25.1 Grant to Oriental Language Teachers

During the fiscal year 2008-09 and the period July to December 2009, some Rs 26.48 million and Rs 14.33 million have respectively been paid as allowances by the four Education Directorates to teachers of socio cultural organisations for conducting evening classes in oriental languages, as shown in Table 25-1.

Table 25-1 Grant to Oriental Language Teachers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education Directorate Zone</th>
<th>No of Registered Schools</th>
<th>No of Teachers</th>
<th>Fiscal Year 2008-09 Rs m</th>
<th>Period July to December 2009 Rs m</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>272</td>
<td>592</td>
<td>10.05</td>
<td>5.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>502</td>
<td>7.94</td>
<td>3.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>421</td>
<td>4.90</td>
<td>3.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>244</td>
<td>3.59</td>
<td>1.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>26.48</td>
<td>14.33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The monthly allowances paid to teachers, categorised as degree holders, advance level holders and ordinary level holders, were Rs 2,000, Rs 1,500 and Rs 1,000 respectively. Payments are effected on the basis of monthly return of attendances submitted by the president/manager of the evening school.

Further to paragraph 17.2 of the 2007-08 Audit Report, a total of 160 school files have been examined at the four Education Directorates. Control over payments of these grants was again found to be unsatisfactory. Common features noted were:

- Visiting Officers did not submit their monthly work plan of visits in advance on a regular basis. Sometimes work plans of visits for three months were submitted together or with long delays of up to four months. Some monthly work plans submitted were not approved by a Senior Officer, while others were approved after visits had already started for the month.

- The teachers’ attendance sheets have not always been certified by the Visiting Officers prior to payment. Inconsistencies were noted between the returns of teachers’ attendance submitted by the socio cultural organisations and the Visiting Officer’s reports.

- Most of the socio cultural organisations did not submit their lists of pupils on roll for the academic year. According to the Visiting Officer’s reports, the presence of students during school visits was on the low side, compared to the number on roll. The ratio of teacher to pupils of 1:25 might not have been respected.
Other observations made for specific Education Directorate were:

- No Visiting Officer has been appointed for Mandarin evening schools at Education Directorate Zones 1 and 2. Allowances have been paid without the monthly returns of teachers’ attendance, submitted by the president/manager of these schools, being certified by a Visiting Officer.

- In the case of Hindi evening schools, no report had been submitted by one Visiting Officer for the period July 2008 to December 2009 in Education Directorate Zone 2 while in the case of Tamil and Telugu evening schools, no reports had been submitted by the two Visiting Officers for the period July 2008 to April 2009 and July 2008 to June 2009 respectively in Education Directorate Zone 4. Despite the non-submission of the Visiting Officer’s reports, payments of allowances had been effected to the evening schools.

- Several cases were noted in Education Directorate Zones 1 and 3 whereby evening schools had ceased operation since a long time, some as far back as January 2004, but were still on the registration list at the Education Directorates. No action has been initiated to de-register them.

- A Visiting Officer had not reported promptly to the Education Directorate Zone 3 the continuous absences of two teachers in two different schools visited by him since May 2009 so as to stop payment of allowances. It was only in October 2009 that the matter was reported to the Education Directorate and payment of allowances stopped. Allowances amounting to some Rs 13,000 had already been paid to them.

**Recommendations**

- Visiting Officers should submit their monthly work plan of visits to Education Directorate in advance to be approved by a Senior Officer of the Directorate.

- Education Directorate should ensure that Visiting Officers report promptly all cases of absences noted during their visits at evening schools.

- Attendance sheets of teachers should be certified by the Visiting Officers before allowances are paid.

**25.1.1 Payment of Mileage Allowance to Visiting Officers**

Visiting Officers are entitled to mileage allowances whenever visits are made by them to evening schools. A review of mileage allowance claims paid at Education Directorate Zones 2, 3 and 4 showed that schools found in the same locality were being visited by the Visiting Officers on different days when these visits could have been effected on the same day. These visits may have been done with a view to earning more mileage allowances.

Visits to schools located in the same locality should be combined to ensure a more judicious use of public funds.
Ministry’s Reply

- The Zone Directorates had issued instructions to Visiting Officers under their responsibility for timely submission of monthly work plan.

- Visiting Officers are being requested to monitor the daily attendance of teachers during their visits. It is proposed to introduce an attendance system where records will also be kept on daily attendance of students.

- A special monitoring system is being instituted whereby a team of Officers from each Zone will be called upon to make surprise visits and check whether work plans of Visiting Officers are being adhered to.

- Zone Directorates are being requested to arrange for combined visits within the same locality so as to make more judicious use of financial resources.

25.2 State of Mauritius Scholarships

During the fiscal year 2008-09 and the period July to December 2009, some Rs 117.6 million and Rs 86.2 million were respectively disbursed by the Government under the Laureate Scheme which provides for 30 scholarships annually in various fields of study.

Although the Laureates and their Sureties signed a bond for the sum of Rs 500,000 to the effect that the Laureates would return and exercise in Mauritius immediately after their studies, a large majority of them had not done so.

From a tracer study carried out by the MOE on past Laureates, covering period 1995 to 2001, out of a total of 182 beneficiaries, 115 had responded. Of these, 81 representing 70 per cent, had settled down abroad or were working/studying there.

Information received by the MOE from the Passport and Immigration Office regarding the movement of Laureates proclaimed in years 2000 to 2004, revealed that 47 to 90 per cent of the Laureates had not returned to Mauritius after completion of their studies.

A follow up of the Laureates proclaimed in year 1996 has revealed the following:

- The whereabouts of the Laureates when they had completed their studies were not properly monitored. Hence, the number of Laureates who had actually returned and worked in Mauritius was not known.

- According to information obtained from the Passport and Immigration Office and the Postal Services, most of the Laureates have address as “unknown, left country or passed away”. Had these information been requested by the MOE at an earlier stage, that is in the last year of studies or soon after completion of studies, the Laureates could have been traced and the bonds recovered.

- 21 personal files of Laureates examined were not updated with correspondences/letters relating to enforcement of bond initiated by the State Law Office (SLO).
25.2.1 Enforcement of Bonds against Sureties

As of February 2010, the position regarding the enforcement of bonds by the SLO against 90 Sureties of the Laureates proclaimed in years 1995 to 2000 was as follows:

- Only seven had refunded the bond in full while eight proposed to pay by instalments.
- Two cases have become time barred in year 2009 and the bonds irrecoverable.
- In one case, the SLO recommended for a waiver of the enforcement of bond as it would be difficult for the Laureate to find a job consonant to his qualifications.
- In four cases, plaints had been lodged by the SLO.
- The remaining 68 cases were still in process at the SLO.

Conclusion

The country is not reaping full benefits from its investments on the Scholars, which for the fiscal year 2008-09 alone amounted to some Rs 117.6 million. Most of the Laureates were not contributing to the development of the country.

Recommendations

Movement of Laureates should be closely monitored. There is an urgent need for the Ministry to review the terms and conditions attached to the Laureate Scheme in order to retain the Laureates and to provide the country with qualified human resources.

Ministry’s Reply

Although bonds were being signed on a condition of the scholarship, it was only in 2005 that Government took a decision to enforce the bonds.

With regards to the 68 cases still in process at the SLO, it has been agreed with the SLO that priority of consideration would be given to cases which were due to be time barred in the near future. Letters have been issued to Universities with a view to obtaining relevant information on those 68 Laureates.

The Ministry is in the process of reviewing the whole Scheme with a view to remedying the situation and also to making the Scheme more equitable and inclusive.

25.3 Supply, Installation and Commissioning of Personal Computers and Laser Printers – Rs 7,384,828

In November 2009, a contract for the supply, installation and commissioning of 300 Personal Computers (PCs) and 265 laser printers was awarded to a Contractor for the sum of Rs 7,384,828. As per conditions of contract, the computer equipment were to be delivered, installed and commissioned by 6 January 2010. The Ministry has earmarked to distribute
these PCs and printers to 261 Headmasters and to five primary Government Schools (GS) by 11 January 2010.

The 300 PCs were delivered by the Contractor and commissioned by the Central Information Systems Division (CISD) during period 21 January to 24 February 2010. On 11 March 2010, the CISD reported that all the microprocessors supplied in the PCs were of a lower capacity, contrary to specifications. As of May 2010, only 22 microprocessors were replaced by the Contractor. However, no commissioning report was seen from the CISD confirming this replacement. Regarding the remaining 278 PCs, replacement of microprocessors by the Contractor was still being awaited. Meanwhile, all the computer equipment were kept on top of each other on the floor at the Central Supplies Division. The Headmasters and pupils of the primary GSs were deprived of computer facilities.

**Recommendations**

The Ministry should consider the option of cancelling the contract as per General Conditions of Contract and also to report the Contractor to the Procurement Policy Office for default so that recurrence of same could be avoided in the future.

**Ministry’s Reply**

The Ministry terminated the contract on 31 May 2010 in accordance with the provisions of the Bidding Documents. The Contractor is accordingly taking back the 300 PCs from the Central Supplies Division.

Part of the Performance Bond relating to PCs was also seized by the Ministry.

The Ministry has subsequently made representations to the Procurement Policy Office against the Contractor for gross default.