

## CHAPTER XI : MINISTRY OF SHIPPING

### Directorate of Lighthouses and Lightships

#### 11.1 Non-restoration of DGPS since Tsunami and Unfruitful Expenditure of ₹ 75.14 lakh

**Essential navigational aids could not be restored even after eight years of tsunami due to flawed planning by the Department that further led to unfruitful expenditure of ₹ 75.14 lakh on purchase of equipment in December 2006 which had not yet been commissioned**

The earthquake and tsunami of December 2004 destroyed the Differential Global Positioning System (DGPS) stationed at Indira Point Lighthouse at Campbell Bay, Andaman & Nicobar Islands that served as an essential navigational aid. In order to restore this station, the Ministry of Shipping, Road Transport and Highways (MOSRTH) placed an order on a firm for supply, installation and commissioning of DGPS equipment at the old approved rate of ₹ 83.50 lakh\* in November 2005 with the stipulation that the equipments should be supplied, installed and commissioned within 13 months i.e., December 2006. The equipment, which has a lifespan of 10 years was supplied by the firm within the stipulated date, i.e., December 2006. 90 per cent payment being ₹ 75.14 lakh was made to the supplier in March 2007.

Meanwhile, for reestablishment of the navigational aids, Andaman & Nicobar Administration (Administration), on the basis of request made in March 2005, allotted one hectare of land in Campbell Bay to the Director of Lighthouses and Lightships, Port Blair (DLL) which was taken over in August 2006. The DLL, however, found that the land was unsuitable for their requirement as it was only 60 meter away from sea and almost at sea level, and was opposite a hill of about 30 meter height which would obstruct transmission of DGPS signals. The DLL requested the Administration for re-allotment of land at a higher elevation with no obstruction for 360° radius in air. After prolonged correspondence between the DLL and the Administration, the land was allotted in September 2007, and taken over by the Directorate in January 2008. In August 2008, the construction work of “Establishment of DGPS Station at Campbell Bay, construction of staff quarters, Inspection Quarters and Technical Building at Campbell Bay” for ₹ 1.92 crore was started after conducting jungle clearance and geo-technical sub-soil investigation. The construction work was completed and DGPS has been installed at Campbell

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\* Cost of DGPS equipment only.

Bay in December 2012 on trial-run basis. However, the DGPS has not been commissioned yet.

Audit observed that:

- The DGPS equipment was ordered and taken delivery of even before suitable land was available.
- DGPS was lying at Port Blair. It was transferred to Campbell Bay only in October 2012, after audit had pointed out that the equipment was lying idle at Port Blair.
- The warranty for DGPS has expired even before installation and trial run.

Thus, an important navigational aid procured in December 2006 and having a life span of 10 years was installed only after 6 years due to the delays in site selection, and construction. The equipment had already lost 60 *per cent* of its life. Further, the very purpose of reestablishment of essential navigational aids since December 2004, was frustrated.

Directorate General of Lighthouses and Lightships, NOIDA (DGLL), in its reply (May 2013) stated that the damages due to Tsunami in the area were vast and unparalleled which was not at all visualised at the time of planning. However, the fact remains that the order for DGPS was placed in November 2005, almost one year after Tsunami. Thus there was sufficient time for the DGLL to ascertain the extent of damage to the area by Tsunami and plan accordingly. The reply also stated that land allotted required “unimaginable development”, the approach road could not be made due to environmental restrictions/hurdles, forest clearance was required, which resulted in abnormal delay and the approach road could not be made motorable until recently, and therefore, Diesel Generator sets required for ensuring 24x7 operation could be transferred only now. The reply itself showed that the Department had procured the DGPS without taking into account the various other facts which could delay the construction of the DGPS station.

Thus, essential navigational aids could not be restored even after eight years of tsunami due to flawed planning by the Department that further led to unfruitful expenditure of ₹ 75.14 lakh on purchase of the equipment in December 2006 which has been idle for 60 *per cent* of its life span and has not yet been commissioned.

The matter was reported to Ministry in April 2013; their reply was awaited as of June 2013.