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Survey on Pry school project-II

Record-keeping found faulty

Staff Correspondent

Standard tender regulations were not followed in the first phase construction of the primary schools under the Universal Primary Education (UPE) programme. Widespread irregularities in record keeping and maintenance of quality control have been identified as the most defective parts of the programmes by the verification team.

Inadequate records

The survey observed that records of supply of construction materials to different districts by the procurement and supply office of primary directorate at Chittagong Port were not consistent with the records of receiving these materials by the district level office of Directorate of Primary Education and Facilities Department. The survey observed a pronounced tendency of awarding contract without standard tender procedure. Seventy per cent of repair works was done without tender. In many cases, construction of new classrooms and latrines were not in conformity with the specifications.

The irregularities and bad quality of work by the contractors indicate lack of proper supervision by the engineers at field level. Operation and maintenance activity of the project had been grossly neglected. The

system of record keeping was identified by the verification team as the most defective part of the project.

The actual expenditure during 1980-85 for civil works and furniture (Taka 6282.57 lakh) exceeded the approved PP provision (Taka 3858.02 lakh) by about 65 per cent.

Out of the total quantum of MS angles supplied to different districts, only 43 per cent was utilised thus leaving an unbalanced of 57 per cent. Similarly in case of CI sheets, the quantum utilised stood at 232,190.4 square metres and the balance 38 per cent was left unutilised.

Although the overall assessment of quality civil works suggests that 60.75 per cent of the new construction falls under the middle category, their present condition is reasonably distributed among three categories, i.e. good, fair and poor. The present condition of the roofs of the schools was found to be good in 39.47 per cent cases, fair in 38.65 per cent cases and poor in 21.88 per cent cases. The survey said that roof condition of 3130 schools under study was poor. About 31 per cent schools have kutchra floor and 69 per cent have pucca floor. Their present condition is fair in 45 p.c. schools, poor in 39 p.c. schools and good in remaining 16 per cent schools.

The overall rating of quality of

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Record keeping

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repair works reveal a dismal picture. In 51 per cent cases, the rating is poor and in 44 per cent cases, it is fair. Only in five cases, the quality of repair works is good.

The project evaluation committee of the Planning Commission had decided that a stock-taking of the civil works undertaken and furniture supplied so far on the project should be made in order to determine quantitative and qualitative achievements of this project. The survey was conducted on 10,000 primary schools throughout the country. Universal Primary Education Programme is being funded by the World Bank. From the third phase beginning from July 1, 1989, Asian Development Bank (ADB) will also finance the programme in Chittagong Division only while the rest three divisions will be taken care of by the World Bank. The responsibility of construction and maintenance will then be transferred to the upazila parishads in place of the Facilities Department of the Education Ministry.

In order to address future programmes with a comprehensive and integrated approach, the verification team observed that the irregularities which have been identified should be investigated into on a priority basis. Remedial measures should also be taken to complete the incomplete new construction works. The study said that decision should be taken for utilisation of surplus construction materials lying at different stores. It said that successful implementation of UPE projects calls for undertaking some important steps which include phasing of the project in six stages i.e. project planning, physical planning and design, tender administration, project monitoring and quality control, operation and maintenance and feedback and evaluation.