

Public Works Department Delhi Government

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Functions

Public Works Department is engaged in planning, designing, construction and maintenance of government assets in the field of built environment and infrastructure development.

Findings

- Public Works Department (PWD) is responsible for construction and maintenance of most of the Master Plan roads in Delhi. Construction of flyovers at traffic junctions of Delhi roads is one of its major achievements.
- A City Museum conceived more than 15 years ago is yet to take off, resulting in expenditure of Rs 30.85 lac incurred due to restrictions on construction activities in the vicinity of protected monuments. The scope of the project and the time overrun will have an inevitable impact on the project cost.
- Punjabi Bagh underpass and Mayapuri flyover have come under the scanner for the miserable quality of work. Cracks have already appeared on the sidewalls just a short period after both were opened for public use.
- There are significant gaps between the approved outlay and the actual expenditure in the Five Year Plans. In the Ninth Five Year Plan the outlay for the secretariat office building was Rs 900 lac whereas the actual expenditure was just Rs 7.92 lac. During the Tenth Five Year Plan the outlay has been kept at Rs 100 lac.

Reforms

- The multiplicity of engineering divisions in New Delhi Municipal Council, Delhi Development Authority, Municipal Corporation of Delhi could be rationalised by bringing them under the umbrella of the PWD. Then convert each zonal office of PWD into an independent business centre. These independent business centres will openly and fairly compete for contracts. The business centre will decide on salaries and promotions of personnel on the basis of the performance of the centre. The centralisation of the public works functions would generate greater accountability, less bickering and turf wars. The decentralisation and competition within PWD would ensure timely completion of projects without overruns.
- For transparency, the Delhi government should put up all tenders, bids, and selected bids of all the projects on its website. The important components of the awarded contracts like the details of the work, time schedule for completion, payment installments should be clearly spelled out. It should update the information on the website every month.
- To reduce false or fraudulent claims by companies and individuals supplying any good or service to the government, a False Claims Act (or 'Quit Tam' Act, as it is known as in the United States) should be introduced. Under the Act any person initiating a legal action or providing information to the government for successful action will receive at least 15 percent but not more than 25 percent of the proceeds of the action or settlement of the claim, depending upon the extent to which the person substantially contributed to the prosecution of the action.

- Often employees of the government have better knowledge of fraudulent actions of their peers. Honest civil servants will find it easier to come forward, particularly against a superior, if the career and personal security was guaranteed by a 'Whistleblower Protection Law.'

The Public Works Department (PWD) builds and maintains the physical infrastructure of Delhi. It has:

- **Engineer-in-Chief**
- **4 Chief Engineers**
- **23 Sub Engineers (Civil)**
- **3 Sub Engineers (Electrical)**
- **4 Senior Architects**
- **93 Executive Engineers, 420 Assistant Engineers, 876 Joint Engineers**
- **Total staff strength as of March 2003: 2,686**

Several flyovers are being constructed by the PWD. The Kalindi bypass is among the ongoing projects. The PWD claims to use state-of -the-art technology in construction. Consultants are employed as and when required for projects, and their expertise is utilised. The PWD works in tandem with the Central Public Works Division (CPWD) when it comes to certain areas like Quality Assurance. Refer to Table 1 for manpower requirements and planning in the Department.

Table 1: Manpower Requirements and Planning in the PWD

	Work Load (Rs in crore)	Number of Sanctioned Posts		
1997–1998	517	3,711	1998–1999	560
	3,715			
1999–2000	706	3,715		
2000–2001	812	3,715		
2001–2002	840	3,750		

Source : www.delhigovt.nic.in/dept/pwd/about.htm

Problems according to the CAG Report, March 2002

Irregular Expenditure on Deployment of Personnel

According to the CAG Report of March 2002, unauthorised deployment of personnel in excess of the sanctioned strength resulted in irregular expenditure of Rs 38.16 lac. The government had sanctioned only four posts of *chowkidars* for the office premises of the Public Works Division XXI. However, as many as 17 *chowkidars* were employed, resulting in the deployment of 13 *chowkidars* in excess of the sanctioned strength. Expenditure incurred by the Division on the pay and allowances of these excess personnel was Rs 17.89 lac during the period from April 2001 to August 2002.

Unfruitful Expenditure on Construction of the City Museum

On account of the failure to foresee restrictions on construction activities in the vicinity of protected monuments, a prestigious project for the construction of a City Museum conceived more than 15 years ago is yet to take off but Rs 30.85 lac has already been spent. More than 50 percent of the land acquired for the purpose has been taken over by the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation.

Non-recovery of Outstanding Dues from a Defaulting Contractor

Failure of the Department to initiate prompt and effective action to enforce recovery of Rs 17.68 lac from a defaulting contractor resulted in the dues remaining unrealised for nearly two years. According to the standard conditions of contract of the Central Public Works Department, if a contractor fails to complete the work entrusted to him within the stipulated time, the contract is to be rescinded and the balance work should be executed through another agency or departmental at the risk and cost of the defaulting contractor.

The Executive Engineer, PWD XIV Division, awarded the work relating to the widening and strengthening of road number 25 from its junction with road number 89 to 'R' Block, New Rajender Nagar, to a contractor in June 1995 at the tendered cost of Rs 90.95 lac, against the estimated cost of Rs 1.18 crore. The work did not finish on time and hence the Executive Engineer allotted the remaining work to another contractor, while the first one had been paid for the work he had done. According to the risk and cost clause in the agreement, the first contractor had to pay Rs 21.34 lac to PWD. This amount is yet to be recovered from him, and this shows one of the inefficiencies in choosing a competent contractor, and also a lack of credible method of choosing responsible contractors. Additionally, the Superintendent Engineer levied compensation amounting to Rs 11.83 lac in May 2002 for disproportionate/ slow progress of work, which also has to be recovered from him.

Reforms

- The multiplicity of engineering divisions like New Delhi Municipal Council, Delhi Development Authority, Municipal Corporation of Delhi could be rationalised by bringing them under the umbrella of the PWD. Then each of the zonal offices of PWD can be converted into an independent business centre. These independent business centres—zonal offices—will openly and fairly compete for contracts. The business centre will decide on salaries and promotions of its personnel on the basis of the performance of the centre. The centralisation of the functions would generate greater accountability, less bickering and turf wars. The decentralisation and competition within PWD would ensure timely completion of projects without overruns.
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Department of Planning