of
vigilance nature, 28 percent were related to procedure, 21 were related to management and 12 percent were related to Customer relationship. This shows the importance of inspection as a vigilance mechanism and its role in control of corruption which is an important good governance indicator.

2.4 Manuals of the Post Office

Rule of law is a very important good governance indicator. Rules avoid discretion and abuse of power. They also serve as guidelines to the service delivery level. Department of Posts has a well laid down code of rules from the earliest years.

The first post office was set up in 1727 in Calcutta. By this time many mail routes for conveying company mail between its factories in Surat, Bengal, Machulipatnam, Madras and other places had come into existence. East India Company issued a set of Postal Regulations in 1736 to improve the system. Bombay Post Office Rules were introduced in 1830. It declared private daks illegal. Madras government issued a Code of Post Office Regulations in 1833 and revised the Code in 1834 which was applicable to the Madras Presidency only. Every Presidency was issuing its own Codes or Regulations depending on local needs, practices and customs which were applicable only within the Presidency. There was no uniformity in Postal Regulations in the British India till 1837.

49 PTC Mysore, Workshop on Inspections, 1991
Uniform regulations were introduced and made applicable to all the
Presidencies with the passing of the Post Office Act No. XVII, 1837.
"The term ‘Postmaster’ was derived from the Post Office Rule 2 and is
now generally used in the Post Offices of India." The Act, 1837 was
repealed in 1838, 1839, 1854, 1866, 1882, 1895, 1896 and 1898. Post
Office Act 1898 governs the post office work even to this day. The post
office enforces the provisions of Indian Post Office Act, 1898.

A Post Office Manual (containing Instructions to Postmasters) was
published by the Department of Post in 1854. This first Manual replaced
all other Codes in use till then. It was printed at the Calcutta Gazette
office. The Manual is found in National Library, Alipore. It contains a
set of forms in use in the Postal Department. Nowhere the word P&T is
seen in this Manual. This Manual was published when Riddell became
the first Director General Posts. It was prepared using the set of rules
compiled by Ranken in the North West Provinces in 1845, and Riddell
had the fortune to use this book of rules while serving in the North West
Provinces. As he knew the importance of this compilation, when he
became Director General, he brought the first Manual and all the
definitions in the Manual were borrowed from Ranken's compilation as
stated in the preface to the Manual. A separate chapter on Inspecting
Postmasters is found from page 40 to 49 of this Manual.

50 Mazumdar, Supra 9, p. 213
The Manual of the post office rules and orders published for the guidance of the postal officials extended to four volumes by 1889 and remained so even till 1918. The first and second volumes contained the rules and orders relating to the several departments of post office. The third volume dealt with the duties of the supervising officers, Superintendents and Inspectors of post offices. The fourth volume contained the rules and orders for the railway Mail service. Rules for the passenger service and the Bullock train were published separately.\(^{51}\)

"Every official in the department is supposed to have the contents of these at the finger’s ends, but in reality few have ever read them through and anyone who attempted to obey all their instructions would find himself sadly hampered in the exercise of his duties."\(^{52}\)

With the amalgamation of the Posts and Telegraphs Department in 1914 additional manuals were required relating to the Telegraphs branch namely Engineering and Traffic. In 1934-35 there were eleven volumes of rules, and many had two or more parts. Six departmental volumes on operative work were got revised and issued in 1986-87 and remaining eight volumes were updated and printed in 1987-88.\(^{53}\)

At present there are eight Manuals of Rules (Postal Volumes, as they are popularly called). After the separation of telegraph department

\(^{51}\) Ahmed Noor H. Supra 33, p. 162  
\(^{52}\) Clarke G, Supra 34, p. 2  
\(^{53}\) Ahmed., Noor H. Supra 33, p. 164
in 1984 the five telegraph and engineering manuals have become not useful to the Department of Posts. In addition to this there are Post office Guides, in three parts. There are Savings Bank and Savings Certificate manuals also. All these manuals of rules have been the bible of the Inspecting officer as well of the post office employee over the years. Manual VIII lays down the rules and duties of the Supervising officers, Superintendent and Inspectors.

2.5 Inspection Questionnaire

Inspection questionnaire is an aid for inspection. The compliance and adherence of prescribed rules and procedures is checked during inspection with the help of the Questionnaire. The questions are nothing but the rules and procedures in a question form. Some editions of questionnaires also cite the rule to which the question refers in paranthesis at the end of the question so that the inspecting authority can refer to it in case of doubt. The inspector is expected to know the rules and procedures by heart and guide the post master and staff during the inspection. Inspection questionnaire was introduced in the Department as early as 1854.

In the Manual of 1854 there is a chapter entitled ‘Inspecting Postmasters’. “The Inspecting Postmaster (IP) will be required to visit daily the Post Office of any place in which he may be staying and will be to a great extent be responsible for the working of the office during his
stay. All orders and instructions given by the IP must be in writing. An Order Book should be kept in each Post Office in which the orders should be recorded. The general purpose of such Order must be noticed in the Diary."54 "Road establishment in each division will be under the IP and it will be his special duty to superintendent the establishment of overseers and runners, to see that they receive their pay punctually and in fall, and to punish neglect. He must pay attention to the state of ferries and Ferry Boats on mail lines."55 "Inquiry into complaints regarding the despatch and delivery of letters will perhaps be the most important duty of IP."56 "It will be the duty of the IPs to see that the daily cash account and Peon Book are kept punctually in every office in his division."57

"It will, perhaps, be desirable to restrict the powers of IPMs to the limits which were originally prescribed for inspectors. If the IPM had not the powers of issuing and enforcing orders, great confusion and much fraud would unquestionably be caused by the removal of the control of local paid and ex-official postmasters."58 From this paragraph we observe that a cadre of inspectors existed prior to 1854 and the cadre of Inspecting Postmasters (IPM) which came later was given similar powers.

54 Rule 142 of Manual 1854, Department of Posts, National Library, Kolkatta
55 ibid., Rule 143
56 ibid., Rule 146
57 ibid., Rule 147
58 ibid., Rule 139
Beginning of the inspection questionnaire can be seen in Rule 160 of the Manual 1854. A total of 48 standard questions covering various branches of post office are found. There were 12 questions for Letter mail department, 8 for Bhangy or parcel department, 6 questions for Dawk Bearer Department, 9 questions for road establishment and 13 questions for office, records and miscellaneous. By 1873 as seen from Rule 19 of Chapter XIII of the revised edition of the Manual, the number of questions to be used during inspection had gone up to 130. There were 50 questions on Letter Mail Department (1-50), 15 questions on Parcel department (51-65), 15 questions on Deposit department (66-80), 9 questions on Registration department (81-89), 15 questions on Subordinate Delivery (90-104), 11 questions on Stock (105-115), 3 questions on Forms department (116-118), 11 questions on Accounts department (119-129), and one question on Miscellaneous subjects (130).

As and when new rules and procedures were introduced, the scope of inspection also increased simultaneously and resulted in the addition of questions.

The system of quarterly inspection is seen in Rule 156 and a report was laid down. “Each office must be visited, thoroughly inspected and a full report given once in each quarter. Forms of the quarterly report will
be furnished." 59Rule 20 of the Chapter XIII of 1873 Manual states that “as soon as the inspection of a post office is completed the inspector will submit a report in the subjoined form to the PMG: ‘The PO at ................. has been thoroughly inspected by me in accordance with the instructions given in the PO Manual. It was last inspected by ................. on the ...................’. Then will follow an account of the most important observations made and steps taken by him.”

The role of inspectors was also clearly laid down in the rules in 1873. “Inspector will ordinarily be assisted in the supervision of the Division by one or more sub inspectors, but he should understand that sub inspectors are merely assistants, and that he is primarily responsible for the proper management of the entire Division. Sub inspectors will be immediately subordinate to the Inspector, making reports and receiving orders and instructions from him.”60 Rule 26 discusses the role of sub inspectors. As per Rule 31, “Particular attention should be given by sub inspectors to the works of rural messengers.”61 Sub inspector was required to submit report to the Inspectors as per Rule 40.

Post & Telegraph Manual (Volume VIII) which discusses the duties of officers at the circle level, Divisional level, and sub divisional level, was last revised in 1979. The present inspection system is based on

59 Ibid., Rule 156
60 Rule 5, Manual 1873,
61 Ibid., Rule 31
this. It also contains standard questions to be used for inspections. It also
refers to the Collection of Inspection Report Forms used for inspection.
Rule 2, 2A, 8, 21, 163, 167, 170A, 238, 239, 241, 243, 298 to 302 in the
Manual VIII are the important rules regarding inspection of circle office,
stock depot, post offices and mail offices. A booklet titled Collection of
Railway Mail Service Inspection Report Forms, (5th edition) was
printed in the year 1959.

Types of Questionnaires

Different inspection questionnaires are issued by the Department
for inspection of different classes of post office. Questionnaires are also
prescribed for inspection of specialized and technical areas like
computerized offices, Business offices etc. depending on the nature of
requirement. There are questionnaires for Head Post Office, sub post
office and Branch Post office, Postal Stores Depot, Railway Mail service
offices, Circle offices, Regional Offices and so on. Guide for inspection
of Branch post offices (revised edition 1992) was circulated in February
1993. Only selected questions from this were to be used during second
inspection of badoffices. The inspection questionnaire issued in 1993 was
revised and a new edition of Standard Inspection questionnaire, was
issued by the Department of Posts in 2006 for inspection of head post
office, Branch post office and Sub post office. This revised edition is used in 2011.

In October 2000 and January 2001 separate guidelines for the inspection of Business Post offices were circulated. In 1997, after introduction of Rural Postal Life Insurance scheme, additional questions relating to RPLI were added to the Standard Questionnaire. 62 In 1999 additional questions for the inspection of V-sat money order work were prescribed. In 2004, the questionnaire for the inspection of Savings Bank branch by AOICO (SB) was revised. A separate Questionnaire for inspection of computerised post offices was first introduced in 2005.

Inspection questionnaire for Circle Office/Regional Office was issued in September 2008 by Deputy Director General (PO, I & MM), Department of Posts, New Delhi. The practice of citing rules at the end of each question has been given up in these new editions except in a set of additional questions added through separate orders issued by the DG Posts.

2.6 General Rules made by Director General regarding Inspections

Post& Telegraph Manual (Vol. VIII) is the magnacarta of the Department of Post as far as inspections of post offices is concerned. Inspection of the Circle office is the personal responsibility of the Head of the Circle as per Rule 2A of the Manual and it is listed under Personal

62 DG Posts letter no 16-2/96-Inspn dated 6.11.97
Duties of the Head of the Circle. He will inspect his own office annually and submit the report to DG Posts. After 6 months a further complete report indicating action taken on various action points has to be sent to the Directorate. Verification of Head post office will be done with reference to Standard questions no 1 to 21 given in part A of the Head office verification report, Rule 239. Rule 163 to Rule 188 is under the caption Control of Inspectors and Overseers work by Superintendent. Rule 163 explains the general control to be exercised on the inspectors work. Rule 167 explains manner of inspection of an inspector’s office and Rule 170A manner of inspection of office of the Asst. Superintendent of Mail office and Inspector RMS. Rule 234 to 249 is under the caption ‘Tours and inspections’ and it contains rules regarding tours and inspections. Rule 238 explains manner of inspection of post offices.

While using the standard questionnaire, the general guiding principle is no answers need be given to those questions which relate to matters in which the work of the office is found to be entirely in order. However all questions have to be attempted and findings have to be noted in the inspection notes on the basis of which Inspection report is drafted. The notes taken during inspection are then preserved with the inspection report in the office of inspecting authority.

Besides Inspections which are done once in a year, management visits are made to post offices. To ensure that visits to post offices are
purposeful, points to be checked during such visits are laid down in the form of Management Visit Guidelines. These guidelines are in the form of a questionnaire. These guidelines are meant to help the visiting officer to carry out mandatory checks during the visit. One such set of guidelines, called Management Visit Guidelines were issued in 2002 and revised in 2005. While issuing these guidelines, Member (Operations) observed as follows: "The need for bringing about qualitative improvement in the postal services has never been felt more than now in view of the changing scenarios on account of all round developments and emergence of alterative service providers. Department of Posts can no longer take its clientele for granted…"

From time to time DG Posts has issued instructions regarding conduct of inspections. Some of the important instructions are as follows:

- Inspection of a head office has to be done twice, once every six months. The first inspection is detailed and second is only the accounts verification.
- All offices, operative and administrative have to be inspected annually at least once.
- Some offices identified as bad performing offices have to be inspected a second time.
- The inspection of an office should be done within 12 months
from the date of last inspection and should not be delayed.

- The inspection programme has to be finalized at the beginning of the calendar year and should be followed.
- The inspection reports should be released within 15 days
- The inspection reports of a subordinate authority should be reviewed by the higher controlling authority. The inspection reports of Branch post offices and other offices released by the Divisional superintendent should be reviewed by the Director of Postal Services.
- All Branch post offices should be inspected by the Divisional Superintendent personally at least once in 10 years. In other years they can be inspected by lower officers.
- Inspection report should be pasted to the order book kept in the post office.
- Marginal remarks should be passed as to the action taken on the observations made and compliance reports should be sent to the Divisional Superintendent.
- Inspection reports should list out action paragraphs of the last inspection on which action is incomplete for pursuing them further before closure of inspection report.
- The office copies of the inspection reports should be
preserved for three years although those pasted to the order book are permanent records.

- In the office of the superintendent there will be an Inspection Branch to monitor the inspection work and progress.

- Inspection progress reports should be sent monthly, quarterly, half yearly and annually to the next higher authority up to the DG Posts.

- Inspection standard questionnaire should be followed in addition to framing of new questions by the inspecting officers as per the new developments and requirements.

- Internal inspection of the office is done by the Head of the office every year wherever prescribed and the inspection report is released.

2.7 Inspection Reports

Every office is required to maintain a book called order book to which the inspection reports are pasted in a chronological order. The order books in fact tell the story of the post office, its ups and down, its prosperity and decline. These Order Books are permanent records and are kept in the post office. Some post offices have several volumes of Order books depending on the age of the post office and years of its existence, as minimum one inspection in a year. Some inspection reports are as old as 1900 like Bangalore GPO. Due to lack of proper attention to these
invaluable documents, many have been eaten away by termites and lost due to natural calamities while some are lucky to find a safe place in the museums of Postal Training Centres. A proper policy to preserve these documents is required.

Inspection reports pasted to the order book are permanent records and to be preserved always. A few reports of inspections done by Mr Grey, PMG in 1847 are discussed by Mazumdar. He quotes from the inspection reports of Gaya, Arrah, Chapra, and Patna, Dinajpur, Muzzapurpurand Purneaphost offices. Only one quote from Gaya post office inspection report is cited below just to explain that a proper inspection system existed even as early as 1847.63

"Gaya (Gaya) PO: "the mail routes through kutch road during rain becomes almost impossible for the foot travellers owing to the nature of soil, could the trunk road be once properly metalled to a sufficient depth and few bridges are completed by the Gaya and Patna Fund Committee...it will facilitate the travelling of several mails including those for Patna, Dinajpur, Arrah, Chapra, Tirhoot, Nepal (Nepal) etc. Average collection of postage amounts to Rs 450 p.m., letters and packets passing though this office averages 5000 per month despatched."

Mahabaleshwar is a hill station and a tourist place. During the British Raj, it was the summer capital of the Bombay Government for three months and special post and telegraph facilities were being

63Mazumdar, Supra 9, p. 31-33
organized here in those months. In the Inspection report dated 20 October 1922 of this office we read as follows:

"As the Government of Bombay generally assembles at Mahabaleshwar sometime during the season i.e. 10th March to 9th June, it is desirable that the Divisional Superintendent should reside either at Mahabaleshwar or Panchagani in the season provided of course that he can do so without incurring any extra expense."

The post office here is more than 100 years old. The order book of Mahabaleshwar post office in Satara district, Maharashtra gives very interesting insight into the maintenance of order books. Volume I of the order book is dated 1869 and still preserved intact. The researcher came across the following format in this book in 2011.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date Of Order</th>
<th>Date of Receipt From Deputy Post Master</th>
<th>Copy of the Order</th>
<th>Signature Of Post Master</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

The orders were written on the book itself during inspection and a copy was made and sent to the higher office as in those days mechanical aids for copying were not available. The Deputy Post master was also the inspecting postmaster as observed from the observations made by Duncan Davidson, PMG Bombay.
Bangalore GPO inspection report dated 1912 shows that the inspecting officers were evolving forms and procedures during inspections. The excerpts read as follows:

"In order to conform with the Rule 682 Vol. It will be best for the money order department to be supplied with an India Rubber Stamp made to the following design...."

The quote shows that the inspecting officer had drawn the design of a stamp to be manufactured and used. This design was drawn on the order book by the inspecting officer as an instruction to be followed. Inspecting officers were instructors and were guiding the postmasters about the rules to be followed.

Inspection reports once received have to be pasted to the order book and compliance report or action taken report on the observations made in the inspection report has to be submitted by the head of the office to the Divisional office, Regional office, Circle office, or Directorate as the case may be.

2.8 Inspection Software

In year 2000 Tamil Nadu Postal Circle developed a software to facilitate inspection of post offices by the inspecting officer. Once the master data of the post office was fed to the computer using the software, the drafting of inspection reports became very easy. The software helped to fill in the blanks. Delay in issue of reports was drastically
reduced as a result. Inspecting officers were supplied with laptops from 2010-11 which made the task of inspection and maintenance of Management Information System (MIS) much more easy.

2.9 Control by External Agencies

The Ministry of Finance has introduced a questionnaire in September 2011 to be used by the inspecting officers to enforce KYC (Know Your customer) norms and apply the Anti-Money Laundering Act to Postal Savings Bank investments. This was circulated to all inspecting officers by the Department. The National Savings Institute, Nagpur is authorised to inspect the post offices and check the enforcement of the Anti-Money Laundering Act.

2.10 Summary

Inspection system developed as a governance mechanism over a long period of time. It has helped in performance monitoring and evaluation. Department of Posts has a well-established inspection system. Codification of rules of the service delivery was done as early as 1854. The role of the Department of Posts has undergone a change from a monopoly player to a competitive service provider. Computerization and internet has empowered the Department to provide electronic services and improve monitoring. In spite of this, even today every Inspecting officer spends a substantial part of his time doing inspection of offices.
In the next chapter some theoretical issues relating to governance and inspection will be examined.