

CHAPTER X : MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT

National Institute for the Visually Handicapped, Dehradun

10 Blocking of funds

Non-construction of administrative block and staff quarters despite availability of funds deprived the intended facilities to the staff of the Regional Centre besides blocking of Rs 35.71 lakh.

With a view to accommodating the officers and staff of the Regional Centre of National Institute for the Visually Handicapped (NIVH), Executive Council of NIVH, Dehradun, approved (June 1992), the construction of office complex consisting of administrative block, vocational training block, hostel block and staff quarters for its Regional Centre, Chennai at an estimated cost of Rs 1.23 crore prepared by Chief Engineer (Building), Public Works Department (PWD) Tamil Nadu for the year 1992-93. The detailed estimates for each building were prepared between January 1994 and July 1998 for the total cost of Rs 1.71 crore. The construction work was entrusted to PWD of Tamil Nadu. Out of Composite Grants-in-aid received by the Institute from the Ministry a sum of Rs 100.65 lakh was paid to State PWD for the construction of office complex during the period from March 1992 to March 1995.

Test-check (July 2000) of records of NIVH, Dehradun and subsequent information collected (July-October 2001) revealed that the construction work was started in the year 1992 in a phased manner keeping in view the availability of the funds. PWD spent Rs 64.94 lakh upto August 1996 on construction of vocational training centre and hostel block whereas the balance amount of Rs 35.71 lakh for construction of administrative block and staff quarters was lying unutilised with it as of October 2001 due to ban on construction activities imposed (1995) by Tamil Nadu Government owing to the reason that the campus of NIVH was adjacent to a high security prison. Though, the ban on construction works was lifted by the Tamil Nadu Government (January 1998), no construction work was restarted as of October 2001.

In reply to the audit query, NIVH stated that sanction for revised cost of project was being obtained from higher authorities to enable the State PWD to start the work. Reply is not tenable as non-start of the work even after a lapse of period of more than 3 ½ years since the lifting of ban on construction activities indicated lack of seriousness of NIVH towards the objective of the

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project, besides, blockage of Rs 35.71 lakh with State PWD without serving any meaningful purpose.

The matter was referred to the Ministry in August 2001; their reply was awaited as of January 2002.