

CHAPTER VII : MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

7.1 Additional expenditure on electricity charges consumed for residential purpose

National Zoological Park, Delhi incurred additional expenditure of ₹ 3.66 crore during 2013-18 towards energy charges for electricity drawn from a non-domestic high tension connection but consumed for domestic purpose, due to non-installation of electricity meters for the residential quarters.

The National Zoological Park, Delhi (NZN), functions under the Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change (MoEF&CC). The electricity requirement of NZN for its office buildings, beats and residential buildings is met from BSES Rajdhani Power Ltd. (BSES) through non-domestic High Tension (HT) electric connection with a sanctioned load of 238 KW. This included installed load of 224 KW for 57¹ residential quarters, as assessed (January 2010) by Central Public Works Department (CPWD).

NZN requested (May 2010) BSES to provide separate electrical connections for its residential quarters. BSES informed (October 2010) NZN that an Electric Sub-Station would be installed for the purpose and sought a layout plan for the same. After sustained correspondence between NZN and BSES for site specifications, NZN forwarded (June 2016) a map for the proposed sub-station to BSES. In response, BSES informed NZN that work on the sub-station would be commenced only after receipt of an undertaking from NZN confirming the fulfilment of certain conditions² specified (May 2016) by BSES. NZN did not provide such undertaking, instead it asked (August 2016) BSES to provide cost estimates for the work. BSES clarified (September 2016) to NZN that cost estimates could not be framed until the location for the sub-station was confirmed. Nevertheless, NZN continued to pursue the matter of cost estimates with BSES and the matter remained under correspondence. As of April 2019, the work of installation of sub-station had not commenced.

Meanwhile, BSES raised (2013-14 onwards) composite electricity bill on the total energy consumption of NZN including office buildings and residential quarters, which was paid by NZN. NZN in turn recovered the energy charges from its employees for their residential consumption according to rates fixed by

¹ Type I - 46 quarters, Type II - four quarters, Type III - four quarters, Type IV - two quarters and Type V - one quarter.

² (i) There should be a motorable road of 4 m width on at least two sides of the sub-station plot; and (ii) There should be no cables/ducts/pipes or any other utilities passing through that plot.

NZP for domestic consumption for different types of quarters. These rates ranged from ₹ 600 to ₹ 1,500 per month (2013-14), ₹ 720 to ₹ 1,800 per month (2014-15), ₹ 900 to ₹ 2,250 per month (2015-16) and ₹ 1,080 to ₹ 2,700 per month (2016-17 and 2017-18) for different types of quarters. During the period from 2013-14 to 2017-18, 34³ residential quarters were occupied by employees of NZP. NZP paid ₹ 6.18 crore to BSES towards electricity charges for office and residential quarters and recovered an amount of ₹ 1.99 lakh from its employees.

Audit observed that NZP did not segregate the electricity requirements of its official facilities and residential buildings in the first instance by getting electric meters installed in each of the residential quarters through CPWD. Further, NZP prolonged the matter of providing separate electricity meters for the residential areas for nearly nine years by not fulfilling the prerequisite laid by BSES. Electricity meters were not installed in the residential quarters for recording the actual consumption of electricity and effectively recovering charges for the same from the employees based on actual readings. Consequently, there was a wide gap between energy charges paid to BSES for electricity drawn from the non-domestic HT supply used for domestic consumption and amount recovered from the employees towards such consumption. Considering the assessed load of 142 KW for 34 residential quarters that were occupied during 2013-18 as a proportion of the total sanctioned load of 238 KW (59.5 *per cent*) for which the bills were paid to BSES, the corresponding expenditure for electricity consumed in 34 residential quarters is ₹ 3.68 crore⁴. However, NZP recovered only ₹ 1.99 lakh from its employees for this period thereby incurring extra expenditure to the extent of ₹ 3.66 crore.

Thus, failure of NZP in segregating energy requirements for official and domestic consumption and in fulfilling prerequisites for getting separate electricity meters for domestic consumption led to additional expenditure of ₹ 3.66 crore during 2013-18 for electricity consumed for residential purpose but paid for non-domestic HT connection.

MoEFCC stated (July 2019) that the matter was being pursued with BSES for installation of electric meters for the residents of NZP. NZP added (September 2019) that the necessary process for installation of meters had been started. Audit, however, noticed that the space identified for installation of the sub-station was yet to be handed over to BSES and the requisite undertaking was also yet to be provided to BSES.

³ A total of 35 quarters were occupied, however, one quarter of Type B was not included in calculations as it was occupied only partially during the period commented upon.

⁴ 59.5 *per cent* of total electricity charges of ₹ 6.18 crore.