

CHAPTER XII : MINISTRY OF TOURISM

12.1 Irregular expenditure on engagement of staff paid from contingency

The Indiatourism offices, London, Milan and Paris incurred irregular expenditure of Rs. 83.17 lakh on engagement of staff paid from contingencies against vacant posts or for work of regular nature.

Item 12 of Schedule 1 of the Financial Powers of the Government of India's representatives abroad read with Part- IV thereof provided that the Regional Directors/ Directors of Indiatourism offices abroad could employ only class IV staff paid from contingency subject to the condition that the staff so employed was not for work of a regular nature or against the vacant posts borne on the regular establishment. In disregard of these instructions, the Indiatourism offices, London, Milan and Paris had been engaging contingency paid staff from July 2001 to March 2005 for work of regular nature or against vacant posts and incurred irregular expenditure of Rs. 83.17 lakh as under:

(Rupees in lakh)

S. No.	Indiatourism office at	Nature of work	Period	Amount
1.	London	Engagement of staff against vacant local posts.	January 2004 to March 2005	24.13 ¹
2.	Milan	Engagement of staff for the work of cleaning and direct mailing, which was work of regular nature.	July 2001 to March 2005	30.48
3.	Paris	Engagement of staff against vacant post of Secretary and for direct mailing, which was work of regular nature.	April 2002 to March 2005	28.56
Total				83.17

While the Indiatourism office at Paris approached the Ministry of Tourism in November 2003 and February 2005 for approval to the engagement of part time help on contractual basis and sanction for an India-based post of Secretary, the office at Milan sought (May 2005) approval for either two part time helps or one India-based post of Information Assistant.

The Ministry stated (October 2005) that the Indiatourism office in London engaged temporary staff against vacant posts, pending recruitment of regular staff for which approval in respect of the pay scale to be offered was awaited from the High Commission of India. In the case of Indiatourism, Paris, the

¹ At GB Pound 28,936.82 at official exchange rate of GBP1= Rs. 83.39 prevailing in March 2005

office was facing difficulties in appointment of a candidate to the post of Secretary/Stenographer as the benefits offered were not attractive enough and its proposal for converting this local based post to an India based post was under process in the Ministry. Indiatourism, Milan was not appointing the temporary staff on a regular basis, but only during peak season, to cope with the heavy workload.

The Ministry's reply was not tenable as the Heads of Indiatourism offices abroad had not been delegated with powers to employ temporary contingency paid staff against vacant posts borne on regular establishment or for work of a regular nature.

12.2 Unauthorised expenditure due to irregular continuation of post

Failure of the Ministry to stop continued operation of a post by a subordinate office abroad resulted in irregular expenditure of Rs. 57.27 lakh.

The Government of India (Department of Tourism) transferred (March 1992) one local based post of secretary-cum-stenographer from the Government of India Tourist Office (GOITO), Dubai to the GOITO, Madrid. The GOITO, Dubai continued utilizing the post and requested (February 1996) the Department of Tourism, Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation, New Delhi to cancel its order of March 1992 as there was heavy load of work. The Ministry regularised (April 1996) the post for the period March 1992 to February 1997 and later (November 1997) till September 1997, while abolishing the post of secretary-cum-stenographer with effect from October 1997.

During the course of audit, it was noticed that the GOITO, Dubai, continued to operate the post upto January 2004 even after formal abolition of the post. The office terminated the post only from February 2004. During the period October 1997 to January 2004, pay and allowances amounting to Rs. 57.27 lakh were paid to the employee.

In reply, Ministry stated (October 2005) that "though the services of the employee would have been terminated immediately but the same was done in February 2004 perhaps in anticipation of approval of this Ministry".

The reply clearly showed that even the Ministry was not sure about the reason for allowing the post to continue involving irregular expenditure of Rs.57.27 lakh.