

CHAPTER XIII : MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

Department of Culture

13.1 Unprocessed books

Failure of the Director to take effective steps to process the books purchased resulted in idle expenditure of Rs 74.63 lakh for three to nine years apart from frustrating the objective for which the books were purchased and deprived the readers of the books.

The Professional Divisions of the National Library select, receive, access and process books and publications obtained through purchase, Delivery of Books Act, gift and exchange. On receipt of the books, the Acquisition Unit under the Professional Division allots an accession number to each book and sends the books to the Processing Unit. The Processing Unit after descriptive cataloguing, subject cataloguing, classifying, shelf-listing, labelling, relabelling, typing of catalogue, entry cards including duplication of cards and final checking of fully processed books issues them to the readers as per requisition.

The Director, National Library could not ensure complete processing of all books for accession within a reasonable time. Test check of 14061 books, out of a total 18536 books accessioned during 1991-98 revealed that 4394 books representing 31 *per cent* valuing Rs 69.49 lakh were not sent for processing as of August 1999.

The Processing Unit did not maintain any records of books received from the Acquisition Unit, books actually processed by it and made ready for issue to the readers, books not processed and period of pendency. A random sampling of books from the shelves of the Processing Division revealed that 265 books purchased during the years 1989 to 1996 valuing Rs 5.14 lakh received from the Acquisition Unit between June 1996 and June 1997 were yet to be made ready for issue to the readers as of April 1999.

The Library also receives books published in India in accordance with Delivery of Books (Public Libraries) Act 1954 which are accessioned and processed in the respective language divisions. Sample check of 49881 books of Indian languages received under the provisions of the Act during the period 1991-98 revealed that 38771 books representing 78 *per cent* had not been processed.

The Direction failed to ensure complete processing of 4394 books valuing Rs 69.49 lakh.

Non-processing of books purchased resulted in idle expenditure of Rs 74.63 lakh for three to nine years.

Thus, failure of the Director to take effective steps to process the books even after three to nine years of their purchase resulted in idle expenditure of Rs 74.63 lakh apart from depriving the readers of the library from using the books. As no records are maintained in the processing division there is no assurance that the books purchased actually reach the readers within a reasonable time.

The Ministry stated, in August 1999, that the acquired books could not be processed due to lack of qualified personnel and administrative problems like staff unrest and shortage of space in the stock division and processing division. It added that action to clear the backlog for processing of the books was being taken by the National Library.

Department of Education

13.2 Unauthorised expenditure on the operation of local posts

Operation of five local posts by the Embassy of India, Bonn without any sanction of the Government since March 1994 resulted in unauthorised expenditure of Rs 2.36 crore.

While Department of Education sanctioned five local posts up to March 1994, the Mission continued to operate the posts beyond March 1994.

With a view to promoting Indo-German ties in the field of education, the Government of India, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Department of Education sanctioned five local temporary posts of Junior Translator, Stenographer, Clerk, typist and Messenger for the Education Wing of Embassy of India, Bonn. These posts were operated on the budget grant of the Education Wing of the Mission provided by the Ministry of Human Resource Development every year. In terms of the last sanction from the Ministry available on record, the posts were to continue upto 28 February 1994. Scrutiny of records in audit revealed that the Mission continued to operate all the five posts as of December 1999.

Three of the five posts were being operated in other wings of the Mission.

While the posts of Junior Translator and the Stenographer were assigned the work of Education Wing, the posts of the Clerk, Typist and Messenger were being operated in the Accounts wing, Reception and the Ambassadors' office respectively. Since the expenditure on all these posts was being met out of the budget being provided by the Ministry of Human Resource Development, utilization of these posts in other wings of the Mission defeated the very purpose of their creation. Besides, this establishes that not only the Mission continued to incur expenditure on these posts without sanction of the competent authority, these were not required for the tasks for which the Ministry had sanctioned it earlier. The continuation of these posts after February 1994 without the sanction of the Government was also unauthorised.

Operation of the Posts without sanction resulted in unauthorised expenditure of Rs 2.36 crore.

The operation of five local posts by the Mission since 1 March 1994 without any authority resulted in unauthorised expenditure of Rs 2.36 crore upto October 1999. The unauthorised operation of posts was continuing as of December 1999.

The HOC¹ of the Mission stated in April 1999 that the Department of Education did not renew the sanction due to oversight and renewal of sanction of the post has now been requested. He further stated that the Mission had been sending annual returns for their continuance regularly through Ministry of External Affairs and also been projecting the expenditure under salaries for these posts under the budgetary allocation provided by the Department of Education. Regarding the deployment of staff to other wings, the Mission stated that the same has been done under the administrative powers vested with the HOM².

The reply of the HOC is not tenable because sending of annual returns and proposals for budget do not substitute for the basic requirement of sanction of competent authority. His contention for diversion of posts is also not acceptable since the HOM did not have any administrative powers vested in him for deploying the posts for purposes other than for which they were sanctioned on a regular basis.

It is recommended that the Department of Education may review the actual requirement of posts in the Mission and take action to stop the avoidable expenditure.

The matter was referred to the Ministry in August 1999; their reply was awaited as of December 1999.

¹ Head of the Chancery

² Head of the Mission