

CHAPTER-II

GENERAL SECTOR

CHAPTER II : GENERAL SECTOR

2.1 Introduction

This Chapter of the Audit Report for the year ended 31 March 2012 deals with the findings on audit of the State Government units under General Sector¹.

The names of the major State Government departments and the net budget provisions and expenditure of the State Government under General Sector during the year 2011-12 are given in the table below:

Table 2.1.1

(₹ in crore)

Sl. No.	Name of Department	Budget provision (Original and Supplementary)	Expenditure
1.	Assembly Secretariat	46.17	45.02
2.	Personnel Department	6.97	5.60
3.	Chief Minister's Secretariat and Secretariat Administration	99.21	82.23
4.	Law	13.16	9.36
5.	Election	12.69	11.60
6.	Finance	568.34	700.71
7.	Personnel, including Passport Political and Chief Minister's Secretariat	20.22	22.04
8.	Home (Police)/(Jail)	440.17	430.66
9.	Printing & Stationery	19.90	19.21
10.	General Administration	21.14	19.49
11.	District Council Affairs	251.90	178.41
12.	Planning	209.93	206.47
13.	Public Relation	17.31	15.99
	Total	1727.11	1746.79

Source: Budget Estimates, Appropriation Acts and Appropriation Accounts

Besides the above, the Central Government has been transferring a sizeable amount of funds directly to the Implementing agencies under the General Sector to different departments of the State Government. The major transfers for implementation of programmes of the Central Government are detailed below:

Table 2.1.2

(₹ in crore)

Name of the Department	Name of the Scheme/Programme	Implementing Agency	Amount of funds transferred during the year
Planning	Economic Census	Deputy Commissioners, East Khasi Hills and West Garo Hills	15.50
Home (Police)	Directorate of Forensic Science CFSs and GEsQD	Meghalaya Police Information Technology Society	0.49
	Crime and Criminal Tracking Network and system		0.74

Source: Central Plan Scheme Monitoring System of CGA website

¹ Categorized considering the activities of the departments concerned.

2.1.1 Planning and conduct of Audit

Audit process starts with the assessment of risks faced by various departments of Government based on expenditure incurred, criticality/complexity of activities, level of delegated financial powers, assessment of overall internal controls and concerns. The audits were conducted during 2011-12 involving expenditure of ₹ 379.09 crore (including expenditure pertaining to previous years audited during the year) of the State Government under General Sector. The report contains four Transaction Audit Paragraphs.

After completion of audit of each unit, Inspection Reports containing audit findings are issued to the heads of the departments. The departments are requested to furnish replies to the audit findings within one month of receipt of the Inspection Reports. Whenever replies are received, audit findings are either settled or further action for compliance is advised. The important audit observations arising out of these Inspection Reports are processed for inclusion in the Audit Reports, which are submitted to the Governor of State under Article 151 of the Constitution of India.

The major observations under General Sector detected in audit during the year 2011-12 are given below.

MEGHALAYA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

2.2 Excess expenditure due to award of work in gross violation of codal provisions

The Meghalaya Legislative Assembly Secretariat incurred excess expenditure of ₹ 1.76 crore due to execution of painting works flouting the provisions of Financial Rules. Besides, excess payment of ₹ 14.35 lakh was made to the Contractor due to admission of erroneous claim.

The Meghalaya Financial Rules (MFR) prescribes that for every work, other than petty works, initiated by or required by any department, it is necessary to obtain administrative approval before undertaking the work. It also provides that the departments concerned are required to follow the schedule of standard cost laid down by the PWD. When the work is to be done by a contractor sealed tenders should be invited and a deed of contract should be executed and payments for works done by a contractor should only be made on the basis of measurements recorded in the measurement book

A mention was made in the Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India for the year ended 31 March 2009 (Civil and Commercial) (Government of Meghalaya) that the Meghalaya Legislative Assembly Secretariat (the Assembly Secretariat) allotted works regarding painting of four building belonging to the Assembly Secretariat without observing any provision of the MFR and also without ascertaining the competitive rates to safeguard the financial interest of the State resulted in excess expenditure. In the *suo motu* Action Taken Note the Assembly Secretariat stated (June 2010) that *‘However, in view of what has appeared in the CAG Report the office will be more particular in future. In fact, the Assembly Secretariat has now engaged M/s Meghalaya Government Construction Corporation Ltd., (M/s MGCC) to follow the normal procedure like preparing estimates, scrutinise bills submitted by Contractors/Suppliers for all works, repairs and supplies relating to the Assembly Secretariat’.*

The accounts and related records of the Assembly Secretariat for the period September 2008 to November 2011 were audited in November/December 2011. It was noticed that the Assembly Secretariat made final payments to contractors in respect of five works during this period. It was observed that all the five works were arbitrarily awarded by the Assembly Secretariat to the contractors without inviting tenders; no detailed estimates were prepared nor ‘administrative sanction’ obtained; the work orders to the contractors did not indicate the quantity of work to be done, the rate and estimated value of the work to be done; scheduled date of commencement and completion; etc.; Further, the payments were made to the contractors without the Assembly Secretariat even once verifying or measuring the work carried out by them. Apart from violation of codal provisions excess payment to the contractors due to

payment at higher rates and passing of incorrect bill that were noticed in audit are discussed below:

2.2.1 Excess expenditure due to payment at higher rates

The quantity of painting work executed and the rates paid by the Assembly Secretariat for three works are given in **Table 2.2.1** below.

Table 2.2.1

Name of the contractor	Description of work	Date of award Date of payment	Quantum of painting work executed (in sq ft)	Rate at which paid (₹ per sq ft)	Amount paid to contractor (₹ in lakh)	Amount payable @ ₹ 11.06 per sq ft. (PWD highest rate)	Difference (₹ in lakh)
M/s G.M. Enterprise	Painting of walls of Speaker's residence at Laitumkhrach (inside and outside)	December 2007 December 2008 - October 2009	19,075	185	35.29	2.11	33.18
M/s G.M. Enterprise	(i) Painting of walls of Assembly Secretariat (inside and outside)	January 2008 December 2008. February 2009 and November 2009	55,746	200	111.49	6.17	105.32
	(ii) Painting of grills inside MLA Hostel		1,231	250	3.08	0.13	2.95
M/s Banalari Khongwar	Painting inside and outside of Grade-IV quarters	January 2008 January 2009	12,000	300	36.00	1.33	34.67
Total							176.12

From the above table it could be seen that the rates paid by the Assembly Secretariat for painting ranged from ₹ 185 to ₹ 300 per sq.ft. whereas as per the schedule of rates (SOR) 2007-08 (year in which the three said works were awarded) of the State Public Works Department (PWD), the highest rate for painting was ₹ 11.06 per sq.ft. Computed with reference to this rate, the Assembly Secretariat incurred an extra expenditure of ₹ 1.76 crore:

2.2.2 Excess payment on an incorrect bill

The contractor (M/s N.R. Enterprise) was awarded (July 2007) work of 'Repairing the roof of a quarter'. Audit observed that based on the contractor's final bill submitted (August 2007) for ₹ 16.60 lakh along with a statement of expenditure showing the items and quantity of work executed and amount claimed by him, payment for ₹ 16.60 lakh was made to the contractor by the Assembly Secretariat. Details of quantity of work executed, rate and amount claimed by the contractor for different items of works executed by him is as reproduced below:

Table 2.2.2

Sl. No.	Item of work executed	Quantity executed (in sq m)	Rate (in ₹)	Amount claimed and paid (in ₹)	Actual amount admissible at the rate
1.	Cost of 4 mm CGI sheets (TATA make), fixing with nuts, washers, screws, etc.	200	520	93,600	1,04,000
2.	Providing dressed wood/rebated wood of sizes 2" X 3" and 3" X 4"	130	520	19,500	67,600
3.	Cost of construction, fitting, labour and carrying charges, loading/unloading of materials, etc.	-	-	52,900	52,900
Total amount claimed				16,60,000	2,24,500

A perusal of the above table, indicates that there were calculation mistakes (shaded in red) while arriving at the amount payable. The correct amount admissible works out to ₹ 2.25 lakh instead of ₹ 16.60 lakh claimed by the contractor and paid to him, resulting in an excess payment of ₹ 14.35 lakh.

Audit observed that the Hostel Superintendent, Assembly Secretariat vaguely noted on file that the *“the contractor it seems has billed confusingly”* and the Deputy Secretary, Assembly Secretariat while submitting the file to the Secretary, Assembly Secretariat noted that the bill was submitted by the contractor *“confusingly”* and *“therefore the bill cannot be passed”*. Despite these observations, the Secretary, Assembly Secretariat approved the payment of ₹ 16.60 lakh to the contractor.

While admitting the facts, the Secretary, Assembly Secretariat stated (September 2012) that the Works and Accounts wings of the Assembly Secretariat had been strengthened to avoid recurrence of such irregularities and the firm M/s N.R. Enterprise had agreed to refund the excess payment of ₹ 14.35 lakh in three instalments and the first instalment of which (₹ five lakh) had since been refunded in September 2012.

Audit strongly feels that as in the case of all other government departments/agencies which do not have their own in-house engineering wing, the Assembly Secretariat should invariably get all works executed through the State PWD or other Public Sector Agencies viz., Meghalaya Government Construction Corporation Ltd., National Buildings Construction Corporation Ltd., etc.

2.3 Irregularities in purchase of carpets

Purchase of carpets at exorbitant rates in violation of prescribed norms and failure to ascertain the reasonableness of rates offered by the suppliers resulted in extra expenditure of ₹ 32.24 lakh. Besides, excess payment of ₹ 13.60 lakh was made to the suppliers.

Rule 8(1) of the Meghalaya Preferential Stores Purchase (MPSP) Rules, 1990 stipulates that “*open tenders/quotations are to be invited for purchase of any item of stores*”. Further, for making payment to any person for sale or supply, Section 106 of the Meghalaya Value Added Tax (MVAT) Act, 2003 (as amended in 2005) stipulates that the person making payment on behalf of a public authority for any sale or supply, is required to deduct VAT at source while making such payment.

Scrutiny (November-December 2011) of records of the Secretary, Meghalaya Legislative Assembly Secretariat (Assembly Secretariat) revealed the following irregularities:

2.3.1 Carpets purchased at exorbitant rates resulting in extra expenditure

The Assembly Secretariat invited (April 2009) tenders to purchase (brand and quality of carpet to be supplied was not specified) of approximately 1,715 square metre of carpet for the old Assembly Secretariat office building. Three firms, all offering to supply *Unitex* brand carpet of *Sonata* quality, responded. The rate of ₹ 2,200 per square metre quoted by a Shillong-based firm M/s Hanumanbux Umadutt was the lowest. In January 2010, however, the Assembly Secretariat issued the supply order to supply *Unitex* (*Sonata*) carpet to a Balat-based firm M/s P.B. Construction (Supplier ‘A’) who had not even participated in the bidding process. Further, the supply order did not mention the floor area and rate at which the carpet to be supplied. Supplier ‘A’ in May 2010 billed the Assembly Secretariat for 1714.69 square metre of *Unitex* (*Sonata*) carpet at ₹ 2,200 per square metre (including fitting, fixing and VAT).

Again, the Assembly Secretariat invited (June 2011) tenders to purchase carpet (brand and quality of carpet to be supplied was not specified) of approximately 855.50 square metre for the new Assembly Secretariat office building. Three firms, all offering to supply *Jutex* brand carpet of *Melody* quality, responded. Again, the rate of ₹ 1,850 per square metre offered by M/s Hanumanbux Umadutt was the lowest. The Assembly Secretariat, however, in the same month issued the supply order to Smti. Pelcy Snaitang of Balat (Supplier ‘B’), who had not even participated in the bidding process, to supply *Jutex* carpet (quality was not mentioned) at the rate of ₹ 1,850 per square metre (including fitting, fixing and VAT).

Audit noticed that:

- The requirement of Rule 8(1) of the MPSP Rules, 1990 was violated as on both occasions the notice inviting tenders for supply of carpets was only

posted on the Assembly Secretariat notice board and hence not adequately publicised.

- The Assembly Secretariat did not make any attempt to compare the rates offered by the suppliers in response to tenders with the manufacturer's rates or prevalent market rates to safeguard the public interest especially in view of the fact that the rates (₹ 2,200 and ₹ 1,850 per square metre) offered by the suppliers in April 2009 and June 2011 were three to four times higher than the rates (₹ 612 and ₹ 689 per square metre) at which carpets were purchased by the Assembly Secretariat in January 2009 and March 2010 respectively.

To ascertain the reasonableness of the rates of 'Unitex (Sonata)' and 'Jutex' carpets procured by the Assembly Secretariat in April 2009 and June 2011, Audit in June 2012 obtained the maximum retail price from the manufacturer/the local firm. While the rates quoted by the manufacturer for Unitex-Sonata carpet was ₹ 656 per square metre (excluding 10 per cent fitting and fixing charges and 13.5 per cent VAT on total cost inclusive of fitting and fixing charges), the rate obtained from the local firm for Jutex carpet was ₹ 850 per square metre (all inclusive). The rates at which these were purchased by the Assembly Secretariat (Unitex-Sonata carpet: ₹ 2,200 per square metre; Jutex carpet: ₹ 1,850 per square metre) were two and three times higher, as a result of which an extra expenditure of ₹ 32.24 lakh was incurred as below:

Table 2.3.1

Name of supplier	Brand of carpet	Quantity supplied (sq m)	Rate (₹ / sq m)	Amount due (₹ in lakh)	Market rate (₹ / sq m)	Cost of carpet at market rate (₹ in lakh)	Extra expenditure (₹ in lakh)
M/s. P.B. Construction	Unitex (Sonata)	1714.69	2,200	37.72	819.02	14.04	23.68
Smti. Peley Snaitang	Jutex	855.50	1,850	15.83	850.00	7.27	8.56
Total							32.24

Source: Payment vouchers, rates obtained from manufacturer and a local firm.

2.3.2 Excess payment to the suppliers and non-deduction of VAT at source

Section 106 of the MVAT Act, stipulates that the person making payments on behalf of a public authority for any sale or supply, is required to deduct VAT at the applicable rate at source while making such payment. The orders placed by the Assembly Secretariat with both Supplier 'A' and 'B' for supply of Unitex (Sonata) carpet and Jutex carpet at ₹ 2,200 and ₹ 1,850 per square metre respectively clearly specified that these rates were inclusive of VAT, therefore, it was incumbent on the Assembly Secretariat to deduct VAT at the applicable rate of 13.50 per cent, from the payments to be made by them.

Audit noticed that the Hon'ble Speaker's approval was obtained (September 2011) to make payments to the two suppliers after deducting the VAT as applicable in each case. Accordingly, the Secretary, Assembly Secretariat on 07 September 2011 issued orders to pay ₹ 32.63 lakh and ₹ 13.69 lakh to Supplier 'A' and 'B' respectively.

However, the Secretary, Assembly Secretariat on 14 September 2011 and 15 November 2011 issued fresh orders superseding the earlier orders and authorised the payment of ₹ 42.82 lakh to Supplier 'A' and ₹ 17.96 lakh to Supplier 'B'. Reasons for issue of fresh orders enhancing the amount payable were not on record. Thus, not only VAT was not deducted but oddly, an extra 13.50 *per cent* was added to the two suppliers' bills and paid to them, resulting in excess payment of ₹ 13.60 lakh as detailed below:

Table 2.3.2

(₹ in lakh)

Name of the Supplier	Gross amount payable (inclusive of VAT @ 13.5%)	Amount of VAT to be deducted	Net amount payable	Amount actually paid (paid in)	Excess payment
M/s P.B. Construction	37.72 (@ ₹ 2,200 per sq m for 1714.69 sq m)	4.49	33.23	42.82 (November 2011)	9.59
Smti. Pelcy Snaitang	15.83 (@ ₹ 1,850 per sq m for 855.50 sq m)	1.88	13.95	17.96 (September 2011)	4.01
Total					13.60

The Secretary, Assembly Secretariat in September 2012 stated that as per usual practice quotations were called for and the lowest rate was approved. Being the local suppliers who were all along carrying out other supply orders with the Assembly Secretariat, supply orders for the carpets were placed with them at approved rates. The Secretary also informed that ₹ 7.23 lakh had since been recovered from the supplier as VAT.

The reply is an attempt of the Assembly Secretariat to justify act of irregularity committed by it, which has caused exchequer extra financial burden. The Assembly Secretariat cannot absolve themselves of its failure to ascertain the reasonableness of the rates offered before purchases were made especially in view of the fact that during same period it has purchased carpets on two occasions at much lower rates. Besides, issuing supply orders to the supplier who had not even participated in the bidding process was highly irregular and in violation of all established principles of public procurement. Further, although ₹ 7.23 lakh had stated to have been recovered as VAT, an additional ₹ 6.37 lakh was still recoverable from the suppliers on account of excess payment made to them as worked out by Audit in the earlier table.

2.4 Irregularity in award of work and payment made to the firm without verifying work carried out

The Meghalaya Legislative Assembly Secretariat issued a work order to construct the Assembly Building at Mawdiangdiang to a firm in contravention of the terms of the tender and made a payment of ₹ 2.14 crore without verifying work carried out.

Following the gutting by fire of the Meghalaya Legislative Assembly Building (Assembly Building) at Khyndailad, Shillong in January 2001, a High Powered

Committee (HPC) of the Meghalaya Legislative Assembly decided (March 2001) that the facility be re-constructed at the same site.

The facts emerging out of the scrutiny of records relating to the construction of the new Assembly building are discussed in the succeeding paragraphs:

The Meghalaya Legislative Assembly Secretariat (Assembly Secretariat) in July 2001 invited tenders for “*Consultancy for Re-construction of Meghalaya Legislative Assembly*”. The scope of the consultancy work *inter alia* included “*detailed survey of the building site and approaches, preparation of master plan, site plan, layout plan, architectural, structural and all related drawings and submission of soil testing report, etc.*”. Seven parties bid for the consultancy out of which the HPC in June 2002, selected a Shillong-based firm M/s Caroline C. Pala (hereinafter referred to as the *firm*). In October 2002, the Assembly Secretariat issued a ‘Preliminary Work Order’ (PWO) to the firm to carry out the consultancy assignment. However, in December 2002, the Assembly Secretariat issued another PWO to the firm to construct the Assembly Building at Khyndailad at a cost of ₹ 26.62 crore and to be completed within three years. This was followed by a ‘Final Work Order’ (FWO) issued to the firm in January 2003.

The action of the Assembly Secretariat to award the construction of the Assembly Building to the firm was irregular as the tender notice issued by the Assembly Secretariat was only for consultancy work for which the firm accordingly had bid. Further, the basis on which the estimate of ₹ 26.62 crore was arrived at was not produced to Audit.

In August 2004, the HPC changed the site of the Assembly Building from Khyndailad to Mawdiangdiang. Thereafter, on 12 November 2004, the Assembly Secretariat issued another FWO to the firm to construct the building at the new site at a cost of ₹ 20.55 crore [rough preliminary estimate prepared by the State’s Public Works Department (PWD)] with the stipulation that the work was to start in consultation with the Chief Engineer (CE), PWD and should be completed within 31 March 2007. An agreement was also signed during the same month between the Assembly Secretariat and the firm stipulating that the works were to be executed as per programme approved by the Executive Engineer, PWD, Building Division, Shillong. The agreement also prescribed for subsoil investigation, contour survey, preparation of concept design, preparation of detailed working drawings and obtaining permission from Meghalaya Urban Development Authority (MUDA) before commencing construction.

On 13 January 2005, the HPC again changed the site of the Assembly Building from Mawdiangdiang to PWD Complex at Barik point, Shillong and on 17 January 2005, the Assembly Secretariat directed the firm to stop work at Mawdiangdiang.

The firm on 10 March 2005 submitted a bill of ₹ 2.14 crore for works it had executed at Mawdiangdiang before stoppage of work on 17 January 2005. This amount was paid by the Assembly Secretariat to the firm in December 2009. The bill of ₹ 2.14

crore submitted by the firm was sanctioned and paid by the Assembly Secretariat through 21 ‘office orders’ all dated 16 December 2009 (21 office order each sanctioning payment of ₹ 10 lakh to the firm and one office order sanctioning payment of ₹ 13.53 lakh).

In this connection, the following irregularities were noticed:

- there were no records with the Assembly Secretariat to indicate that the work of subsoil investigation, contour survey, preparation of concept design and detailed drawing were carried out by the firm;
- the PWD was not consulted before commencing works;
- the firm did not obtain permission from MUDA before commencing construction – a fact confirmed by MUDA to audit in September 2012.
- there was nothing on record to indicate that clearance for paying the bill was obtained from the EE, PWD, Building Division, Shillong who was the project-in-charge.
- the total area of the Mawdiangdiang site as per the tender notice issued by the Assembly Secretariat in July 2001 was 10,000 sqm. The firm however, billed an amount of ₹ 10.34 lakh for making a trace-path in an area of 13,425 sqm.
- ₹ 30.60 lakh was billed for construction and dismantling of labour and sentry shed and another ₹ 0.80 lakh for security, which was not prepared by the PWD.
- The firm billed ₹ 12 lakh for parking of JCBs (Earth Movers) at the site for 60 days, while no excavation work was undertaken.

The Assembly Secretariat stated (July 2012) that payment was made to the firm “*Based on physical verification made at site*” This contention was unacceptable as there was nothing on record to show that the Assembly Secretariat had measured or physically verified the works executed by the firm at Mawdiangdiang.

To locate traces of work claimed to have been carried out by the firm, joint inspection of the Mawdiangdiang site by Audit and Assembly Secretariat officials was requested (October 2012). The inspection could not, however, take place as the Assembly Secretariat stated (October 2012) that none of its existing staff know the exact location of the site and also since the relevant file was missing.

Not only did the Assembly Secretariat commit a gross irregularity by awarding the work of constructing the Assembly Building to the firm which was totally outside the scope of the tender but paid ₹ 2.14 crore to firm for the work claimed to have been executed by it, for which no proof exists. Thus, the entire expenditure of ₹ 2.14 crore incurred on the purported construction has been rendered waste.

The Secretary, Assembly Secretariat stated (December 2012) that the construction work for the building was awarded on the basis of approval of the then Honourable Speaker, the work was carried out on the land allotted to the Assembly Secretariat in

September 2004 (reverted back to MUDA in April 2006) and the contractor mobilised all the necessary requirement for the construction work and accordingly submitted the bill immediately after the firm was asked to stop the work. But the bill was not considered by the competent authority for some reason. However, on being approached by the firm to settle the payment immediately with a threat to take the recourse of the Court of Law, the Assembly Secretariat settled the claim to avoid any litigation in this matter. The reply is not convincing because reasons for which the competent authority did not consider the bill initially had not been specified in the reply and there was no record in support of physical verification or measurement of the work for which payment was made.

2.5 Unauthorised expenditure on staff deployed in excess of authorised strength

The Meghalaya Legislative Assembly Secretariat and Meghalaya Legislative Assembly Printing Press was incurring an unauthorised expenditure of ₹ 6.74 crore annually due to irregular appointment of 433 persons in excess of their authorised strength.

Mention was made in paragraph 2.18 of the Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India for the year ended 31 March 2009 (Civil and Commercial) that about 417 temporary staff were appointed by the Meghalaya Legislative Assembly Secretariat (Assembly Secretariat) between January 2000 and May 2008 in excess of its authorised strength of 327 posts and even though in April 2008 the services of 199 of the 417 staff were terminated, the Assembly Secretariat as of May 2008 still had 218 excess employees.

Audit revisited the issue in November-December 2011 and it was noticed that the number of persons on the roll of Assembly Secretariat in excess of authorised strength has once again swelled to 371 as of August 2011 due to employment of additional persons from time to time during the period as summarised in the table below:

Table 2.5.1

Sl. No.	Position as of	Number of posts authorised by Finance Department			Number of persons on roll in excess of authorised strength (Grades II, III & IV)
		Permanent	Temporary	Total authorised strength	
1	May 2008	218	109	327	218
2	August 2011	224	112	336	371

The above position was confirmed by the Assembly Secretariat in February 2013.

Similarly, as of August 2011, the Meghalaya Legislative Assembly Printing Press (Assembly Printing Press) was also overstaffed as under:

Table 2.5.2

Number of posts authorised by Finance Department			Number of persons (Grades III & IV) on roll in excess of authorised strength
Permanent (non-gazetteed)	Temporary	Total authorised strength	
49	-	49	62

Meghalaya delegation of Financial Power Rules, 1981 stipulated that temporary posts beyond a period of 12 months can be created only with the approval of the Finance Department. Further, Personnel Department had prescribed a written examination and personal interview for recruitment to Group 'C' posts and interview for recruitment to Group 'D' post.

There was nothing on record to indicate that the Assembly Secretariat had obtained Finance Department's concurrence for the operation of additional posts in excess of its authorised strength and continued to practice of appointing to staff on 'pick and choose' basis without adhering to any selection criteria/procedure.

During April 2011 to March 2012, ₹ 6.74 crore was incurred on the salaries of the excess staff on the rolls of the Assembly Secretariat (₹ 5.84 crore) and Assembly Printing Press (₹ 0.90 crore). Thus, due to employment of persons in excess of the authorised strength, an unauthorised expenditure of ₹ 6.74 crore was being incurred annually.

The Secretary, Assembly Secretariat stated (December 2012) that with the introduction of modern technology, appointment of extra staff was considered justified and the Finance Department had been moved for regularisation of most of the temporary staff. The reply is not convincing because such appointment without the approval of the Finance Department was contrary to the Meghalaya Delegation of Financial Power Rules, 1981.