

**CHAPTER XVIII : MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND CHILD
DEVELOPMENT**

18.1 Blocking of funds

Release of grant amounting to ₹ one crore during 2002-03 and 2007-08 to the state Government in violation of the provisions of the Swadhar Scheme remained unfruitful as targeted beneficiaries of the State were deprived of the facilities for about six years.

The Ministry of Women and Child Development launched a Swadhar Scheme in 2002 with the primary objective of providing shelter, food, clothing and care to the marginalized women/girls living in difficult circumstances and without any social and economic support. Under this scheme, the Ministry provides assistance to Women and Child Welfare Department of State Governments, Women Development Corporations, Urban Local Bodies, reputed Public/Private Trust or Voluntary organizations for various components like construction of building for the centre, rent for the shelter, management of the centre etc. For construction of shelter homes, the Ministry provides 75 per cent of the construction cost subject to the ceiling of ₹ 25,000 per inmate. It releases the approved grant in three instalments, 50 per cent of the approved assistance before starting the work, 40 per cent on completion of civil works and balance 10 per cent after construction is over. As per the conditions of scheme, construction of the building is to be completed within 18 months from the date of release of first instalment of the grant.

Government of Maharashtra (the State Government) submitted a proposal (June 2002) for a project costing ₹ 6.05 crore, which included construction of a 400 bedded shelter home at a cost of ₹ 4.75 crore and the remaining amount for other components¹ of the scheme. Before sanctioning the project, the Ministry had asked (October 2002) the State Government to confirm to bear the construction cost beyond ₹ 100 lakh permissible as per the schematic norms for 400 inmates. The Ministry accorded its approval (December 2002) for the project on the stipulation that the State Government would commence the project in a phased manner in accordance with the availability of funds and would commence the construction of shelter home for 100 girls within a period of six months as the first phase and complete the overall project within 18 months' time.

¹ Provision of furniture, beds, food, contingencies, cost of administration etc.

Examination in audit disclosed that the Ministry did not ensure hindrance free site before releasing the grant of ₹ 50 lakh as required under the scheme guidelines which stipulate that grants shall be released upon production of non-encumbrance certificate of the land. At the time of release of grant the requisite land was encroached and consequently, the State Government could not commence the construction of shelter homes till September 2005. As a result the ₹ 50.00 lakh released in January 2003 remained blocked with the State Government for more than two years. Again the Ministry released second instalment of ₹ 40.00 lakh in January 2007 without ensuring completion of civil works and similarly final instalment of ₹ 10.00 lakh was released (August 2007) without the completion of the construction of shelter homes in totality.

The Ministry while admitting the delay stated that the first phase of the project with a capacity of 200 women had been completed at a cost of ₹ 2.75 crore and the PWD, Maharashtra would be handing over the constructed building in July/August 2010.

The fact remains that the release of grant amounting to ₹ one crore in violation of the provisions of the scheme remained unfruitful for about six years as the targeted beneficiaries of the state were deprived of the facility which was to be provided by July 2004. Moreover, while the intended objectives had been only partially achieved, the Ministry had released the entire admissible grant for construction of building which targeted for providing home to 400 beneficiaries.

The matter was referred to the Ministry in August 2010; their reply was awaited as of March 2011.