

CHAPTER X: MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE

10.1 Non-deployment of surplus staff

Faulty estimation and sanction of posts without actual requirement by Director General of Health Services, New Delhi and failure of Director, Laboratory to take up the matter with Director General of Health Services for deployment of surplus staff resulted in unfruitful expenditure of Rs 38.97 lakh.

Government of India sanctioned in October 1986 the creation of one post of Technical Supervisor and one post of Laboratory Assistant for Research and Development (R&D) Unit of BCG Vaccine Laboratory, Chennai. The post of Technical Supervisor was operated from 23 October 1987 to 04 November 1996 and the post of Laboratory Assistant was operated from 03 November 1988 to 26 April 2000. A scrutiny of the relevant records maintained in the Laboratory, however, disclosed that the R&D Unit was not at all set up in the Laboratory. The Director also reported in January 1999 to the Director General of Health Services (DGHS), New Delhi that it would be inappropriate for a manufacturing institution, especially the one dealing with live organisms to have any R&D unit inside the production premises. Yet, DGHS did not take appropriate action to abolish posts. Thus, the expenditure of Rs 7.97 lakh on these two posts was unfruitful.

Director of the Laboratory proposed in July 1988, the creation of nine posts, as detailed in the following table, so as to take over the maintenance of Central Air Conditioning Plant from the CPWD. The proposal was based on the opinion of a UNICEF expert, with a view to have a proper check on the supply of filtered air and humidity control which would go a long way in bringing down the loss in production. The Ministry sanctioned the creation of nine posts in September 1989. These posts were filled up and continued to be in operation, as indicated in the table.

Sl. No.	Name of the post	Number	Date of filling up of posts	Date upto which operated
1.	Electrical and Mechanical Supervisor	1	25.09.1989	Till date
2.	Technician	2	18.01.1992 and 12.02.1993	One post operated till date. One post became vacant with effect from 08.03.1999.
3.	Mechanic	2	26.10.1989 and 15.11.1989	Till date
4.	Assistant Mechanic	2	18.11.1989 and 25.11.1989	One post is operated till date. One post became vacant from 01.03.1999.
5.	Khalasi (Workshop)	2	20.11.1989 and 02.07.1990	Till date

However, the work of maintenance of Central Air Conditioning Plant continues to be performed by the CPWD till date. While the Electrical and Mechanical Supervisor was being utilised for sealing and freeze-drying work in the production of vaccine, the incumbents of the remaining eight post were deployed to share the work of staff in other similar posts. Despite this, the Ministry converted in July 1998, seven of the nine posts into permanent ones.

The Director of the Laboratory reported to the DGHS in January 1999 that all the posts created for maintenance of Central Air Conditioning Plant, except the Electrical and Mechanical supervisor, were surplus and suggested that they should be re-deployed. He also stated that the Refrigeration Engineer of the Laboratory had confirmed that the maintenance of the Air Conditioning Plant by the CPWD was satisfactory. DGHS has not taken any action to abolish the surplus posts or to re-deploy the incumbent staff so far. The expenditure of Rs 31 lakh as of September 2000 on salaries of the staff employed on these posts remained unfruitful.

Thus due to non-deployment of surplus staff, there was unfruitful expenditure of Rs 38.97 lakh on salaries.

Audit reported the matter to the Ministry in May 2000; who have not replied as of February 2001.

10.2 Denial of facility of anti-pollution incinerator

National Institute of Communicable Diseases planned in August 1985 the procurement of anti-pollution incinerator for safe disposal of hospital waste. Ministry sanctioned Rs 4.5 lakh to National Institute of Communicable Diseases for its procurement in January 1987, but it could be procured only in March 1996 and is yet to be commissioned.

National Institute of Communicable Diseases (NICD) functions as a national centre of excellence for disease control, besides imparting training and conducting research in various aspects of communicable diseases.

With a view to providing safe disposal of waste, infectious material and minimising damages to the environment, the Director, NICD decided in August 1985 to install a new incinerator in place of the old incinerator and sent a proposal to Director General, Health Services (DGHS) in February 1986 for purchase of an anti-pollution incinerator costing Rs 4.5 lakh. The Ministry issued its expenditure sanction and administrative approval in January 1987. NICD placed supply order on Thermax Ltd. in October 1990 through Director General, Supplies & Disposal (DGSD) after 44 months of expenditure sanction. But when DGSD asked them in September 1991 for general specifications suiting indenter's requirements, NICD failed to furnish these, which ultimately led to cancellation of order in June 1992.

Instead of furnishing the specifications or placing a fresh indent on DGSD, NICD took up the matter with the Executive Engineer (E), Central Electrical Division No. IV of the Central Public Works Department (CPWD) and requested him in December 1993 for procurement and installation of anti-pollution incinerator by giving its specifications. The Superintending Engineer (Elect), Delhi Central Electrical Circle-IV, CPWD furnished preliminary estimate of Rs 34.38 lakh in December 1994 including cost of incinerator: Rs 19.75 lakh, electrical works: Rs 1.30 lakh, civil works: Rs 6.50 lakh, cost of foundation and accessories: Rs 2.25 lakh and contingent and departmental charges: Rs 4.58 lakh. The entire amount of Rs 34.38 lakh was paid in advance to the Executive Engineer, Electrical Division No. IV, CPWD, in March 1995. Installation and commissioning of incinerator including civil and electrical works related thereto was to be completed before the end of June 1995.

Executive Engineer, Electrical Division IV, CPWD purchased the incinerator in March 1996 and stored it in the NICD's campus. After the receipt of incinerator, Senior Architect of DGHS proposed in August 1996, a new site for its installation which was accepted by NICD in September 1996. The building plan was sent to Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) in October 1996 for clearance. As the chimney of incinerator was 30 meter high, the matter was also taken up with the Director General, Airport Authority of India for obtaining No-Objection Certificate. The clearances from various departments/agencies viz. MCD, Delhi Vidyut Board, Delhi Urban Arts Commission, Airport Authority of India, Delhi Metro Rail Corporation etc.

were obtained by August 1998 only. An expenditure of Rs 14.63 lakh was incurred on civil and electrical works for installation as of May 2000 but the incinerator is still not commissioned for want of approval/clearance from the Delhi Pollution Control Board.

Thus, improper planning by Director, NICD viz., purchase of incinerator before finalising and preparing site for its installation led to the equipment lying idle. Besides NICD continued to throw waste, infectious material/dead bodies of the animals used in experiments/research work in the dustbins of MCD causing serious threat to the environment and incalculable health hazard to the public.

Audit reported the matter to the Ministry in August 1999; who have not replied as of February 2001.

10.3 Follow up on Audit Reports

Despite repeated instructions/recommendations of the Public Accounts Committee, the Ministry did not submit remedial/corrective Action Taken Notes on four Audit Paragraphs.

Review of outstanding Action Taken Notes (ATNs) on paragraphs included in the Reports of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India - Union Government (Civil) revealed that the Ministry has failed to submit ATN in respect of four Paragraphs included in the Audit Reports up to and for the year ended March 1999 as detailed below:

Number and year of the Audit Report	Paragraph number	Subject
2 of 1998	7.2	Loss due to expired medicines
2 of 1999	6.4	Non-recovery of Rs 31.75 lakh
2 of 1999	6.5	Recovery at the instance of Audit
2 of 2000	11.2	Loss on account of expired medicines

Audit reported the matter to the Ministry in December 2000; who have confirmed the position in February 2001.