

CHAPTER II : MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE

National Oilseed and Vegetable Oils Development Board, Gurgaon

2.1 Non-utilisation of field hostel

Due to indecisiveness of the National Oilseeds and Vegetable Oils Development Board, a field hostel continues to remain unutilised even thirteen years after completion of its construction, rendering the expenditure of Rs. 42.54 lakh unfruitful.

The National Oilseeds and Vegetable Oils Development Board (Board), Gurgaon constructed a field hostel in the premises of the Board at a cost of Rs. 39.58 lakh in March 1993 for use as temporary accommodation for the staff and guest house for field officials visiting the Board. Besides, Rs. 2.96 lakh was incurred on installation of water heating system, furnishing of hostel and payment to the consultant for framing of allotment rules.

Audit scrutiny brought out the following:

- Though the hostel was meant for use as temporary accommodation for the staff and guest house for visiting field officials, the Managing Committee of the Board decided (March 1993) to use the field hostel as staff quarters in view of the difficulties experienced by the staff in getting accommodation in the vicinity of the office complex and appointed a consultant to frame the draft allotment rules.
- In November 1993, the Managing Committee again changed its decision and directed that only hostel rules need be framed. The hostel rules were approved by the Ministry in November 1995. The rules provided for accommodating visiting scientists, resource persons, implementing agencies and other official guests in the hostel.
- The hostel remained unutilised and in September 2000, it was decided to convert one block of the hostel into Executive Director's residence after renovation at a projected cost of Rs. 2 lakh. Since the Ministry sanctioned only an amount of Rs. one lakh for renovation, the renovation was abandoned viewing that it was not possible to upgrade the field hostel with the sanctioned amount.

The Secretary of the Board intimated (December 2005) that the proposal for utilising the field hostel in an economic manner is being taken up with the Ministry. The Ministry stated (June 2006) that Board has proposed to shortly start training activities and the field hostel would be used partly as residence for Executive Director and partly as accommodation for trainees/guests.

Inexplicable delay of the Board about the use of the field hostel and its continued vacancy after 13 years of completion of its construction, casts serious doubt about the need of the hostel besides rendering the expenditure of Rs. 42.54 lakh unfruitful.