

CHAPTER II : MINISTRY OF CULTURE

Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

2.1 Unfruitful expenditure

NMM&L did not devise adequate checks to ensure receipt of final research manuscripts/ monographs from Fellows. Consequently, pay and allowances amounting to ` 55 lakh paid to four Fellows was rendered unfruitful as they had left the Institute without submitting the final report.

Nehru Memorial Museum and Library (NMM&L) provides Fellowships for pursuing research in Social Science under various schemes¹. The benefits which arise out of the Fellowship scheme are outputs of original research in Social Sciences in the form of publications, articles and presentations.

The period of Fellowship was three years with a provision for extension by two years subject to progress of work. This was revised to two years from August 2007 with no provision for extension. The Fellowships are offered at three different levels i.e. Senior Fellows, Fellows and Junior Fellows. The emoluments including allowances correspond to that of Professor, Associate Professor and Assistant Professor of Central Universities respectively. The Fellows are required to submit their final manuscripts/monographs to NMM&L, on receipt of which the salary of Fellows for the last month is released.

Further, in terms of the scheme guidelines, all Fellows were required to submit periodic progress reports to the Director, NMM&L of their projects once every six months. These reports were to be referred to the expert review committee consisting of subject and other suitable experts for their opinion and recommendation.

Audit noted that during the period 2005-06, the NMM&L had granted seven Senior Fellowships, eight Fellowships and three Junior Fellowships. Contrary to the terms and conditions of Fellowship, five out of seven Senior Fellows, two out of eight Fellows and two out of three Junior Fellows had not submitted their final report even after a lapse of two to five years after leaving NMM&L. The NMM&L had paid ` 1.19 crore to these nine Senior Fellows/Fellows/Junior Fellows during 2005-06 to 2009-10. Audit further

¹ (1) Promotion of Research in Modern Indian History and Contemporary Studies;
(2) Perspectives in Indian Development;
(3) India and Changing Trends in World Economy and Polity.

noted that against the requirement of reviewing the progress of the work of the research Fellows every six months, the review committee in these cases met only once in December 2008. The Committee mainly recommended extension of one year to the Fellows for submission of research papers.

On being pointed out by Audit, (March 2011) the NMM&L, followed up the matter with defaulting Fellows for submission of final manuscripts/monographs. Consequently, five (three Senior Fellows, one Fellow and one Junior Fellow) out of the nine Fellows submitted their final manuscripts/monographs, between June 2011 and January 2012. Audit further noted that the remaining four Fellows were yet to submit the final manuscripts/monographs leading to unfruitful expenditure of ` 55 lakh towards pay and allowances paid to these Fellows.

This indicates that the internal control of NMM&L to monitor the timely submission of manuscripts/monographs was not effective. Further, NMM&L had not incorporated punitive Fellowship terms to protect its financial and academic interests in situations where Fellows default in submitting the products of their research i.e. manuscripts/monographs.

Thus, NMM&L incurred unfruitful expenditure of ` 55 lakh on salary and emoluments of four Fellows. In addition, the prospects of these research projects remained unascertainable.

NMM&L stated (August 2011) that all out efforts are made to ensure that the Fellows submit their reports as early as possible and are being reminded regularly. The last salary in some cases has not been released and Leave salary/Pension contribution is not released till the receipt of monographs/manuscripts.

However, the fact remains that adequate checks and balances have not been instituted by NMM&L which allows the Fellows to leave without submitting the final report. Non-release of salary for the last month does not constitute effective action against the defaulting Fellows.

The Management may consider inclusion of clause regarding refund of grant in case of failure of Fellow to submit the products of their research within the time allowed as in the case of Indian Council of Social Science Research and Indian Council of Historical Research.

The matter was referred to the Ministry in November 2011; their reply was awaited as of January 2012.