

CHAPTER – IV

WORKS EXPENDITURE

PARAGRAPHS

IRRIGATION DEPARTMENT

4.1 Abnormal delay in construction of Canal

Expenditure of Rs. 92.47 lakh on Dhari Canal, Rudraprayag remained largely unfruitful even after 25 years of the sanction.

Government granted (April 1978) administrative and financial sanction for construction of 10 kms long Dhari canal (Canal) at Agastya Muni block in Rudraprayag district at a cost of Rs.12.35 lakh to irrigate 37 hectares of land.

Test check (May 2002) of the records of the Executive Engineer (EE), Irrigation Division, Rudraprayag revealed that construction was started in 1980-81. The work had to be stopped in 1985-86 after incurring an expenditure of Rs. 21.45 lakh on 2 km completed length of canal plus some earthwork in other available stretches of land due to want of permission for the acquisition of 3 hectares of forest land (approx. 2.5 km stretch of canal) in the alignment of canal . Work was restarted in 1996-97 after receipt of permission in April 1996. The lapse of nearly 17 years in obtaining permission resulted in increase in labour and material cost. The EE submitted (1997) revised estimates for Rs. 99.90 lakh for which approval was awaited (June 2002). The actual expenditure aggregated Rs. 92.47 lakh by 31 March 2002 with only 3.6 km of canal having been completed to irrigate 5.6 hectares of land (15 *per cent* of intended target). The remaining stretch of 6.4 km was lying incomplete for want of funds.

The Department in their reply (May 2002) accepted that there was delay in acquisition of land due to changes in land acquisition rules/procedure from time to time and settlement of objections in relation thereto.

The inordinate delay of 15 years on the part of Department in submitting proposal for acquiring forest land led to a cost overrun of Rs.80.12 (Rs.92.47 lakh –Rs.12.35 lakh) by 31 March 2002 with a negligible physical achievement of 15 *per cent* only. The expenditure of Rs. 92.47 lakh remained largely unfruitful with 85 *per cent* of the target area lying unirrigated.

The matter was reported to Government (November 2003); reply was awaited (May 2004).

4.2 Excess payment to contractor

Reimbursement to contractor of increase in the minimum wages without verification of payment made to labourers resulted in excess payment of Rs.4.56 crore.

Government sanctioned (March 1981) construction of Head Race Tunnel from Km. 4.5 to Km. 12.00 under the Maneri Bhali Project (Stage-II) at a cost of Rs.20.11 crore.

The Superintending Engineer (SE), Maneri Bhali Stage-II, Circle, Uttarkashi awarded the work on tender basis to M/s. Hydel Constructions Ltd., New Delhi at a cost of Rs. 20.11 crore. The work was started in April 1981 for completion by March 1986. The date of completion was later extended upto July 1991. According to the conditions of the contract, the contractor was to be reimbursed the increase in the minimum wages of labour on submission of a certificate that the extra wages had actually been paid to the labourers. Government had also clarified in February 1993 that it would be the responsibility of the officer releasing the payment to obtain evidence of payment of the increase in minimum wages to the labourers.

Scrutiny of the records (October 1997) of the Executive Engineer (EE), Maneri Bhali Construction Division –II, Chinyaliasaur (Uttarkashi) revealed that the contractor was paid a sum of Rs.5.61 crore against the amount of Rs. 1.05 crore actually paid by him towards reimbursement of increase in minimum wages of labourers from April 1981 to March 1991 without verifying the evidence of payments. Thus, an excess payment of Rs. 4.56 crore was made to the contractor by the Department.

On this being pointed out (October 1997), the EE stated that the matter of excess payment was referred to the SE for his decision. The SE instructed (April 1999) the EE for preparation of counter-claim against the contractor. The latest position in this regard was awaited.

Thus, failure of the Department to verify payments made by the contractor resulted in an excess payment of Rs.4.56 crore being made to him.

The matter was referred to Government (December 2003); reply was awaited (May 2004).

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

4.3 Unfruitful expenditure on construction of incomplete roads

Expenditure of Rs.5.34 crore incurred on construction of Jakholi-Bhiri motor road, Kwarab-Sargakhet road and Tiliyapur-Suryanagar road remained unfruitful due to non-acquisition of forest land in time etc.

Financial rules provide that availability of land should be ensured before the start of any construction. The Forest Conservation Act, 1980 requires prior approval of the Government of India for the use of forest land for non-forest purposes.

The following cases were noticed in audit:

(a) The Uttar Pradesh Government accorded (August 1976) administrative and financial sanction for construction of 80 km long Jakholi-Bhiri motor road costing Rs.1.60 crore for providing transport facilities to residents of the hill region. Out of above, 40.20 km road was to be constructed on forest land.

Due to restrictions on use of forest land under Forest Conservation Act, 1980, the administrative and financial sanction was modified (July 1982), reducing the length from 80 km to 55 km only for construction at a cost of Rs. 2.16 crore. On approval (July 1994) of the Government of India for use of forest land for non-forest purposes, (clearance sought in April 1993), the State Government revised (March 1998) the administrative and financial sanction increasing the length of the road from 55 km to 60.20 km and the cost to Rs.5.28 crore. In the revised sanction the Government specified that the construction of road be completed within two years (i.e by March 2000) and no further revision in the estimates would be sanctioned.

Scrutiny (May 2001) of records of the Executive Engineer, Temporary Division, PWD (Department), Srinagar, Garhwal and further information obtained (February 2002) revealed that Rs. 1.88 crore had been spent on construction of 20 km of road from Jakholi by July 1995.

The Department constructed different stretches of the remaining part of the road at a cost of Rs.3.64 crore by November 2001. The Department prepared revised estimates for Rs. 7.41 crore on the grounds that the sanctioned cost of Rs. 5.28 crore was based on rates prevailing during 1997 and labour and material rates had increased. Contrary to the specific and unequivocal instructions of the State Government of March 1998, these revised estimates were submitted to Government for sanction in September 2000, which is yet to be received. There was no further progress in work after November 2001. As of February 2002, forest land falling in 14.70 km of alignment of road was yet to be acquired and execution of hill cutting in 3.85 km length as well as construction of retaining walls and scuppers in 6.84 km length was still incomplete.

Thus, due to defective planning and tardy execution of work the proposed road could not be completed even 27 years after it was first sanctioned. The expenditure of Rs.3.64 crore on construction of intermittent reaches remained unfruitful and the road was susceptible to damage due to vagaries of nature.

The Department in its reply stated (February 2002) that sanction of the second revised estimates and additional funds were awaited.

(b) Government of UP sanctioned (December 1974) Rs. 48.53 lakh for the construction of a road from Kwarab to Sargakhet (25kms) to provide connectivity to local farmers and traders. The road was subsequently extended

up to Pokhari (total length 41 kms) under revised administrative and financial sanction of the Government (August 1976) for Rs.78.28 lakh.

Test check (May 2000) of records of the Executive Engineer, Construction Division, PWD, Nainital (executing agency) revealed that the work was started in January 1976 without obtaining the technical sanction from the competent authority and without ensuring the availability of approximately 7 kms stretch of forest land. Technical sanction was, however, accorded for 34 kms length of road only on either side of forest land for Rs. 63.15 lakh. Later, alignment of the road was changed due to availability of alternate forest land. Consequently an additional 3 kms length of road with two bridges was to be constructed, increasing the total length to 44 kms and the cost to Rs. 2.44 crore. The Department submitted (January 1992) a revised estimate of Rs. 1.42 crore for the additional items of work for which sanction was awaited (September 2003).

It was noticed that by the end of April 2001, the Department had spent Rs. 1.15 crore on construction of 37 kms road against the total financial sanction of Rs. 78.28 lakh for 41 kms.

Construction was started without ensuring the availability of forest land and in disregard of Government instructions (August 1976) that work should not be commenced nor expenditure incurred without proper survey and technical sanction of competent authority. This led to non-completion of work for a very long period thereby increasing the cost (Rs.36.72 lakh spent in excess of the financial sanction on the work so far completed) besides depriving the local farmers/traders of the intended benefits.

The Department did not furnish their comments (July 2001) on the improper and ad hoc execution of work with inordinate delay in completion but intimated that revised estimate submitted to Government was pending for approval.

(c) The State Government accorded (December 1997) administrative and financial sanction for construction of 6 km long all weather pucca road from Tiliyapur to Surya Nagar at a cost of Rs.63.60 lakh. This included a 3.25 kms stretch of reserve forest land.

Scrutiny of records (July 2002) of the Executive Engineer, Construction Division, Khatima, revealed that construction work was started by Provincial Division, Rudrapur in February 1998. Technical sanction was, however, received only in July 2001. Second coat painting stage (P2) had been executed in 2.75 km length and top coat in 1.40 km length at a cost of Rs.0.55 crore by March 2002. The work was stopped (February 2002) for want of sanction for utilisation of forest land under the Forest Conservation Act, 1980.

The work remained suspended (November 2003) with a stretch of 3.25 km lying incomplete. The Superintending Engineer, 53 Circle, PWD, Haldwani had accepted (July 2001) that the intended benefits could not be given to the public.

It was further stated (November 2003) that the remaining portion of work would be completed after clearance from Forest Department and State Government's approval for the revised estimate of Rs.39.10 lakh for the balance work.

The Department in its reply (November 2003) intimated that work would be completed on availability of sanction for use of forest land.

Thus, commencement of work without technical sanction and approval for the use of forest land for non-forest purposes rendered the expenditure of Rs. 0.55 crore unfruitful, as the two ends of the road i.e. Tiliyapur and Surya Nagar were not linked. This was also likely to result in cost overrun of Rs. 29.91 lakh on the basis of revised estimates sent to Government.

The three cases were referred to the Government (November 2003); replies were awaited (May 2004).

4.4 Extra expenditure incurred on widening and strengthening of Ring Road, Dehradun

Disregard of Indian Road Congress specifications in strengthening and widening of Ring Road, Dehradun led to an avoidable expenditure of Rs. 34.20 lakh.

According to the specifications of the Indian Road Congress (IRC) and departmental orders regarding widening of roads, the crust thickness in the original middle portion of the road surface should not be less than that in the widened portion.

Government sanctioned (November 2001) the construction (3.00 Km) as well as widening and strengthening (11.15 Km) of Ring Road in Dehradun at a cost of Rs 9.68 crore. Technical sanction was accorded (February 2002 and February 2003) for the same amount by the Chief Engineer, PWD, Pauri.

Test check (August 2003) of the records of the Executive Engineer (EE), Provincial Division (PD), PWD, Dehradun as well as Temporary Division (TD), PWD, Rishikesh revealed that the widening and strengthening of the Ring Road was executed by these divisions¹ in three sections, namely (i) Jogiwala-Ladpur (1.25 Km) (ii) Dehradun Sahastradhara road (6.90 Km) and (iii) Rajpur Nagal Sahastradhara (3.00 Km).

¹ TD, Rishikesh: (i) Jogiwala-Ladpur.
(ii) Dehradun-Sahastradhara.
PD, Dehradun: Rajpur Nagal-Sahastradhara section.

It was noticed that the estimates for widening and strengthening were prepared and sanctioned without taking into account the crust thickness of the existing roads. This resulted in the crust thickness of the widened portion in these sections being much in excess of that in the middle portion of the existing roads which was contrary to specifications and orders and led to an extra cost of Rs.34.20 lakh as detailed below:

Sl. No.	Section	Crust thickness of the middle portion (cm)	Crust thickness in widened portion (cm)	Extra cost on excess crust thickness (Rs.in lakh)
1.	Rajpur Nagala Sahastradhara	27	42	4.51
2.	Jogiwala Ladpur	38	47	2.66
3.	Dehradun Sahastradhara Km. 1,2,3,5,6,7.	27,21,20,28,28,28 respectively	43	27.03
	Total			34.20

On this being pointed out, the EEs did not furnish any reply regarding execution of work contrary to the specifications and departmental orders.

The deviation from IRC specifications and departmental orders led to an avoidable expenditure of Rs 34.20 lakh.

The matter was referred to Government (December 2003); reply was awaited (May 2004).

4.5 Avoidable expenditure on renewal of Rishikesh Bypass Road

Premature and unwarranted renewal of the road surface immediately before improvement/strengthening led to an avoidable expenditure of Rs.15.73 lakh.

The specifications of IRC stipulate that a Mix Seal Surface (MSS) on a road should be renewed after a minimum period of 6 years of its construction.

Test check (August 2003) of the records of Executive Engineer (EE), Temporary Division, Rishikesh revealed that MSS on the Rishikesh Bypass road (Km.1 to Km 7) was completed in December 1997. Renewal work on km 3 and 4 was, however, carried out between March 2002 and September 2002 at a cost of Rs. 15.73 lakh before it had become due.

It was noticed that this road was included for improvement / strengthening under Kumbh Mela works at a cost of Rs.1.07 crore. Subsequently, improvement /strengthening work of Rs. 94.44 lakh was carried out, rendering the earlier expenditure of Rs. 15.73 lakh avoidable.

On this being pointed out, the EE stated that the life of MSS work was adequate for only 5 years and hence the renewal was carried out. The contention of the EE is not tenable because the minimum period of 6 years for renewal of MSS has been laid down in IRC specifications. Besides, the renewal of the road

surface immediately before approval, strengthening/ improvement of this road under Kumbh Mela work was totally avoidable and unjustified.

Thus, the unwarranted renewal of the road surface by the EE led to an avoidable expenditure of Rs.15.73 lakh.

The matter was referred to Government (December 2003); reply was awaited (May 2004).