

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 539
TO BE ANSWERED ON: 29.11.2024

CLOSURE OF CSCs IN WEST BENGAL

539. SHRI SAMIK BHATTACHARYA:

Will the Minister of MINISTER OF ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government is aware of the fact that Government of West Bengal had issued orders to close down all Common Service Centres (CSCs) in the State;
- (b) if so, the reasons for such decision and current status of CSCs in West Bengal;
- (c) the numbers CSCs closed and the impact of these closures on employment in the State, including the number of job loss as a result of the closure; and
- (d) the steps being taken by Government to address the situation and ensure the continuity of digital services in West Bengal?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE FOR ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
(SHRI JITIN PRASADA)

(a) to (d): The Government of West Bengal vide notification dated October 12, 2020, bearing reference number as 185-P&AR /IT-03/ 2017, has notified that the Government of West Bengal will render all its public and para-statal services through the BSKs henceforth and no service shall be rendered through Common Service Centre (CSCs)/ Tathya Mitra Kendras (TMKs) from now onwards.

Common Services Centres (CSCs) are set up by Village Level Entrepreneurs (VLEs) and are an initiative of Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, Government of India through CSC e-Governance Services India Limited, a special purpose vehicle (SPV) set up for this purpose. The CSC initiative (i.e. CSC 2.0 project) aims to connect government to rural citizens by delivering services to citizens till Gram Panchayat level. Over 800 services are being delivered through CSCs, including government services, financial services and services related to Aadhaar, various social welfare schemes, education, telemedicine, travel bookings, utility payments, etc. (ref Annexure-I)

The CSCs are a major medium of outreach of Government Services to the last mile alongwith providing a source of livelihood to the rural masses. Besides financial independence, CSCs have instilled a sense of pride associated with entrepreneurship in the common people of the country. It is an instrument of change which is providing a structured platform for socially inclusive community participation for development.

However, the Government of West Bengal is not willing to avail its complete benefits and has issued notification affecting the delivery of services and functioning of CSCs within the state. This has led to deprivation of the benefits of State services being available through CSCs to the common people of West Bengal and may lead to sufferings for the common rural masses.

MeitY had received a Writ petition (WP) with WPA (P)/458/2023 Dr. SUKANTA MUJAMDAR v/s STATE OF WEST BENGAL & ORS, wherein the petition highlights the following:

“The Government of West Bengal introduced one parallel platform by the name of Bangla Sahayata Kendra (BSK) to perform a similar role as played by the CSC.

Immediately after the implementation of the said BSK, the Government of West Bengal issued one notification dated October 12, 2020, bearing reference number as 185-P&AR /IT-03/ 2017, wherein it was suggested that the Government of West Bengal will render all its public and para-statal services through the BSKs henceforth and no service shall be rendered through Common Service Centre (CSCs)/ Tathya Mitra Kendras (TMKs) from now onwards. After the notification dated October 12, 2020, was issued by the Government of West Bengal, all the CSCs were locked by the local gram panchayat and their men and agents and the VLEs were not allowed to open the said centres at any cost”.

MeitY had been made one of the respondents in the array of parties w.r.t above mentioned WPA. In this context, MeitY filed an affidavit in the Hon’ble High Court of Calcutta through Central Government Counsel wherein MeitY has extended its support and has stated that the State Government is duty bound under Article 257(1) to support the Union Government in implementing the CSC project. Hence, any hindrance in functioning of CSCs within the State of West Bengal is **unconstitutional**.

CSC e-Governance Services India Limited has apprised that as on 31.10.2024, a total of 26,264 CSCs (rural + Urban) are functional in West Bengal, out of which 23, 753 CSCs are functional at the Gram Panchayat (GP) level. District-wise number of functional CSCs in the States of West Bengal, as on 31.10.2024, are at **Annexure-II**.

CSC e-Governance Services India Limited has apprised that a total **5,983** CSCs have been closed due to various reasons (including operational and administrative challenges) during 2017 to October 2024, in the State of West Bengal. Further, CSC e-Governance Services India Limited apprised that each CSC, on average, generate employment **from three to four (3-4) persons**, and as a result, the closure of these CSCs has affected over **20,000 individuals in West Bengal**, leading to a loss of opportunities for earning and engagement. The status in respect of closed CSCs in West Bengal is at **Annexure-III**.

Details of services offered through CSCs

- | S.no. | Service |
|--------------|--|
| 1 | Aadhaar services |
| 1.1 | Aadhaar generation |
| 1.2 | E-KYC and authentication services |
| 1.3 | Aadhaar printing |
| 1.4 | Aadhaar updates (UCL) |
| 2 | Central Government to Citizen services |
| 2.1 | Ayushman Bharat Yojana related services |
| 2.2 | Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana related services |
| 2.3 | Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Scheme related services |
| 2.4 | Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maandhan Yojana related services |
| 2.5 | Pradhan Mantri Kisan Maandhan Yojana related services |
| 2.6 | Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi Yojana related services |
| 2.7 | Pradhan Mantri Merchant Pension Yojana related services |
| 2.8 | Pradhan Mantri Street Vendor's AtmaNirbhar related services |
| 2.9 | E-Shram registrations |
| 2.10 | Passport applications |
| 2.11 | Income-tax (Permanent Account Number) applications |
| 2.12 | Jeevan Pramaan related services |
| 2.13 | Udyam Jyoti Parichay related services |
| 2.14 | Submission of recruitment applications |
| 3 | State Government to Citizen services |
| 3.1 | E-District services |
| 3.2 | Public Distribution System related services |
| 3.3 | Labour registration services |
| 3.4 | E-Stamping related services |
| 3.5 | Vehicle registration and driving licenses applications |
| 3.6 | Recruitment services |
| 3.7 | Municipal services |
| 3.8 | Swasth Bima related services |
| 3.9 | Fasal Bima Yojana related services |
| 4 | Education services |
| 4.1 | Digital Literacy |
| 4.2 | Online courses of the National Institute of Electronics and Information Technology, National Institute of Open Schooling, Indira Gandhi National Open University, Indian Institutes of Technology and private universities |
| 4.3 | Various courses of the CSC Academy |
| 5 | Legal services |
| 5.1 | Tele-legal consultation services |

- 5.2 E-Courts related services
- 6 Financial inclusion services**
- 6.1 Banking services
- 6.2 DigiPay (Aadhaar Enabled Payment System) services
- 6.3 Insurance services
- 6.4 National Pension System and Atal Pension Yojana related services
- 6.5 FASTag services
- 6.6 Credit information company registrations
- 7 Tours and travels**
- 7.1 Indian Railways Catering and Tourism Corporation's services
- 8 Utility bill payment services**
- 8.1 Bharat Bill Payment System
- 8.2 Electricity bill payment
- 8.3 Water bill payment
- 8.4 Liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) booking
- 9 Healthcare services**
- 9.1 Medicine sale
- 10 Business to Citizen/ Business to Business services**
- 10.1 Grameen E-Store
- 10.2 Distribution of products
- 10.3 Agriculture services
- 10.4 Recharge of mobile phone and Direct To Home (DTH)
- 10.5 Income-tax return filing
- 11 Skill development**

Source: CSC e-Governance Service India Limited

Annexure-II

District-wise status of functional CSCs in West Bengal, as on 31.10.2024			
State Name	District Name	No. of functional CSCs (Urban+Rural)	No. of functional CSCs (Rural)
West Bengal	Alipurduar	432	422
West Bengal	Bankura	1,044	987
West Bengal	Birbhum	1,293	1,204
West Bengal	Coochbehar	1,116	1,050
West Bengal	Darjeeling	284	231
West Bengal	Dinajpur Dakshin	947	871
West Bengal	Dinajpur Uttar	1,257	1,177
West Bengal	Hooghly	1,117	968
West Bengal	Howrah	777	667
West Bengal	Jalpaiguri	618	557
West Bengal	Jhargram	258	249
West Bengal	Kalimpong	46	44
West Bengal	Kolkata	211	0
West Bengal	Maldah	1,671	1,612
West Bengal	Medinipur East	2,038	1,922
West Bengal	Medinipur West	1,854	1,741
West Bengal	Murshidabad	2,276	2,124
West Bengal	Nadia	1,906	1,724
West Bengal	North 24 Parganas	1,996	1,518
West Bengal	Paschim Bardhaman	322	234
West Bengal	Purba Bardhaman	1,384	1,246
West Bengal	Purulia	1,182	1,140
West Bengal	South 24 Parganas	2,235	2,065
		26,264	23,753

Source: CSC e-Governance Service India Limited

Annexure-III

Details of Closed CSC IDs in West Bengal from February, 2017 to October, 2024		
State	District	Total CSC ID Inactive
West Bengal	24 Paraganas North	623
West Bengal	24 Paraganas South	434
West Bengal	Alipurduar	101
West Bengal	Bankura	224
West Bengal	Birbhum	244
West Bengal	Coochbehar	234
West Bengal	Darjeeling	156
West Bengal	Dinajpur Dakshin	199
West Bengal	Dinajpur Uttar	244
West Bengal	Hooghly	353
West Bengal	Howrah	309
West Bengal	Jalpaiguri	160
West Bengal	Jhargram	11
West Bengal	Kalimpong	6
West Bengal	Kolkata	192
West Bengal	Maldah	400
West Bengal	Medinipur East	231
West Bengal	Medinipur West	283
West Bengal	Murshidabad	579
West Bengal	Nadia	427
West Bengal	Paschim Bardhaman	63
West Bengal	Purba Bardhaman	333
West Bengal	Purulia	177
Total		5,983

Source: CSC e-Governance Service India Limited
