

THIRTEENTH KERALA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

**COMMITTEE
ON
PUBLIC ACCOUNTS
(2011-2014)**

THIRTY SIXTH REPORT

(Presented on 28th January, 2014)



SECRETARIAT OF THE KERALA LEGISLATURE
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM
2014

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On

**Action Taken by Government on the Recommendations
contained in the Twenty-third Report of the
Committee on Public Accounts
(1991-1993)**

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Shri G. P. Unnikrishnan, Under Secretary.

INTRODUCTION

I, the Chairman, Committee on Public Accounts, having been authorised by the Committee to present this Report on their behalf, present the Thirty Sixth Report on Action Taken by Government on the Recommendations contained in the Twenty-third Report of the Committee on Public Accounts (1991-93).

The Committee considered and finalised this Report at the meeting held on 21st August, 2013.

Thiruvananthapuram,
28th January, 2014.

DR. T. M. THOMAS ISAAC,
Chairman,
Committee on Public Accounts.

REPORT

This Report deals with the Action Taken by Government on the recommendations contained in the Twenty-third Report of Public Accounts Committee (1991-93).

The Twenty-third Report of the Committee on Public Accounts (1991-1993) was presented to the House on 23rd July, 1992. The Report contains 9 recommendations relating to Higher Education Department. The Report was forwarded to the Government on 3-2-1993 to furnish the Statement of Action Taken on the recommendations contained in the Report and the final reply was received on 8-6-2012.

The Committee examined the Statement of Action Taken received from Government at its meetings held on 8-10-1997, 10-8-2004, 24-8-2004 and on 17-10-2012.

The Committee approved all the replies furnished by the department on the recommendations. The recommendations of the Committee and the Statement of Action Taken furnished by Government are incorporated in this Report.

HIGHER EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

Recommendation

(Sl. No. 1, Para No. 14)

Though the Government decided in 1967 to establish a printing press with modern technology in printing it took twenty years for its partial commissioning. There was delay in the work of construction of the building for which Government sanction was accorded in 1974. The building consists of six blocks of which two blocks were completed in 1979, another two in 1986 and the remaining two in 1989. The original estimate for the civil works was ₹ 54.50 lakh in 1974 while it had to be revised to ₹ 160.92 lakh in 1987. The Education Department is blaming the Public Works Department for this delay, as that Department was in charge of construction.

Action Taken

The construction of the Government Press, Mannanthala was completed on 1985. All modern machinery was established in the said press. Now the press is functioning in two shifts. The printing work of lottery tickets, PRD items, text book are being undertaken there.

Recommendation

(Sl. No. 2, Para No. 15)

It is seen from the note received from Government, that delay ranging from two to three years was there in commissioning the various machines from the date of delivery.

Action Taken

All the machines had been commissioned except Photo Type Setter. They are working properly.

Recommendation

(Sl. No. 3, Para No. 16)

The printing technology is undergoing rapid modernisation and something modern today would become obsolete tomorrow. A project envisaged in 1967 took twenty years to materialize. It is natural that by this time the whole project would be bereft of the most modern Printing Technology. The Saga of 'Photo Type Setter' bears ample testimony to this view. The 'Photo Type Setter' delivered on 17-10-1985 and 'Graphic Plate Processor' delivered on 18-11-1985 have not yet been installed. When the Committee visited the Press on 15-1-1992, they enquired why these machines were not installed. The Secretary to Government stated that Photo Type Setter was supplied by a U.K. firm by realising 90% payments in advance. The operational defect of the equipment could not be rectified due to lack of enthusiasm on the part of the supplier. The guarantee period of one year was over and the original manufacturer had stopped the manufacture of the item. The witness stated that efforts were being made through the agent to get the equipment installed.

Action Taken

The Graphic Plate Processor is working properly at present. The V.H.S.E. Department have expressed their willingness to take over the Photo Type Setter if the same is put back to working condition. Action is being taken to get the machine repaired to hand over the V.H.S.E. Department.

Regarding Para Nos. 14, 15 and 16 the Committee decided to take further evidence from the concerned officials. Accordingly the Committee took evidence from the Director of Printing at the meeting held on 24-8-2004 and approved the Statement of Action Taken in the light of the explanation put forth by the witness.

Recommendation

(Sl. No. 4, Para No. 17)

The Committee recommend that urgent steps should be taken to commission the Photo Type Setter and Graphic Plate Machine. The date of Commissioning of these equipments should be intimated to the Committee.

Action Taken

The Graphic Plate Processor was commissioned on 21st July, 1994.

Regarding the "Photo Type Setter" in spite of best and repeated efforts, it could not be got repaired for want of import spare parts and competent Technician to repair it. Further this technology has now become almost obsolete and still advanced Printing Technology like D.T.P. has since been introduced in Government Press, Mannanthala. The proposal of the Director of Printing to dispose of the Photo Type Setter is under the consideration of Government.

Recommendation

(Sl. No. 5, Para No. 18)

The Committee hopes that Government would provide adequate attention to solve the problems affecting the productivity. They recommend that monthly performance chart of each machinery be maintained up-to-date and percentage of utilisation of rated capacity of each item be intimated to the Committee at the earliest.

Action Taken

(XXIII) Performance Chart Register for machine is being maintained.

Recommendation

(Sl. No. 6, Para No. 19)

The Mannanthala Unit has enough scope for better functioning. It is ideally located with a large compound, enough building space and modern machinery. The Committee is of the view that the unit could function well if put under efficient management. The Secretary to Government informed the Committee that the State Planning Board was seized of the situation and they had mooted a study on the performance of Printing Department.

Action Taken

The evaluation Division of State Planning Board conducted a study on the working of the Government Press, Mannanthala. On the basis of this report the Director of Printing, Government of India and the Educational Consultants India Ltd. (ECIL) were consulted for the preparation of a project report for the modernisation of Government Presses in the State. The ECIL have demanded ₹ 7,04,460 as fee. The Director of Printing and Superintendent of Government Presses have discussed with Director (Printing), Government of India and reported that the modernisation programme can be taken up in a phased manner for a period of five years 1995-99 either as Plan Programme or Non-Plan Programme in view of the Budgetary provision. Government have now constituted an Expert Committee comprising of the following four members to submit a study report regarding improvement and modernisation of Government Presses:

1. Shri H. Gangiah, Director of Printing, Stationery and Publications, Karnataka.
2. Shri Ramkumar, Deputy General Manager, Quality Control, Printing Machine Division, H.M.T., Kalamassery.
3. Shri K. Swaminathan, 25/2160, Thyvila Road, Thiruvananthapuram.
4. Shri Mathew V. John, Superintendent of Government Presses, Thiruvananthapuram.

The Committee has been requested to submit the report to Government within six months .

Recommendation

(Sl. No. 7, Para No. 20)

The Committee are of the view that a study team as envisaged by the Planning Board should include the experts in Printing Technology, Business Management and Material Management. The aim of Government should be to run the unit on the best possible lines. In order to achieve this, the financial and materials management should be streamlined.

Recommendation

(Sl. No. 8, Para No. 21)

It is seen that one Block of the building had been completed and handed over to the Printing Department in 1984. But it could not be put to use for want of air conditioning facility and H.T. power supply. The costly machines erected could not be put to use due to the non-availability of trained persons. If action had been taken sufficiently in advance, the problem of non-availability of trained hands could have been solved. If all these were arranged in a phased manner with sufficient planning and forethought, the idling of machinery resulting in unnecessary locking up of Government money could have been avoided. The Committee cannot held commenting on this aspect. They hope that all these hindrances have been overcome now and the unit is working in full capacity. The latest position may be intimated to the Committee.

Action Taken

Government Press, Mannanthala, is now working in full swing since all the machines have been commissioned except “the Photo Type Setter” and put to regular production.

Recommendation

(Sl. No. 9, Para No. 27)

The Committee opines that as the special audit was conducted by the Accountant General at the instance of Government, there was no need for conducting a fresh audit in the cases. The Vigilance Department should complete the investigation expeditiously and register the case on the basis of the available evidence and pursue further action.

Action Taken

The Vigilance Department registered a criminal case with CC No. 355/95 on the basis of the recommendations. The charge sheet relating to the above case was laid before the Judicial 1st Class Magistrate Court, Kayamkulam on 16-8-1995 against Shri Shamsudeen, Shri Balakrishna Pillai and Smt. Abida Beegam as a1, a2, a3 under Section 120 (B) and 477 (A) I.P.C. During the pendency of the proceedings the first accused Shri Shamsudeen died and the charge against him

was abated. The court found accused are guilty and sentenced to undergo simple imprisonment for six months each under Section 120 B and 477 (A) I.P.C. respectively. Against this judgment Smt. Abida Beegam filed criminal appeal with No. 73/02 and Shri Balakrishna Pillai filed Criminal appeal with No. 77/02 before the Additional Session Court, Mavelikkara and on hearing by the Court the appellant were acquitted of the charges levelled against them giving them the benefit of doubt. Smt. Abida Beegam and Shri Balakrishna Pillai were retired from service and all service benefits were given in view of the court direction.

Thiruvananthapuram,
28th January, 2014.

DR. T. M. THOMAS ISAAC,
Chairman,
Committee on Public Accounts.