



## **TALK TO EXPERTS – SERIES-5**

Author

### **Utility Shifting**

#### **Reasons responsible for languishing projects-**

Last week, we discussed clearance issues as the reasons that resulted in inordinate delay in completing some highway projects. Under reasons not attributable to the concessionaire, like the environmental and forest clearances, we look into another one under the title **Utility Shifting**.

Imagine some high tension wires are crossing the land that comes under the project. High tensions wires serve the public with provisions of power taking them from the place of origin to the place of consumption through various technical mechanisms. The service is an essential one since it is used for domestic purposes; more importantly, the industries depend on it and in turn, the economy of the region depends on the power which the high tension wires carry. Therefore, high tension wire is an essential utility.

Now, to shift the utility, namely, the high tension wires, permission must be obtained from the authorities for shifting. This involves too many tasks. The relevant authorities, here the Department of Electricity must agree to the shifting; before it agrees, it must be sure that the facilities are not denied but rather shifted in a proper place in a proper manner. Finding a suitable place for shifting is not that easy because the passage of high tension wires has certain inviolable conditions such as there should not be domestic settlements within certain stipulated area. Therefore, proper place must be found for shifting. There is a possibility, again, some land owners might object to it and move the court. It means the project is delayed with no foreseeable time limit. It might take time before the land owners acquiesce in. Delay in implementing the project once again ends up in escalation of the cost and revision of the date of completion of the project.

In addition to the problem of finding a place for the utility shifting, the budget must be allotted to meet the expense incurred in shifting the utility. The concessionaire must get the estimate approved by the authorities; he must also get the approval from them for the methodology he is going to follow in shifting the utility.

Sometime it so happens that utility is removed first and shifted to the pertinent place at the earliest. The gap between removal of the utility and installation will invite criticism from the public. In other words, there must be excellent coordination and cooperation between the government departments for any project to see its completion with least delay and cost overrun.

Utility shifting is the responsibility of the government authorities and the concessionaire has no right over there.

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