

Research Update on Delhi Handbook 2003

The *State of Governance: Delhi Citizen Handbook 2003* was a compilation of agencies, boards, corporations and departments of Delhi Government. The research was an administrative and financial analysis of the organisation, which resulted in various recommendations--short-term and long-term--and reforms needed to make the system better. Update on that research and the changes that have happened in these two years (2003-2005) were an inevitable part when the second handbook was envisaged. However, the challenge was to choose the government bodies that were most worthy of such update. An update on all areas covered by the Delhi Citizen Handbook 2003 was beyond the scope of the book as this handbook was already researching on as many departments as the first handbook!

After much analysis, five areas including departments and schemes were chosen for update. They were chosen on the basis of their irrelevance, misuse of funds and reforms that were earlier suggested as immediate measures to be implemented to stop wastage of resources and manpower. The government bodies chosen for the research were:

- Department of Chit Fund
- Department of Prevention of Food Adulteration
- Delhi Energy Development Agency
- Gosadan scheme – Department of Development
- Holiday Homes for Industrial Workers – Department of Labour

The Methodology

With the introduction of the Delhi Right to Information (RTI) Act, 2001 RTI applications seemed the most convenient and fullproof way to procure information without exposing oneself to the usual bureaucratic maze and incessant reluctance of the officials to give information. However, filing information under RTI was also not as easy as it seemed. The process can be quite unwieldy and difficult if one

is not aware of the process of filing the applications. The experience was mixed; there were some departments that readily took in the applications, however there were also departments where the officials showed strong reluctance in accepting the applications. However, with persistence, the information was available for all five areas and this experience can definitely be counted as a triumph for one of the most innovative legislation in recent times – the right to access government information – Right to Information.

Department of Chit Fund

The Department of Chit Fund supervises the activities of the chit fund companies in Delhi through the Madras Chit Fund Act, 1961. The main reforms that were suggested for this Department were that the government should relieve itself from the responsibility of approving bye-laws and increasing paid-capital by entrusting it to chit fund companies or federations. The government should only be involved at the stage of registration and should provide information on registered and debarred companies for the benefits of members. Thus, it was concluded that there should not be any government role in chit fund management.

However, even after two years when we researched on the Department, it was revealed that the Department still has a registration of 2,780 companies in Delhi. The budget estimate was Rs 23 lac in 2004-05 and Rs 29 lac in 2005-06. When asked about the expenditure for the past three years, the information, through RTI, was furnished as detailed in Table 1.

Table 1: Comparative Expenditure for 2003-2005 (Rs in lac)

<i>Heads</i>	<i>2003-04</i>	<i>2004-05</i>	<i>2005-06</i> <i>(Till 31 Oct 2005)</i>
Salaries	15.5	18	15
Other Expenditure	1.24	14	0.88
Advertisements and Publicity	0.86	0.87	
Med. Trt.			0.07

Thus, as it can be seen that the government resources are still being utilised for maintaining a department that has lost its relevance over the

years. There are arguments that a meagre amount is allocated for this purpose. But too many small pieces get together to make the big picture and the same logic applies to with government budget. Also there has been no change in the procedures of regulating chit funds and grievance redressal mechanisms in the Department.

Prevention of Food Adulteration Department

The research conducted on the Prevention of Food Adulteration (PFA) Department in 2003 revealed some interesting facts.

- The number of registered food establishment was 1.5 lac to be inspected by 37 inspectors. According to statistics, if one inspector visits one shop in a day then the same shop would be inspected only after 17 years.
- The PFA Department collected 4, 485 samples in the period of 1994-99, out of which 607 were found to be adulterated. The Department initiated 557 cases and courts settled 467 cases. The rate of conviction was 44% and rate of acquittal was 29%.
- The infrastructure in the Department is very poor. Against the target of 12 food samples to be lifted per inspector, each one of the 37 inspectors lifted only an average of two samples per month.
- It is also interesting that the Department does not know the number of food establishments in Delhi.

Reforms suggested for prevention of food adulteration were to increase the number of inspectors so that better monitoring could be done. PFA should be transferred to then envisaged Consumer Protection Department. However, there does not seem to be much difference in the performance of the Department.

The Department has 34 inspectors out of the sanctioned post of 37 inspectors. There is still no information available with PFA regarding the number of food establishments in Delhi.

Table 2 gives information regarding the food samples lifted, instituted cases of adulteration and convicted cases in 2003 and 2004.

Table 2: Information on Prevention of Food Adulteration

<i>Samples</i>	2003	2004
Number of food samples	2,080	2,413
Number of samples adulterated	169	188
Number of samples misbranded	49	51
Number of cases instituted	404	252
Number of cases convicted	23	109

Thus, it can be seen that the conviction rate has only dropped over the years and the number of inspectors have not increased. The Department needs immediate restructuring and the number of inspectors has to be increased substantially.

Delhi Energy Development Agency (DEDA)

In the first Handbook, we recommended that the Delhi Energy Development Agency should be closed down. The decision for closure was taken in the Cabinet meeting, Government of Delhi in August 2004 and as such there are no plans and schemes for 2005-06. Only winding up exercise is in progress. The approved allocation for the Integrated Urban Energy Program was Rs 60 lac, which are primarily being used for salary purpose and Rs 40 lac has been allocated for battery bus in 2005-06. According to the officials at DEDA, no expenditure is being incurred in the propagation of schemes and the grant in aid is used only for salaries and allowances. The agency is being closed down, but it should be done as soon as possible without wasting more resources. The Evaluation Report of the Planning Department recommended the closure of DEDA in 1997. It took eight years and several lac of worthless expenditure to realise the significance of the suggestions or to act on the recommendations.

Holiday Homes for Industrial Workers – Department of Labour

‘Setting up of Holiday Homes for Industrial Workers’ is a plan scheme under the Department of Labour. According to the earlier research done on this scheme, it was observed that there was an apparent skewness in the expenditure and outlay of the scheme. The booking/occupancy rates were very poor because of poor quality. The amount

of subsidy has also been quite considerable in the light of infrastructure and actual occupancy. The report of Evaluation Unit of the Planning Department, NCT Delhi concluded that the Labour Department is not in a position to manage these homes and should shut them down immediately.

However, even after two years there is no action on that and holiday homes still operate with similar budgets and allocations. Information that was procured only substantiated the abovementioned points. Table 3 gives the allocations and expenditure of holiday homes over the years.

**Table 3: Allocation and Expenditure of Holiday Homes
(Rs in lac)**

Year	Allocation		Expenditure	
	Plan	Non-Plan	Plan	Non-Plan
2001-02	2	6.3	0	4
2002-03	0.6	6	0	6
2003-04	4	7	3	4
2004-05	20	11.5	18	11
2005-06	30	10	0.06	2

Analysing the expenditure in the light of total number of occupants each year will show that the holiday homes have not been performing as efficiently as they should, which would require their immediate closure. Table 4 gives the total number occupants and total income generated from visitors.

**Table 4: Absolute Number of Visitors and Income Generated
2001-2005(Rs)**

Year	Number of Occupants	Total Income Generated
2001-02	248	1,23,661*
2002-03	539	21,150
2003-04	694	26,750
2004-05	617	21,825
2005-06	551	27,225

**Due to non-availability of records, total income of labour welfare centres and holiday homes were furnished in the RTI applications*

At present, eight employees are working in the scheme at different holiday homes on diverted capacities or as part time employees. The total expenditure incurred on miscellaneous items except telephone charges, electricity and water in the current year 2005-06 is Rs 1, 15, 690. The viability of the scheme can also be judged by the fact that there are more visitors from the Delhi Government who use these homes than the industrial workers for whom it was actually made. The number of Delhi Government employees as visitors has increased from 433 in 2003-04 to 493 in 2004-05. This figure, when compared with total number of visitors reaffirms the previous point. According to information furnished by the Labour Department through RTI, it is clear that there is no proposal to dispose off the government properties and shut down the holiday homes.

Thus, evidently, a scheme that is totally unviable is still being run by the Government in the name of labour welfare. This only indicates the number of such wasteful schemes that are run by the Delhi Government and wasting the resources on public money.

Gosadan schemes – Department of Development

Gosadan schemes by the Department of Development is run for the welfare of animals and stray cattle. The Department is provided subsidies and grants to the NGOs to establish Gosadans in Delhi. However, more than 50% of the allotted land is lying unutilised. The expenditure per cow is Rs 4,146, more than per student expenditure in a government school in Delhi. The recommendations were that stray cattle should be auctioned off and all cattle should be registered so that the owners can be fined if their animals are spotted. This would reduce the number of stray cattle significantly.

The Department is only responsible for monitoring the functioning of NGOs who are running these Gosadans and providing them with some financial assistance in the form of grants in aid. Table 5 provides information on financial allocation, actual expenditure and grants in aid released from the Delhi Advisory Board for Animal Welfare.

Table 5: Financial Profile of Gosadan Scheme

Year	Financial Allocation	Actual Expenditure	Grant in aid released from GABAW*
2001-02	8	6.52	17.88
2002-03	5	4.99	13.15
2003-04	10	10	17.5
2004-05	--	--	17.5

*The grant in aid includes grants given to PFA Goshala, Bawana for the first three years. However, the Gosadan has been closed down effective April 2005 as the NGO running the Gosadan surrendered.

Even though the Department is really not running the service and just providing financial assistance and monitoring the Gosadan, it has not been able to perform the job as efficiently as it can. In most Gosadans, the number of animals is far less than the capacity of the Gosadan. This is indicative of inefficient services by the NGOs accompanied by poor monitoring and supervision by the Department. Table 6 showing the land allotment and number of animals in these Gosadans will substantiate the aforementioned argument.

Table 6: Information on Gosadans in Delhi

Gosadan	NGO	Land Allotted (In acres)	Shelter Capacity (Number)	No. of Animals as on Oct.2005
Gopal Gosadan, Harewali	Bhartiya Govansh Rakshan Parishad	15	1,500	1,064
Shri Krishan Goshala, Sultanpur	Surbhi Sodh Sansthan	36	3,100	864
Manav Gosadan, Khanpur	Jain Samaj	16	1,450	212
Dabur Hare Krishna Goshala, Surhera	Jan Kalyan	24	2000	963
Acharya Sushil Gosadan, Ghumanhera	Acharya Sushil Muni Foundation	19	1900	756

Thus after studying the abovementioned tables, it is clear that better management is needed in this scheme. Moreover, supervision should be strengthened by innovative measures, which should include financial prudence in providing subsidies to all NGOs running Gosadans. Those who do not meet the target capacity should be penalised. The Department should also specify performance standards and ensure that these standards are met.

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**Few takers for
online RTI
applications**

Only 10 Right To Information appeals have been posted online but 400 submitted in person

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