

Chapter 3: Planning

District Policy and Planning

Government of India envisages an inclusive and participative planning process for the development of districts. The 74th Amendment to the Constitution mandated the establishment of a District Planning Committee (DPC) for consolidating the plans prepared by the Panchayats and municipalities in the district into an integrated District Plan. All the three tiers of local administration viz. DRDA, Blocks and GPs were to prepare an Annual Action Plan (AAP) at the beginning of each financial year equivalent in value of about 125 *per cent* of their share of funds allocated in the preceding year and no work is to be taken up unless it forms part of the AAP.

The District Planning, Development and Twenty Point Programme Review Committee (DPDC) for district Sirmaur was constituted in August 2003 with the Minister of the district as the Chairman and the MPs, MLAs, Chairperson Zilla Parishad and other district party workers of the ruling party as members. The DC and other district level heads of offices and the SEs of PWD/IPH/HPSEB and Conservator of Forests of the district were the other members. The DPDC was to function as the Policy and Planning Council at the district level and oversee the implementation of the developmental programmes to be executed in the district. It was to accord approval for the shelf of schemes/projects to be executed in the district and give directions to the administrative and technical personnel. It was to meet thrice a year for this purpose and review/monitor the progress of implementation of the schemes.

Audit findings

Audit scrutiny revealed that the DPDC had not prepared any Perspective Plan or Annual Action Plans, or even a shelf of schemes for the overall development of the district. The local levels of administration like the Blocks and GPs were not involved in providing any inputs to the planning process. Schemes were sanctioned on an adhoc basis by the DC based on the proposals submitted by the MPs/MLAs/Other individuals as per the perceived benefit to the local populace. During 2004-09 against the required 15 meetings, the DPDC held only five meetings. In fact, there was no integrated District Plan.

In the absence of perspective plans and integrated annual action plans for the development of the district with inputs from Blocks and GPs, gaps in various developmental schemes/programmes remained unidentified with the result that the felt needs of the weaker sections of the society and the disparities between various regions and communities within the district could not be addressed.

Recommendation

Holistic perspective and integrated annual plans should be prepared for the district, based on a structured process of obtaining inputs from Blocks and GPs and other stakeholders for a more realistic assessment of the district.