

## CHAPTER XI : MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

### Department of Elementary Education and Literacy

#### 11.1 Inadequate monitoring leading to idling of funds/non-recovery of unspent grant

**Failure of the Ministry in monitoring utilisation of grants released to the Government of Maharashtra for establishing/upgrading District Institutes of Education Training resulted in idling of Rs. 4.84 crore for nine years. Further, it also failed to recover unspent grant of Rs. 20.41 lakh being retained by the Zilla Saksharta Samiti, Karimganj, Assam for periods ranging from two to four years.**

Audit scrutiny (October 2005) of the records of the Ministry revealed that it had not been adequately monitoring the utilisation of grants released to the State Government and Zilla Saksharta Samiti, and the unspent grants had been lying with them for considerable periods as detailed below.

##### a) Idling of funds with Government of Maharashtra

The Ministry of Human Resource Development (Ministry) launched a centrally sponsored scheme of teacher education in 1987-88. The scheme, inter alia, included establishment of District Institutes of Education and Training (DIET) by upgradation of existing Elementary Teacher Education Institutions (EIEI) wherever possible and establishment of new DIETs where necessary. Under the scheme, recurring and non-recurring central assistance was being released to the State/Union Territories Government.

Audit examination revealed (October 2005) that the Ministry had released non-recurring grant (for civil works and equipment) of Rs. 6.05 crore during 1995-96 & 1996-97 to the Government of Maharashtra for establishment of 15<sup>1</sup> DIETs. Audit noticed that the State Government had utilised Rs. 1.21 crore on upgradation of three DIETs and the balance Rs. 4.84 crore had remained unutilised. The Ministry allowed the unspent grant to be carried forward by the State Government year after year despite the fact that the land for construction of building was not available with the State Government. The release of grant of Rs. 3.37 crore in 1996-97 and permission to carry forward unspent grant of previous year was against the provision in the Ministry's sanction releasing the grant of Rs. 2.68 crore for the year 1995-96 stipulating that further grant would be released on receipt of report from the State

<sup>1</sup> Ahmednagar, Satara, Ratnagiri, Nagpur, Bhandara, Wardha, Nasik, Thana, Jalna, Jalgaon, Yeotmal, Solapur, Gadchiroli, Sindhurg and Sangli

Government of the utilisation of assistance for civil works and equipment to the extent of 75 per cent and corresponding physical progress of work. The State Government could manage land for 8 DIETs during 2003-04 and for 3 DIETs during 2004-05. Land for one DIET was yet to be acquired. The construction work of these 11 DIETs where the land had been acquired had also not commenced. Consequently, failure of the Ministry to monitor utilisation of grants resulted in idling of Rs. 4.84 crore with the Government of Maharashtra for 9 years.

In response to audit observation, Ministry furnished (November 2006) latest position of unutilised grant lying with the DIETs which works out to Rs. 2.21 crore.

**b) Non-recovery of unspent grant from Zilla Saksharta Samithi, Karimganj, Assam**

The Ministry of Human Resource Development (Ministry), Department of Elementary Education and Literacy under its programme of Nation Literacy Mission approved the budget proposal of Rs. 149.47 lakh for imparting literacy to 1.69 lakh persons in the State of Assam. As per the prescribed norms, Union Government was to give financial assistance to the extent of 2/3<sup>rd</sup> of the cost of the project and 1/3<sup>rd</sup> was to be borne by the State Government. Accordingly, the Ministry sanctioned (March 2001) central assistance of Rs. 99.65 lakh being 2/3<sup>rd</sup> of the project cost and released first instalment of Rs. 49.82 lakh to Zilla Saksharta Samithi (ZSS), Karimganj, Assam which is a society registered under the Registration of Society Act, 1860 and headed by the Deputy Commissioner, Karimganj. Audit noticed that ZSS commenced the project in June 2001 and completed it in December 2003 imparting literacy to 1.15 lakh learners. It incurred total expenditure of Rs. 62.99 lakh out of which Union Government's share (2/3<sup>rd</sup>) worked out to Rs. 41.99 lakh and the balance unspent grant of Rs. 7.83 lakh was to be refunded. Further, ZSS had also not refunded the unspent grant of Rs. 12.58 lakh to the Ministry pertaining to another programme relating to total literacy campaign lying with it since 2000-2001. Thus, failure of the Ministry to monitor recovery of unspent grant resulted in various amounts totaling Rs. 20.41 lakh being retained by the ZSS for periods ranging from two to four years. In response, Ministry stated (September 2006) that unspent balance of Rs. 20.41 lakh is only a notional figure as the ZSS did not actually get this amount since State Government did not release its share. It also informed that matter regarding release of matching state share for these projects had been taken up at the level of Chief Minister. The reply was not tenable as out of Rs. 20.41 lakh refundable by the ZSS, Rs. 12.58 lakh had been lying with it

since 2001-2002. Ministry could have ensured refund of this unspent balance before release of fresh grant.

Thus, inability of the Ministry in monitoring utilisation of grant and also releasing fresh grant in violation of its own instructions resulted in idling of grant of Rs. 4.84 crore for nine years. The Ministry also failed to monitor recovery of Rs. 20.41 lakh being retained by ZSS for periods ranging from two to four years.

### **11.2 Excess release of grant**

**Inadequate scrutiny by the Ministry resulted in excess release of grant of Rs. 0.62 crore to the Government of Karnataka under 'Improvement in Science Education in Schools' scheme. Also Rs. 2.01 crore remained to be recovered towards unutilised portion of the grant. On the matter being pointed out in audit, the Ministry recovered Rs. 0.91 crore (October 2005). The balance Rs. 1.72 crore including the excess release of Rs. 0.62 crore is yet to be recovered.**

The Ministry of Human Resource Development (Ministry) formulated a centrally sponsored scheme called 'Improvement of Science Education in School' (ISES) with a view to improving the quality of science education and promoting scientific temper as envisaged in the National Policy of Education. Under the scheme, 100 *per cent* financial assistance was provided to the State Government/UTs by the Ministry for specified purpose subject to the States undertaking the responsibility for maintenance and refurbishment of laboratories and libraries after these were brought to the desired standard with the central assistance. The approved purposes were: providing scientific kits, setting up new laboratories, upgradation of laboratories, library books and training of teachers in the government as well as aided schools.

In September 1999, the Government of Karnataka sent a proposal to the Ministry for grant of financial assistance of Rs. 7.00 crore for setting up new laboratories and science libraries and providing laboratory equipment and science kits. Ministry sanctioned (February 2002) Rs. 7.00 crore and released Rs. 5.28 crore by July 2002 after adjusting Rs. 1.59 crore on account of excess grant released and Rs. 0.13 crore being the unspent balance of earlier years.

Audit noted (May 2004) that the Ministry did not scrutinise the proposal of the State Government properly and sanctioned the funds on the basis of information supplied by the latter about the number of schools to be covered without checking the accuracy of the data. On the matter being pointed out by audit, the Ministry reviewed the position and admitted (August 2005) that the State Government had covered 316 schools twice for providing science library

books, which resulted in release of excess grant to the extent of Rs. 0.62 crore as shown in the table.

**Table A**

(Rupees in lakh)

Sl. No.	Item	Grant sanctioned			Actual utilisation			Excess Grant released
		No. of schools for which grant sanctioned	Rate per school	Amount	No. of schools covered	Rate per school	Amount	
1.	Library Books	820	0.18	147.60	504	0.17	85.68	61.92

The Ministry also informed that the state Government had covered 190 schools under 'setting up new laboratories' and 314 schools under 'up gradation of existing science laboratories' against the funds released for 310 and 510 schools under these categories respectively. It added that the refundable excess grant had been determined as Rs. 0.91 crore on the basis of actual expenditure of Rs. 4.37 crore incurred by the State Government out of Rs. 5.28 crore released. The Ministry also informed in October 2005 that the State Government had refunded Rs. 0.91 crore.

Audit, however, noticed that the Ministry had erroneously worked out the refundable amount as Rs. 0.91 crore instead of Rs. 2.63 crore (Rs. 2.01 crore + Rs. 0.62 crore towards excess release of grant) as indicated in Table A and B.

**Table B**

Sl. No.	Item	Grant sanctioned			Actual utilisation			Excess Grant released
		No. of schools for which grant sanctioned	Rate per school	Amount	No. of schools covered	Rate per school	Amount	
1.	Setting up of new lab.	310	0.90	279.00	190	0.77	146.30	132.70
2.	Upgradation of lab.	510	0.30	153.00	314	0.27	84.78	68.22
	<b>Total</b>	<b>820</b>		<b>432.00</b>	<b>504</b>		<b>231.08</b>	<b>200.92</b>

Thus, while sanctioning the grant of Rs. 7.00 crore, the Ministry failed to scrutinise the proposal of the State Government properly with reference to the number of schools already covered and released excess grant of Rs. 0.62 crore. An amount of Rs. 2.01 crore was to be recovered towards unutilised portion of grant. Hence, out of the total recoverable amount of Rs. 2.63 crore, only Rs. 0.91 crore was actually recovered and balance of Rs. 1.72 crore had not been recovered as of September 2006.

In response to audit observation, the Ministry while admitting the facts stated (September 2006) that the Government of Karnataka had been asked to refund the balance amount of Rs. 1.72 crore. It further added that in case of delay on the part of the State Government, the Ministry would also make efforts to adjust the same from the future releases of grants to be made to it under other centrally sponsored schemes.

### **11.3 Lack of monitoring leading to idling of funds**

#### **Failure of the Ministry to monitor and recover unspent grant of Rs. 3.94 crore under 'Improvement in Science Education in Schools' released to Government of Gujarat resulted in its idling for about four years**

In November 1999, the Government of Gujarat sent a proposal to the Ministry for grant of financial assistance of Rs. 3.94 crore under Improvement of Science Education in Schools (ISES) scheme for the supply of science kits to 16424 upper primary schools. Accordingly, the Ministry after adjusting the unspent grant of Rs. 1.13 lakh relating to this scheme lying with the State Government for the year 1989-90, released Rs. 3.93 crore in February 2002.

Audit noticed (October 2005) that the State Government intimated the Ministry (October 2004) after a lapse of more than two years of receipt of the grant, that it could not utilise the grant as the scheme was not communicated to the Director, Primary Education, Gujarat and proposed to surrender the grant. Ministry, even after knowing that the grant of Rs. 3.94 crore had been lying unspent, failed to recover it as of December 2005. As the State Government had already agreed to refund the unspent grant, Ministry should have adjusted the amount against the subsequent grant of Rs. 5.12 crore released in December 2004 to the State Government under another centrally sponsored scheme of Integrated Education for Disabled Children. Thus, the Ministry failed to monitor the refund of the grants which resulted in blocking Rs. 3.94 crore.

In response, the Ministry stated (June 2006) that the scheme of Integrated Education for Disabled Children was a separate scheme with a different purpose and in view of the State Governments' commitment to surrender the unspent grant, any adjustment of funds across the schemes was not considered. It further added that the State Government had been asked to refund the unspent balance. Reply of the Ministry was not tenable as it neither obtained refund nor adjusted the amount remaining unspent with the State Government.