

CHAPTER XX : MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES

20.1 Inordinately delayed calibration laboratory project

CWPRS¹ failed to complete the Calibration Laboratory Project in 13 years of its scheduled date of completion even after an expenditure of Rs 2.69 crore. As a result, the work of calibration/rating of flowmeters proposed to be undertaken in this laboratory has not been possible leading to practically no value for expenditure incurred on this project.

The Ministry sanctioned the Calibration Laboratory Project for CWPRS Pune in June 1984 at an estimated cost of Rs 1.90 crore. It was envisaged to be a state of the art facility and was targeted to be completed by 1987. The project was intended to cater to the demands of rating of flowmeters and orifice meters in closed conduits and for rating of small and medium capacity pumps of appropriate standards.

The Calibration Laboratory Project though funded by the Government of India was to be implemented as an offshoot of another project, namely the Hydromechanics Project funded by the UNDP², which was to be completed by December 1984. The progress of Calibration Laboratory Project was dependent on the progress of the Hydromechanics Project in many ways including the building, equipment, staff and more importantly the finances, because both the schemes were implemented in an integrated manner. Due to cost and time overrun in completion of the Hydromechanics Project which was terminated in March 1990, after incurring an expenditure of Rs 1.10 crore, the progress of Calibration Laboratory Project too was affected.

There were further delays in the Calibration Laboratory Project due to revision of drawings and tender specifications, cancellation of all draft tender documents prepared for entire turn-key job of the project, separation of various items of work in package deal in number of contracts and then obtaining sanction of the Ministry, collapse of the pump house and the subsequent inquiry, repeated invitation of tenders for various individual items of work, non-availability of water in sump and splitting of one single turn-key contract in to 27 different contracts etc. This caused revision in the cost of the project to Rs 2.70 crore in January 1995.

The Department had incurred an expenditure of Rs 2.65 crore till June 1997 on the project for construction of the laboratory building and procurement and installation of equipment. The project was ready for trial run for commissioning and miscellaneous preparatory work thereof was going on. In June 1997, the Ministry, asked CWPRS at the instance of Ministry of Finance

¹ Central Nations Development Programme

² United Nations Development Programme

to weed out the project from the Plan side and directed CWPRS to stop incurring further expenditure on the project. However, CWPRS further spent Rs 4.70 lakh after June 1997 from non-plan funds to meet the already committed contractual obligations so as to avoid litigation. The testing and commissioning of the project remained to be done as of December 1999.

The Ministry stated, in October 1999, that the project is technically useful and very much relevant to the needs of Indian flow meters, pumps, valves and flow elements industry and had got good potential to attract clientele from the industry and actual utility of the project to its full capacity would commence on its commissioning.

The reply of the Ministry fails to address the fact that the laudable objective of installing a state of the art facility was not achieved even after a period of 13 years and an expenditure of Rs 2.69 crore.

20.2 Speech and data communication facilities remain grossly under-utilised

Non-utilisation of about 78 per cent telecommunication facility by CWPRS for speech and entire data communication system rendered the major part of the expenditure of Rs 41.35 lakh unfruitful.

The Ministry sanctioned the installation of 'Data Communication Facility with EPABX¹ in January 1992 at CWPRS², Pune. The objective of installing the facility was to improve data communication through existing computer network in CWPRS between the various laboratories and the central computer. Telephonic voice communication amongst the laboratories as well as the staff colony was also included while assessing the requirement. A ten year perspective was adopted while arriving at the estimate for the capacity of the facility in terms of the number of data and voice extensions.

The telecommunication facility equipment comprising of EPABX: cost Rs 11.93 lakh, DMKT³: cost Rs 12 lakh and DTI⁴: cost 2.40 lakh was installed in September 1993. The civil works and installation charges for the equipment worked out to Rs 15.02 lakh. Besides this, the cost of maintenance for the period from September 1994 to March 1999 was Rs 6.96 lakh.

Scrutiny revealed that though the ultimate potential of the configuration of the EPABX was 1200 extensions, the hardware installed in the system was only for 352 extensions. Of these, only 260 extensions were being used even after six years of installation. Thus, only 22 per cent of the ultimate potential

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¹ Electronics Private Automatic Branch Exchange

² Central Water and Power Research Station

³ Digital Multi Key Telephones

⁴ Data Terminal Interfaces

of 1200 extensions were utilised. Further, out of 40 DMKTs, only 11 DMKTs were being used for voice communications and none of the 24 DTIs was put to use as of August 1999. This resulted in gross under-utilisation of the capacity of the telecommunication facility rendering a major part of expenditure unfruitful.

Due to decommissioning of cyber in 1996, the data communication facility could not be put to use.

CWPRS stated, in May 1999, that data communication component of the facility, as envisaged in the project, could not be implemented as the cyber computer was decommissioned in 1996, but the voice communication system was fully achieved. This is untenable as less than 30 *per cent* of the speech facilities were being used. Also, the primary objective of data communication facility had failed and only the voice communication facility was being utilised, albeit partially.

The Ministry stated, in October 1999, that increase in extensions beyond 260 would require some additional instruments and DMKTs and DTIs were procured in view of the then available cyber computer. However, the essential components of the system, became dysfunctional due to decommissioning of cyber in 1996. The Ministry further, added that though the data communication did not materialise, the voice communication facility would easily be enhanced after installation of additional hardware.

The reply of the Ministry does not address the issue that the estimate of the capacity of telecom facility adopted with ten year perspective was grossly unrealistic and led to under-utilisation of the equipment capacity by about 78 *per cent* in case of voice communication and 100 *per cent* in case of data communication thereby rendering expenditure of Rs 14.22 lakh largely unfruitful.