

Rs. 1,850 crore lying unused with worker welfare board



• [Sweta Goswami](#)

While most government agencies rue about lack of funds, the Delhi Building and Other Construction Workers Welfare Board faces a problem of plenty.

With over Rs. 1,850 crore lying untouched, the Board has spent just over three per cent of the funds on welfare schemes for construction workers.

A major reason for the funds going untouched is that only 17 per cent of the estimated 10 lakh construction workers in Delhi are registered with the Board.

“As of now, we have 1.7 lakh registered construction workers. The number is less because such workers are primarily floating population. While tracking and mapping them is an issue, getting them to register is also a problem as most of them are illiterate,” said A. Nedunchezhiyan, Secretary of the DBOCWWB.

Surplus

He also informed that until July this year, the Board had around Rs. 1,850 crore of unused funds.

Records revealed that since its inception in September 2002 till August last year, the Board earned revenue amounting to Rs. 1,860.88 crore through cess deposited by government authorities, PSUs and other private agencies based on the construction cost of their projects.

However, it could spend only Rs. 55.25 crore of the earnings on the welfare of construction workers.

In fact, the Board's expenditure on itself surpassed the permissible limit of five per cent of its total expenses, which stood at Rs. 169.85 crore. It spent Rs. 9.69 crore for administrative expenses whereas the sanctioned amount is Rs. 8.49 crore.

‘Over Rs. 24,000 crore lying unused in Boards’

When asked about the reason for accumulation of such a huge amount of unspent money, a senior official said: “This is the case with all States, and Delhi is no exception. As much as Rs. 24,000 crore of money collected as building cess is lying unused and it is an ongoing matter in the Supreme Court.”

Fresh Plans

In a bid to utilise the money, the Labour Department is preparing a proposal to build schools and hospitals in particular areas across the city.

“We are planning to use these funds to build schools and hospitals exclusively for construction workers, who are registered with the Board. These will be built in areas where they reside,” said Mr. Nedunchezhiyan.

With this project, the Delhi government plans to attract construction workers to settle in specific pockets of the Capital so that there lesser migration and they can be mapped.

However, the government is yet to find out which spots in the city have high concentration of construction workers residing there.

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