

## CHAPTER XV : MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT

### 15.1 Inordinate delay in the construction of office building for the National Commission for Women

The office building for the National Commission for Women could not be constructed despite acquiring the land in 2001. The delay was mainly attributable to deficient planning. As a result, funds amounting to ₹ 1.47 crore released to the Central Public Works Department for the construction activity remained blocked since March 2004. Despite substantial time and cost overruns, the project was still at the preliminary stage.

The National Commission for Women (NCW) is presently housed in a hired building. The annual rent for this building is ₹ 50 lakh.

The Department of Women and Child Development accorded (October 1995) in principle approval to the NCW for acquiring land for the construction of a composite building to house NCW and Rashtriya Mahila Kosh. The proposed construction was to provide the NCW an independent and spacious building and to effect saving of rent for the existing hired building.

NCW acquired (June 2001) 3080 sq. meters of land at Jasola Institutional Area from the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) at a cost of ₹ 37.48 lakh. NCW appointed (August 2001) Housing and Urban Development Corporation Limited (HUDCO) for providing architectural consultancy for the project. Based on the architectural drawings prepared by HUDCO, the NCW requested (June 2003) CPWD to prepare the preliminary estimates. The estimates were submitted by the CPWD in October 2003. Accordingly, the Ministry of Women and Child Development conveyed (March 2004) administrative approval for ₹ 6.09 crore for the project and release of ₹ 1.80 crore as the first instalment. NCW released ₹ 1.80 crore to CPWD in March 2004 for execution of the project. Further, the work was to be completed within 24 months after approval of drawings by local bodies.

Audit noted inordinate delays in construction activities as tabulated below:

Period	Particulars
September 2004	HUDCO prepared the designs of the building and submitted them to the DDA
December 2004 and February 2005	DDA made some observations on the drawings which were replied to by HUDCO
March 2006	The Ministry directed NCW to explore the possibility of accommodating the National Commission of Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) at the allotted site.
July 2007	HUDCO prepared the revised plan. This was submitted by the NCW to the Ministry.
April 2008	NCW requested the Ministry to convene a joint meeting comprising the officials of DDA, HUDCO and the CPWD for preparing a comprehensive plan for accommodating various offices.
May 2008	The Ministry directed NCW to take into consideration the area requirement of NCPCR.
August 2009	CPWD informed NCW that the boundary wall of the plot had been constructed.
January 2010	After a lapse of one and half years, the Ministry directed NCW to submit action taken report on the decision taken in May 2008.
March 2010	In pursuance of the direction of the Ministry, Central Adoption Resource Agency and Rashtriya Mahila Kosh submitted their requirement of space.
July 2010	The Ministry decided that in view of Floor Area Ratio restrictions, the plot could accommodate only the requirement of NCW and to construct the building for use of NCW only.
June 2011	NCW re-awarded the entire work of architectural design along with clearance from the local bodies and approval of site plan of building from DDA to the CPWD.
November 2011	The Ministry asked NCW to explore the suitability of NBCC as an alternate implementing agency.

On the basis of the cost estimates submitted by CPWD (₹ 18.00 crore) and NBCC (₹ 16.51 crore), the Ministry finally accorded (June 2012) in principle approval for construction of this office building through NBCC at a revised cost of ₹ 16.51 crore.

Audit noted that there were cascading delays after this acquisition of land by the NCW on account of subsequent thought of widening the scope of construction to accommodate other offices that was not envisaged at the initial stage. The Ministry was unable to firm up the number of organisations that were to be housed at the proposed site. The adhocism of the decision making process was evident in the final view that emerged. This was same as the initial view i.e. the building would accommodate only NCW. This uncalled for delay rendered the entire development from 2006 to 2010 infructuous. This inordinate delay also led to significant cost escalation of ₹ 9.44 crore<sup>1</sup> and blocking of ₹ 1.47 crore with CPWD since March 2004. Consequently, the expenditure of ₹ 79 lakh<sup>2</sup> incurred on procurement of land, construction of boundary wall and consultancy charges paid to HUDCO was also rendered unfruitful.

The avoidable delays in construction resulted not only in substantial time and cost overrun but also led to avoidable payments of rent amounting to ₹ 3.92 crore paid by NCW from October 2006 i.e. the date by which the project should have been completed as per the Standing Finance Committee meeting held in March 2004. Also, despite a passage of more than 12 years from the date of acquiring the land, the project was still at the preliminary stage.

The Ministry admitted (June 2013) that the project had endured inordinate delays. It further stated that NBCC had since obtained the required clearances from the local bodies and it was expected that the work would be completed without further time and cost overruns.

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<sup>1</sup> Cost escalation of ₹ 9.44 crore calculated on the total area of 3299 sq. meter as per CPWD estimates submitted in January 2004.

<sup>2</sup> ₹ 0.37 crore on procurement of land, ₹ 0.33 crore on construction of Boundary wall and ₹ 0.09 crore on payment of consultancy charges to HUDCO.