



## ***Public Works Department***

### **At a Glance**

#### **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 9 crore whereas the actual expenditure was just Rs 7.92 lac. During the Tenth Five Year Plan the outlay has been kept at Rs 1 crore.

#### **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.'