

OVERVIEW

This Report contains 32 paragraphs, three performance reviews and one integrated audit of a Department. The draft audit paragraphs and performance reviews were sent to the concerned Secretaries to the State Government with a request to furnish replies within eight weeks. However, in respect of the three performance reviews/integrated audit and 30 paragraphs included in the Report, no replies were received from the State Government. The audit findings relating to the performance reviews were also discussed with the Secretaries to the State Government and the views of the Government were incorporated wherever appropriate. A synopsis of the important findings contained in the Report is presented in this overview.

PERFORMANCE REVIEWS

National Rural Health Mission

The National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) was launched in Himachal Pradesh in April 2005 to provide accessible, affordable and reliable healthcare to the rural population, especially the vulnerable sections of the society. The programme envisaged convergence of various existing stand alone health programmes, decentralisation of the planning process with special emphasis on bottom-up approach in decision making and creating better linkages and co-operation among various social sector departments.

A mid-term review of the implementation of the programme in the fourth year of the Mission period (2005-2012) highlights the areas of concern and issues which need to be addressed for successful achievement of the objectives set out for the Mission. The review underlines glaring gaps in planning, implementation and monitoring activities. Absence of a household survey and perspective plan and lack of inputs from the community at the grass root level in the annual plans rendered the planning process an exercise in futility. While the number of health centres exceeded the norm, these could not ensure reliable and accessible health care to the targeted beneficiaries due to inadequate infrastructure and insufficient manpower. Some of the key initiatives of NRHM like ASHA and village health and sanitation committees have not received the required attention. Public spending on health sector also remained constant during the last four years.

(Paragraph 1.1)

Modernisation of Police Forces

Modernisation of Police Forces was introduced by the GOI in 1969 initially for 10 years, with periodic extensions, the latest being in February 2001, for another 10 years upto 2010. The scheme aims at improving the efficiency of the State Police Force and enhancing their striking abilities for meeting the emerging challenges.

Performance review of the implementation of the scheme in the State reveals that the objective of the scheme to modernise the State police force to meet the emerging challenges remained largely unachieved. Even after 40 years of implementation of the scheme, provision of infrastructure like housing and basic amenities at the Police Stations /Police Outposts was far from satisfactory. Implementation of the scheme was not in conformity with the areas of priority identified by the MHA. Sophisticated weapons procured were not supplied to the field units and they continued to depend on outdated weaponry. Forensic Science Laboratories were underutilised due to non-availability of technical staff. The benefits envisaged from POLNET and CIPA could not be derived, as these were either not operationalised or where operational, are not functioning at their optimum level. However, the Department's achievement in developing an informative and useful web portal which provides useful information like guidelines and tips for general public, tourists including foreigners and facilitates registration of complaints by the public in 88 out of 112 Police Stations in the State is laudable.

(Paragraph 1.2)

Implementation of Irrigation Projects

Performance review of implementation of irrigation projects in the State under Accelerated Irrigation Benefits Programme (AIBP) and NABARD funding revealed that the objective of speedy development of irrigation potential and its eventual utilisation for the benefit of the farmers was not achieved to the desired extent in the State due to inherent deficiencies in planning, execution and monitoring.

Of the two medium irrigation projects and 121 minor irrigation schemes reviewed in audit, none of the medium irrigation projects was completed, whereas, only 37 minor schemes were completed as of March 2009. The execution of irrigation schemes under NABARD's loan assistance was also not satisfactory, as out of 26 schemes only 13 schemes were completed within the stipulated period and the remaining 13 schemes were still in progress. Non-completion of projects/schemes within the prescribed time limit of two to four years resulted in time/cost overruns.

In the absence of a time bound strategy for systematic harnessing of estimated irrigation potential, only 17,053 hectares (22 *per cent*) irrigation potential could be created by the Department during 2005-09 against the target of 77,880 hectares under Bharat Nirman. Even the irrigation potential created under various schemes was not utilised optimally and the shortfall in utilisation during 2004-09 ranged between 56 and 100 *per cent*. DPRs were not prepared for minor irrigation schemes sponsored under AIBP. Technical sanctions for assuring that the proposals are structurally sound, feasible and estimates are calculated correctly were not obtained.

(Paragraph 1.3)

Integrated Audit of Forest Department

The Himachal Pradesh Forest Sector Policy seeks to achieve sustainable forest management in the State i.e. forest, watershed, wild life, biodiversity and habitats for the maintenance and rehabilitation of its environment and strive for enhanced livelihood of the people of the State. An integrated audit of the Department revealed that there are several areas where it needs to improve the implementation of the programmes.

The Department did not have reliable data relating to the area available for afforestation, as the area shown by the Department as afforested upto 2006-07 was in excess of the area that was actually available for afforestation. Even after the lapse of more than three decades of commencement (1988) of settlement proceedings in the State, only an area of 4,485 sq kms has been demarcated leaving targeted forest area of 11,033 sq kms in 10 out of 12 districts undemarcated. Norms for recovering the cost of CAT Plans from user agencies have not been standardised leading to loss of legitimate revenue of Rs 22.97 crore in nine CAT Plans. Fund utilisation, supervision and monitoring in the Department were not adequate enough to ensure that the Department functions at its optimal level.

(Paragraph 3.1)

AUDIT OF TRANSACTIONS

Excess/over payment/wasteful/unfruitful/infructuous expenditure

➤ The Public Works Department did not plan and construct jeepable road to village Suru in Shimla district resulting in unfruitful expenditure of Rs 85.80 lakh on construction of jeepable suspension bridge.

(Paragraph 2.2)

➤ The Public Works Department did not get construction of Eklavya Model Residential School building works at Nichhar (Kinnaur district) completed in time, rendering an expenditure of Rs 91.49 lakh unfruitful.

(Paragraph 2.4)

➤ The District Rural Development Agency, Sirmour released payment to an implementing agency (VIMARSH) and a consultant (NABCONS) without enforcing the provisions of memorandum of understanding resulting in infructuous expenditure of Rs 44.53 lakh.

(Paragraph 2.7)

➤ Decision of the Youth Services and Sports Department to convert athletics stadium to cricket stadium midway during construction resulted in unproductive expenditure of Rs 53.50 lakh and blocking of Rs 1.30 crore.

(Paragraph 2.8)

Undue favour to contractors/avoidable expenditure

- The Public Works Department extended undue favour to a contractor by allowing advance payments of Rs 1.87 crore against invalid Bank Guarantees.
(Paragraph 2.9)
- Due to acceptance of sub-standard work executed at Rs 1.23 crore, the Public Works Department could not provide quality road connectivity and further inaction to recover levied compensation of Rs 50 lakh resulted in extending undue financial benefit to the contractor.
(Paragraph 2.10)

Idle investment/blocking of funds/diversion of funds

- In violation of Constitution of India and existing financial principles, the Animal Husbandry Department retained revenues received from sale of departmental property and refund of Government funds aggregating Rs 3.93 crore outside Government account.
(Paragraph 2.11)
- Improper planning and identification of schools for construction of kitchen shed-cum-stores under Mid-day-Meal scheme by Education Department resulted in delay in providing the facility to 1,077 schools and blocking of funds to the tune of Rs 6.46 crore.
(Paragraph 2.13)
- Expenditure of Rs 51.90 lakh incurred by the Health and Family Welfare Department on construction of Auxiliary Nurse-cum-Midwife training centre at Chamba and salary of staff deployed did not serve the intended purpose and proved largely unfruitful.
(Paragraph 2.14)
- The Irrigation and Public Health Department did not carry out adequate investigations initially and arrange encumbrance free land for the Flow Irrigation Scheme, Oddigad to Neri in Shimla district resulting in idle investment of Rs 66.79 lakh.
(Paragraph 2.17)
- Poor planning by the Public Works Department resulted in idle expenditure of Rs 1.87 crore on construction of road and bridge over Spiti river and non-achievement of the objective of providing transport facility to Sumra village in Kinnaur District.
(Paragraph 2.18)
- The State Government and Deputy Commissioners of Kangra, Kinnaur and Mandi districts diverted Rs 24.36 crore from calamity relief fund for works not admissible under CRF guidelines.
(Paragraph 2.22)