

CHAPTER VI: MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS

6.1 Injudicious decision of construction of Scholar Transit Hostel

In pursuance of a decision of Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education, Tropical Forest Research Institute constructed a Scholar Transit Hostel in October 2001 at a cost of Rs.1.03 crore which could not be utilised due to lack of demand and its isolated location.

In October 1993, Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education (ICFRE) took a policy decision that every institute under its fold must have at least an Administrative Block, Library cum Information Centre, Scientist Hostel, Scholar Hostel, Rest House and Residential Quarters as per requirement. Accordingly, Tropical Forest Research Institute, Jabalpur (TFRI) decided to construct a 48 suite Scholar Transit Hostel to accommodate research scholars viz. junior research fellows, senior research fellows, research associates appointed in various research projects of institute and scholars doing Ph.D. The Scholar Transit Hostel was to be built keeping in view the future expansion of the Institute's activities.

The construction of 48 suite Scholar Transit Hostel was started in March 1995 and completed in January 2000 at a cost of Rs.1.03 crore. The possession of the building was taken by TFRI in October 2001.

Audit scrutiny revealed that the 48 suite Scholar Transit Hostel building was lying unutilised and had not been furnished with items like beds, tables, chairs etc, as of March 2007. In September 2006, TFRI stated that full utilisation of the Scholar Transit Hostel would not take place, even if it was furnished, as the Institute had a 20 room rest house and a 24 suite Scientist hostel which was also not being utilised to the fullest extent because of various reasons such as isolated location of the complex, limited number of scholars, mostly female scholars etc., ICFRE stated in November 2007 that the 48 suite Scholar Transit Hostel had now been leased out to Indian Institute of Information Technology, Jabalpur till June 2008 for an amount of Rs.0.48 lakh per month plus service charges. Further, it was also noticed in audit that another 19 room transit hostel costing Rs.50 lakh had been constructed under a World Bank project and was lying under the possession of TFRI since January 1999. The same could also not be utilised by TFRI and was being used by Kendriya Vidyalaya (Project School) as class rooms and for other curricular activities etc.

Thus, the decision of TFRI for construction of 48 suite Scholar Transit Hostel was not based on actual requirement as the same could not be utilised for the intended purpose. This injudicious decision resulted in non-utilisation of

Scholar Transit Hostel for more than five and half years, besides idling of investment of Rs.1.03 crore.

The matter was reported to the Ministry in August 2007 and their reply was awaited as of December 2007.