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Excess payment in construction such as payment made for works that are not executed or less executed constitutes a significant portion of the irregularities. According to the Royal Audit Authority, in such cases, the agencies are usually asked to recover the amount. However, the works are left incomplete or the quality is compromised. So, to solve these problems, the Royal Audit Authority calls upon all the public institutions and officials that they will now be held accountable for such lapses.

Although the recoveries are made with penalties, the intended beneficiaries are deprived of the infrastructure when the work is left incomplete. According to the Royal Audit Authority, the office shall insist on full restoration or rectification of works rather than recoveries.

The Auditor-General, Tashi said "A farm road is being constructed and, in the process, they left out the drainage. And there have been cases where drainage is not been made. They have claimed in the bill saying that the drainage we have done, we have constructed the drain. But what we have been doing so far is ok drain has not been constructed so that amount that you have claimed, you recover the amount. But that's not the case because the quality is affecting. So, henceforth, we are saying we will not recover the amount, the drain has not been done, so you do it. So, that's the accountability."

Moreover, he added that the head of the agency will be held accountable. Along with the notification, the authority also launched the Auditor General's Occasional Paper on Agencies Rationalizing Irregularities. According to the Audit Act 2018, the Auditor General may submit to His Majesty The King, the Prime Minister and the Parliament, any other report including the Auditor General's Advisory Series and Occasional Papers covering specific or range of issues intended towards promoting accountability, transparency, integrity and value for money in public operations.

The annual audit reports saw an increasing trend of unresolved irregularities with no improvements.

"Agencies are creating opportunities. So, we are saying look at what are those opportunities and stop creating those opportunities. That's what the agencies should be doing. Leniency on the part of the agencies is an opportunity for the perpetrators. And agencies protecting employees is an opportunity. Lack of internal controls is an opportunity for the perpetrators to commit irregularities or such fraudulent practices," said Tashi, Auditor-General.

The 2020 Annual Audit Report shows unresolved irregularities of over Nu. 2 bn, which was an increase of nearly 45 per cent compared to 2019.

Tshering Zam

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