



III Read the words given in the box below and place them in their appropriate context in the following passage.

slumped dunes defying
hamlets signals devoid

We stepped out of the vehicle at the end of the road. Immediately, our body sent 1. _____ that our decision to visit the sand 2. _____ in the afternoon was insane. We had passed a few 3. _____ on our way to the desert. We could not find even a single soul outdoors, 4. _____ the blazing sun. Even the camels were 5. _____ in the little shade offered by the khejri trees. In this remote place people relied on Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) to connect to the world as the area was 6. _____ of any other network service.



Reading for Meaning

I

Though we are just a click away from sending mail at present, can you imagine how it was before the internet became the way of life? The mail was dropped in the post box, then through the postal system finally it was delivered by the postman in our letter box. The areas beyond the last railhead and after the road crumbles into sand, *Gramin Dak Sewaks* still serve as the sole link between the oases of humanity in India's extremes and their faraway families.

Khetaram is a *Gramin Dak Sewak*. His left shoulder slumped from years of carrying a mailbag, he is the **sole** postman of Somarad Branch Post Office. For the last 15 years, he has been a trusted link between the people attached to this *Rajasthani* village post office and their families. Defying all elements of the harshest desert of India, the Thar, he is the lone face of the state who reaches the

sole: only

Kaveri

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far-flung **hamlets**, or *dhaanis*, of this remote area just 2.5 km short of the Indo-Pakistan border.

Some 120 km beyond the last railhead at Barmer, 50 km beyond the last phone and 10 km beyond where the Barmer–Chohtan road directionlessly crumbles into sand so soft that even bicycles can't **ply**, that's where Khetaram's footprints appear along sand beds and dunes. It is his bodily effort that ensures that the mail transferred from the mail train onto buses before being **hefted** onto his shoulders is delivered at the border, within 24 hours of dispatch from Jodhpur, around 330 km away.

Often, the impression of his footprints reveals the weight of his mailbag. Regulations **stipulate** that his load cannot exceed 28 kilos. But in the summers, when the sands sizzle under his **mojri**-clad feet, Khetaram says, "Even a single delivery is tiring, as I have to cover 20 km for it."

He delivers even on days when his body sends blazing signals that the temperature has crossed 50 degrees celsius, but is recorded as 49.9 degrees celsius, since 50 degrees celsius would mean a state holiday. Sometimes severe heat forces him to postpone deliveries till after sundown.

hamlets:
settlements

ply: move

hefted: lifted

stipulate:
specify

mojri:
traditional
footwear of
Rajasthan





On other days, his *khaki* turban and uniform are his only protection against the desert's furies, the scorching summer winds and swirling sandstorms which turn him into a walking sandman. "Water is too precious to waste on washing, so I can only wipe my body. When I finish, there is a sand dune at my feet every evening," he says.

Till 2001, Khetaram was known as a 'delivery agent', **operating** in rural areas devoid of schools and primary healthcare centres. Since then, India's three lakh plus delivery agents like Khetaram were accepted as *Gramin Dak Sewaks* (GDS), who constitute more than 50 per cent of the total workforce.

The frozen desert of Ladakh, the isles of Lakshadweep, and the **riverine** communities of the northeast are all GDS territories. "The role of GDS is invaluable, since they deliver in interior areas that are often **inaccessible** by any means besides foot," explains the Postmaster-General of Rajasthan Western Region.

operating:
working

riverine:
situated on
river bank

inaccessible:
unreachable

Unlike the British postal system set up in India to relay company *dak* between administrative centres, after independence, the mandate of India Post was to bring the entire population within the mailing **ambit**. Compared to 25,000 post offices in 1947, today we have about more than a lakh and a half post offices throughout the country.





Through the GDS, India Post has also been able to reach rural depositors, who entrust their monthly savings to the post office in their area. Every post office in the country has many operational accounts of the people which reflects their trust in the postal system.

ambit: range



Check Your Understanding

- I Khetaram needs to submit information about himself for getting an identity card. While reading the text, fill up the following information sheet for Khetaram.

Name	Khetaram
Position	
Employer	
Official address	
Mode of transport used	
Key responsibilities	 _____  _____  _____  _____

- II Discuss with your teacher.
1. Why do you think Khetaram has taken up this challenging job?
 2. How do you think Khetaram would feel about taking up this challenging task every day?

Carrier of
Words

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access:
opportunity

remitted:
sent as gift

scrap:
remove

dwel: to
stay on for
sometime

threshold:
entrance to a
home

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II

The essential criterion for GDS selection is **access** to another means of livelihood. They are required to work only five hours in a day and are also allowed to serve after the age of 60, till the age of 65. All this is so that they can be paid a salary to enable them to have an assured income. The salary of regular postmen gets revised as the other government employees. “Only by applying such different conditions could we retain a large workforce of *Gramin Dak Sewaks* to serve remote outposts,” explains a postmaster.

Khetaram’s appointment more than a decade ago gave him a new lease of life. “*Akaal* or famine is a way of life here. In a good year, I get one crop of *bajra*. That cannot feed my family of five. We would starve without this job,” he says. And for each family which resides in this arid land, survival is partly dependent on money orders **remitted** by a relative.

When writing about the social significance of the money order in his book, *Story of the Indian Post Office*, Mulk Raj Anand says, “In no other country a person in remote villages is so dependent on the post office for transmission of small sums of money ... It reflects the absolute confidence which most Indians place in the post office.” In fact, a few years ago, a scheme to **scrap** the GDS and transfer the job to patwaris (village record keepers) was proposed and summarily rejected. “We knew they would not be able to do the job,” says Budh Singh, a village elder.

Such aspects of trust make Khetaram a warmly received man. He can **dwel** on any **threshold**, read out letters and write replies in his slightly shaky hand.



Everyone feels comfortable asking him to read the letters and draft the replies.

“People are kind to me; the **BSF** always gives me a lift. Since their camp came here last year, when I distribute their *dak*, I get a cup of tea.” In the village, a piece of jaggery is all that can be offered when he brings news of a birth or weddings.

There is one letter delivery he **dreads**. The envelope with the right corner torn off, which signifies that the **missive** bears news of death. “*Ashubh Samachar* cannot be carried into the house,” says Khetaram. So, he stands outside, reads out the letter twice, then tears it to bits. “Bad news must be destroyed,” he mutters philosophically.

Today, after more than a decade and a half of bearing words across this desolate geography, Khetaram says his spine is strong. “I am grateful that as a *Gramin Dak Sewak*, I can serve the people even after 60.” He is waiting for the arrival of



BSF: Border Security Force

dreads: fears

missive: letter

Carrier of Words

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entail:
involve

striding:
walking with
long steps

phone lines, now only 50 km away, for then he might become *Gramin Sanchar Sewak*, when his duty will **entail** carrying a cell phone and the post, from home to home. “*Main tayyar hoon*” (I’m ready), he says, before **striding** off with his sack on his shoulder to deliver Panna Devi’s *dak* before sundown.

People like Khetaram are a part and parcel of our social fabric, and are a great support! Our salute to all the people like Khetaram!



Check Your Understanding

- I Complete the table given below with the situations given in Column 1 and the reasons in Column 2.

Column 1	Column 2
	When the temperature is recorded as 50 degrees celsius and above, a state holiday has to be declared.
Khetaram can dwell on any threshold.	
BSF always gave Khetaram a lift.	

- II Why was a piece of jaggery offered in the village when he brought news of a birth or weddings?
- III How would phone lines help Khetaram in his job?



Critical Reflection

- I Read the extracts given below and answer the questions.

1. “*Akaal or famine is a way of life here. In a good year, I get one crop of bajra. That cannot feed my family of five. We would starve without this job,*” he says.



And for each family which resides in this arid land, survival is partly dependent on money orders remitted by a relative.

- (i) Complete the sentence given below with an appropriate reason.

One crop of *bajra* makes a little difference for people like Khetaram because _____.

- (ii) Why did Khetaram term famine as ‘a way of life’?
(iii) Give one reason why Khetaram had to take up a job to help his family to survive.
(iv) Complete the analogy given below with a word from the extract.

Other families: Money orders:: Khetaram: _____

- (v) What would ‘a good year’ signify?

2. *There is one letter delivery he dreads. The envelope with the right corner torn off, which signifies that the missive bears news of death. “Ashubh Samachar cannot be carried into the house,” says Khetaram. So, he stands outside, reads out the letter twice, then tears it to bits. “Bad news must be destroyed,” he mutters philosophically.*

- (i) Choose the correct option for the following question.

Who could have torn the right corner of the envelope?

- A. Khetaram
B. Sender of the letter
C. Receiver of the letter
D. The postmaster

- (ii) Complete the sentence with an appropriate reason.

The most likely reason for Khetaram reading the letter twice is because _____.



(iii) What was Khetaram's philosophy regarding bad news, and how did he act upon it?

(iv) State whether the following sentence is true or false.

Khetaram's action of tearing the letter differed from his beliefs.

(v) Mention any one aspect of Khetaram's temperament which is revealed through this extract.

II Answer the following questions.

1. Justify the statement made by Postmaster-General, Rajasthan Western Region stating that the role of GDS is 'invaluable'.
2. How was the purpose of India Post different from that of the British postal system?
3. People trusted *Gramin Dak Sewaks*. Support this statement with any two instances from the text.
4. Infer the most likely reason that Khetaram was grateful to continue as GDS, even after the age of 60.
5. Explain why the author pays tribute to people like Khetaram.



Vocabulary and Structures in Context

I Study the phrases given in Column 1 and match them with their meanings in Column 2.

Column 1	Column 2
1. crumbles into sand	(i) get a chance to continue living
2. give a new lease of life	(ii) carrying letters to less populated areas
3. turn into a trickle before drying out	(iii) disappears in the desert
4. bearing words across this desolate geography	(iv) lessen gradually and then finally stop



Now, use the phrases from Column 1 in sentences of your own.

- II Identify examples of alliteration and metaphor in the extract given below.

Khetaram's khaki turban and uniform are his only protection against the desert's furies, the scorching summer winds and swirling sandstorms which turn him into a walking sandman.

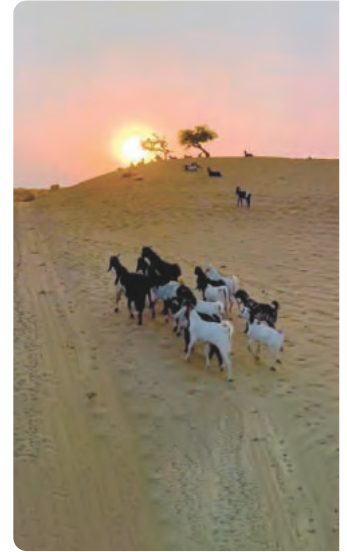
- III Match the words in Column 1 to what they suggest in Column 2 in the context of the chapter.

Column 1	Column 2
1. arid	(i) interest rate for the farmers
2. concessional	(ii) corner of the world
3. gaunt	(iii) farmland without much yield
4. remote	(iv) desert stretching far and wide
5. desolate	(v) farmer waiting for the rains

Now, use the words from Column 1 in sentences of your own.

- IV Read the underlined verbs in the sentences given in Column 1 and their functions in Column 2.

Column 1	Column 2
1. She <u>has found</u> her book.	(i) finished actions (past event — present result)
2. I <u>have</u> just <u>eaten</u> a mango.	(ii) recently completed action
3. <u>Have</u> you ever <u>seen</u> a play before?	(iii) life experiences



4. I <u>have finished</u> my project.	(iv) accomplishment
5. Ajay <u>has become</u> a good bowler in five years.	(v) changes over time
6. I <u>have seen</u> this book in the library many times.	(vi) multiple actions at different times
7. I <u>have studied</u> in this school for six years.	(vii) action completed in the past but has its impact in present

All the verbs in the sentences in Column 1 are in **present perfect tense**.

The structure is: has/have + past participle (third form of the verb).

Now, fill in the blanks by using the present perfect form of the verbs given in the brackets to complete the following paragraph.

1. I _____ (has/have) just _____ (get) a collection of postage stamps from my grandfather. He 2. _____ (collect) these stamps over a period of 20 years. I 3. _____ (study) most of the stamps in his collection and loved all of them. I 4. _____ (begin) my own collection of postage stamps. Grandfather 5. _____ truly _____ (inspire) me.

V Study the sentences given below.

1. GDS delivers the mail at the border.

When the subject does the action, the sentence is in active voice.

2. The mail is delivered by the GDS at the border.

This implies that the 'mail' receives the action 'deliver'.

This sentence is in passive voice because the subject is receiving the action.



3. Khetaram's nephew wants to join the GDS. He asks Khetaram how to prepare for it. Khetaram gives him the following advice.
- (i) You will need a lot of stamina for this job.
 - (ii) Practise reading clearly as some of the villagers will expect you to read out the letters.
 - (iii) Write words neatly as some villagers will ask you to draft replies.
 - (iv) Wear full-sleeved shirts and trousers to protect yourself from the heat.

Now, complete the following paragraph about the advice given by Khetaram. One example has been done for you.

To begin with, a lot of stamina will be needed for this job. Next, reading clearly A. _____, as you B. _____ to read out the letters by some of the villagers. Words C. _____ neatly as you D. _____ to draft replies by some villagers. Full sleeved-shirts and trousers E. _____ to protect yourself from the heat.



Listen and Respond

- I You will listen to a girl talking about an event. As you listen, fill in the blank with the suitable word from the brackets. (Transcript for teacher on page 272)

The speaker concluded her talk with a _____.
(suggestion/request/advice)

- II You will listen to the girl talking about the event again. As you listen, choose the correct option for the following questions.

1. What was the occasion that the speaker was talking about?
 - (i) Letter writing carnival
 - (ii) Philately day
 - (iii) Indian Postal Day



2. India Post is famous for having the most extensive network _____.
 - (i) in India
 - (ii) in the world
 - (iii) among design institutes
3. Letter writing is being revived as this art form has been _____.
 - (i) celebrated
 - (ii) appreciated
 - (iii) forgotten
4. Which of the following will be a part of the letter writing carnival?
 - (i) calligraphy and graphology
 - (ii) origami and designing
 - (iii) letter posting and philately
5. What will the postal department add to the event?
 - (i) interactive demonstrations
 - (ii) theatre and dance
 - (iii) workshop for letter writing



Speaking Activity

- I The postcard, inland letter, envelope, and money order form were engaged in a discussion on who the most important one was.



In groups of four, select one each and reason with each other logically. You may use the points for discussion given in Column 1 and the cues given in Column 2 to express your opinion.

Column 1 (Points for discussion)	Column 2 (Verbal cues to present opinion)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✿ utility ✿ cost effective ✿ privacy ✿ space to write ✿ possibility of enclosures 	<p>It seems to me that...</p> <p>Some people say that...</p> <p>I would like to point out that...</p> <p>I totally agree that...</p> <p>That's one way to look at it but...</p>



Writing Task

A condolence message communicates your feelings to someone whose relative or a person close to them has just passed away. It mentions how sorry you feel for the loss and your prayers for strength to the family members.

- I Khetaram saw a letter with a torn corner. It had news about Bhawar Singh's uncle passing away. Read the condolence message that Sawant Singh sent to his cousin as a reply to the letter.

16 July 20XX
 Dear Bhawar Bhai,
 I am deeply saddened to hear about the loss of Kunwar uncle. Please accept my condolences. I extend my deepest sympathy to you and your family in this hour of grief. May God give eternal peace to the departed soul and

courage to the family to bear the loss.

*Yours sincerely,
 Sawant Singh*



Bhawar Singh
 Village: Veer Nagar
 Jodhpur, Rajasthan

3 4 2 0 0 1

Carrier of Words



Now, on behalf of your parents draft an imaginary condolence message for your aunt on the recent passing away of her father.



Learning Beyond the Text

- I The unique 'Daakroom' carnival was conceptualised by the Ministry of Culture to re-introduce children and larger audiences to letter writing in innovative, creative, and engaging ways. It also hosted competitions and workshops around writing and post. The one-of-a-kind letter writing event, supported by India Post, Ministry of Culture, Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti is aimed to give a digital detox with the aim of reviving the art of letter writing in India.



Source: <https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1880828>

- II Did you know? The study of postage stamps and postal history is called philately. It is possible to be a philatelist without owning any stamps. The stamps that you study may be rare ones and found only in museums.



1. Study the postage stamps given below and discuss who or what they depict.



2. Work in groups of five. Find information about stamps on the following categories and note details as directed.
 - ✿ personalities: name and the field they belong to
 - ✿ celebrations: festivals/national events—name and significance
 - ✿ centenaries: name of person/occasion and significance
 - ✿ nature: name and significance
 - ✿ our heritage: monuments/music/dance—name and significance

Now, prepare a class board on 'Philately-Upholding Our Heritage' with your findings.

III In the past, telegram was a mode of fast communication, commonly used to quickly send short and specific messages, such as greetings and condolences. Its pricing structure was based on the number of words to be transmitted, and therefore, needed to be precise. The following form was used for sending such telegrams.

INLAND TELEGRAM		FOR POSTAGE STAMPS		Charge	Counter Number
<small>Prefix</small>	<small>Number in</small>	<small>For Conditions of acceptance, see over</small>		<small>Chargeable Words</small>
		<small>SERVICE INSTRUCTIONS</small>		<small>Actual Words</small>	To:.....
		ADDRESS			
<small>If you wish to pay for a reply insert R.P. here</small>					

