

CHAPTER VI : MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE

National Institute of Homoeopathy, Calcutta

6.1 Blocking of funds due to injudicious deposit of fund

Failure of National Institute of Homoeopathy to obtain essential land documents resulted in blocking of Rs 1.04 crore for eight years with consequent loss of interest of Rs 58.98 lakh.

Land documents not obtained before depositing funds with CPWD

National Institute of Homoeopathy deposited Rs 1.04 crore with the Central Public Works Department (CPWD) during March 1991-March 1994 for construction of staff quarters on a plot of land offered by the Government of West Bengal. The deposits were made without fixing any time-frame for completion of the project including physical targets and without ascertaining clear title to the land. CPWD could not take up the construction as the Institute did not have either the formal allotment order or the registered lease deed for the land. The Government of West Bengal formally allotted 9.137 acres of land only in September 1997 and the Institute paid Rs 91.64 lakh to the Government of West Bengal towards cost of the land, interest for late payment and cost of boundary pillars between June 1998 and September 1998. The Government of West Bengal issued in February 1999 no objection for starting construction on the plot of land provided it was allowed by the concerned municipality. The lease deed was yet to be executed and clearance of municipality had also not been obtained. The work could not be started as of April 1999.

Failure of the Institute to obtain essential land documents resulted in blocking of Rs 1.04 crore for eight years with consequent loss of interest of Rs 58.98 lakh. Had the construction of quarters been completed the Institute could have avoided payment of house rent allowance of Rs 8.78 lakh and recovered licence fee of Rs 1.38 lakh from the occupants during the period April 1994 to March 1999.

The Ministry in July 1999 attributed the delay to the Department of Urban Development, Government of West Bengal. But the fact remained that the amount of Rs 1.04 crore was deposited with the CPWD without ascertaining clear title of the land.

National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro Sciences, Bangalore

6.2 Irregular payment

National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro Sciences, Bangalore paid patient care allowance of Rs 58.54 lakh to Group C and D (including ministerial staff) which was contrary to the Government of India orders.

Irregular payment of patient care allowance to group C and D (including ministerial staff)

The Ministry sanctioned in January 1988 hospital patient care allowance to Group C and D (non-ministerial) hospital employees including drivers of ambulance cars excluding staff nurses. Despite the specific orders of Government of India, National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro Sciences (NIMHANS) Bangalore paid patient care allowance to all Group C and D employees including ministerial staff, irrespective of their direct involvement in patient care services from December 1987 and incurred unjustified expenditure of Rs 58.54 lakh upto March 1999.

NIMHANS stated that there was no distinction between ministerial and non-ministerial staff and the staff working in the offices would be posted to Hospital/Departments directly involved in patient care and vice-versa. The payment of HPCA at the rates prescribed by the Government of India was extended to the entire Group C and D employees by the governing body /Finance Committee which were the supreme decision making authorities. The reply is not tenable as the Government order specified payment of patient care allowance to Group C and D (non-ministerial) employees only. As a central government autonomous body NIMHANS has adopted Central Government pay scales and generally follows the rules and regulations made by the Government of India. Besides, the issue involved was not presented properly before the governing body for specific approval to deviation from orders of Government of India. There is no justification for payment of patient care allowance to ministerial staff.

The Ministry had directed in September 1999 the NIMHANS to discontinue the payment of patient care allowance to ministerial staff with immediate effect till a Government order is made in this regard.