

Chapter 7: General Services

7.1 E-Governance

NIC, a Government of India agency had setup a District Informatics Centre in District Headquarters to support the District Administration in promoting awareness about the use of Information Technology in various departments. The State Government setup Integrated Community Service Centres (i-CoSC) known as ‘Sugam’ Centres up to tehsil level in districts for providing 50 services under one roof to the citizens of the district through a single window. The i-CoSCs are operated and managed by a district e-governance society with support from the Society for Promotion of Information Technology and e-Governance (SITEG).

i) Services

The system was developed basically to provide the following services electronically:

Table: 24

Certificates	Relating to Birth/Death, Caste, OBC, Domicile, Handicapped status, Marriage, Nationality, Non-Encumbrance, Solvency, Surviving Members and Income.
Registration	Relating to Birth/Death, Marriage, Electoral Rolls.
Revenue	Property registration, certified copy of Khatauni/Jamabandi/Khasara/Girdawari.
Licenses/Permits	Issue of Driving License, Registration Certificates of new vehicles, Token Tax of commercial vehicles, change of address, Transfer of Ownership of Non-transport Vehicles, Issuance of Conductor License and Ration Cards.
Agriculture/ Horticulture	Information about Mandi rates in respect of identified commodities in important mandis, remedy for crop diseases from experts through remote assistance.
Utilities	Application for electricity connection/additional loads, payment of electricity, water, sewerage and telephone bills, property tax and house Tax. HRTC on-line bus tickets booking, HPTDC on-line hotel reservation, private hotel reservation.
Social Services	Information about Family Pension, old age pension, Government Pensioners Helpline, Police on-line complaints, etc.

Source: Sugam records

ii) Functioning of Sugam Centres

There are 10¹⁸ e-governance Centres in the district covering various Sub-divisions, Tehsils and Sub Tehsils. The position of services to be provided and actually available in these centres was as under :

¹⁸ Three at Sub Division level (Nahan, Rajgarh and Paonta Sahib), Three at Tehsil Level (Shillai, Renuka Ji and Pachhad) and Four at Sub Tehsil level (Dadahu, Nohradhar, Kamrau and Ronhat).

Table: 25

Total number of services to be provided		Services actually provided
District level	37	5 (Vahan, Sarthi, Himris, Himbhoomi and e_Parman)
Sub-division level	35	4 (Vahan, Sarthi, Himris and e_Parman)
Tehsil level	33	2 (Himris and e_Parman)
Sub Tehsil level	–	3 (Himris, e_Parman and Himbhoomi)

For strengthening of these centres the Director (IT) released Rs five lakh in November 2008 which remained unutilised in a bank account as of July 2009.

Functioning of four centres viz. Nahan (District), Rajgarh (Sub Divisional Office (Civil), Pachhad (Tehsil) and Dadahu (Sub Tehsil) reviewed on a random basis, revealed the following:

- As per the directions of the State Government (November 2007) all the centres set up at District/Sub Division/ Tehsil/ Sub Tehsil level were to be subsumed under a common brand name Sugam with an identical logo and common sign board. It was however, observed in audit (July, 2009) that centres were either using different brand names like ‘Sugam’, ‘Jan Suvidha e_governance Centre’ etc. or did not have any sign boards as prescribed for indicating the location and the facilities available at these centres. This resulted in avoidable inconvenience to the public.

Photograph: 10



Photograph: 11



Nahan and Rajgarh centres using different brand names

- Sugam centres were to provide services at the doorstep of rural community by bringing all citizens related services and information under a single roof cutting across different tiers of administration. During test check, audit observed that the services in Nahan relating to e_Parman, Vahan and Sarthi were being provided in Sub-Division office (civil) and Himris and Himbhoomi were being provided at Tehsil Office causing unnecessary inconvenience to the public.
- The State level connectivity through Himachal State Wide Area Network (HIMSWAN) Points of Presence (PoPs) has been established at all centers. The HIMSWAN facility provided in Rajgarh Sub divisional Office was not functioning as the PoP centre established for HIMSWAN connectivity was far away from Sub Division Office (Civil).

- Data was not backed up at regular intervals and there was no business continuity plan to operationalise the system in case of any emergency failure. Only the data relating to Himbhoomi was being backed up at the district level.
- It was envisaged that with the implementation of Sugam, the processes relating to all the services proposed to be made available electronically, would be re-engineered and automated. Scrutiny revealed that the citizens continue to follow up their applications for various services manually from one place to another defeating the main objective of providing all the services under one roof.

In conclusion, as regards the e-governance activities, only 2 to 5 services were being provided as of July 2009 through the Sugam centres against 33 to 37 services envisaged to be provided at tehsil to district level.

Recommendation

- *Besides, offering envisaged services through Sugam, efforts should also be made to bring all services under one roof as is presently not the case.*
- *The Sugam/ e-governance centres should have a standardized name and logo which is applied uniformly in all the districts and tehsils.*
- *Disaster recovery plans should be put in place to deal with any eventuality and data in the system should be backed up on a regular basis.*

7.2 Civic Amenities by Municipal Administration

Provision of basic civic amenities in the towns is the responsibility of the municipal administration. Sirmaur district has two MCs for Nahan and Paonta towns and one NP for Rajgarh town. The MCs and NP function as an institution of self governance and were receiving grants and funds from the Government. These institutions also earn revenue through taxes, rents, issue of licenses, car parking, etc. and are mandated to utilise these funds for provision of adequate civic amenities to the public.

i) Execution of developmental works

The functioning of both the MCs and NP for the period 2004-09 was reviewed (July 2009) in audit and there were instances of mismanagement of funds meant for developmental works which deprived the general public of the intended benefits; as is evidenced from the following findings.

- MCs Paonta and Nahan received (April 2007) Rs 35 lakh each¹⁹ for construction of parking, toilets and parks from Director, UDD under Rajiv Gandhi Urban Renewal Facility (RGURF) for infrastructure and sanitation improvement in urban areas. Despite the fact that the conditions governing the sanction of these funds stipulated the completion of these works and utilisation of funds within the financial year 2007-08, none of these works have been taken up as of July 2009. MC Paonta had incurred an expenditure of Rs 7.27 lakh only for purchase of play equipments for main park in front of MC office and soil filling in the Park and the balance amount of Rs 27.73 lakh was lying unutilised. The funds allotted to MC Nahan were still lying unutilised.
- Under the scheme Integrated Development of Small and Medium Towns (IDSMTs) construction of 'Parking-cum-community hall' at Paonta was awarded (July 2002) to a contractor for Rs 92.79 lakh with a stipulation to complete the work within 18 months. The contractor started the work in August 2002 and Rs 39.18 lakh was paid for the work executed upto March 2006. Thereafter, the work was stopped and the funds available for this work were spent on another work i.e. shopping complex sanctioned under the above scheme. With a view to complete the work, the DC Sirmaur accorded (July 2008) administrative approval and expenditure sanction of Rs 23.75 lakh under Backward Regions Grant Fund Scheme (BRGF) and released (July 2008) Rs 19 lakh for this purpose. The funds provided by the DC also could not be utilised for want of approval of the estimate for remaining work as of July 2009. Thus, due to keeping the work in a suspended state for more than three years, the amount of Rs 39.18 lakh spent remained unfruitful and intended benefits could not be provided to the public as is evidenced from the photograph-12:

¹⁹ MC Nahan: for parking at Naya Bazar Nahan; and MC Paonta: for main park and toilets.

Photograph: 12



Abandoned work of Parking-cum-Community hall Paonta after incurring expenditure of Rs 39.18 lakh

ii) Waste Management

Municipal authorities are responsible for collection, storage, segregation, transportation, processing and disposal of municipal solid waste. A review of the processes involved in solid waste management in the district revealed the following:

- The MC Paonta area produces nine to 10 tonnes of garbage per day. To collect this waste, 75 open dustbins and 25 dumper containers have been provided in the town. The Director, UDD released (March 2006) Rs 51.29 lakh under 12th Finance Commission for implementation of Solid Waste Management Project. For this purpose, 2.10 bigha land situated near Kedarpur village had already been transferred (December 2003) to MC Paonta. Out of Rs 51.29 lakh, Rs 12.86 lakh (Dumper placer: Rs 7.38 lakh; dumper containers: Rs. 2.86 lakh; Garbage Rickshaw: Rs 1.79 lakh and development of dumping site: Rs 0.83 lakh) were spent and the balance amount of Rs 38.43 lakh remained unutilised as of July 2009 due to stoppage of work of dumping site (May 2007) by the villagers residing near the dumping site. In the absence of any dumping site the whole garbage of the town was being dumped on the banks of river Yamuna as can be seen from the following photograph.

Photographs: 13



Garbage being dumped on the bed of River Yamuna by MC Paonta

Photograph: 14



Abandoned work of Solid Waste Management Project after incurring expenditure of Rs 0.83 lakh

The EO, Paonta while admitting (July 2009) the facts stated that matter had been discussed in the House and efforts were being made to persuade the people of Kedarpur village to settle their objection relating to development of dumping site.

- The MC Nahan area generates seven to nine tonnes of garbage per day. In order to collect this waste, 45 open dustbins and 19 dumper containers have been provided. In both the MCs-Paonta and Nahan the dumpers are transporting the garbage to the bank of river Yamuna/SWM through Dumper Placers and garbage collected in open dustbins is transported in open tractor trolley which can be seen from the photograph below:

Photograph: 15



Garbage being transported in open tractor trolley by MC Paonta

It was noticed that out of 7 to 9 tonnes of garbage, about 60 *per cent* garbage is non-biodegradable. In Solid Waste Plant only biodegradable solid waste is converted into compost. Thus, 60 *per cent* garbage was lying in the open near the Solid Waste Plant as can be seen from the photographs-16 and 17:

Photograph: 16



Solid Waste Plant Nahan

Photograph: 17



Non-biodegradable waste lying undisposed off near Solid Waste Management Plant Nahan

The EO Nahan while admitting (July 2009) the facts stated that a proposal under BRGF has been included in the project report wherein the funds of Rs 75 lakh had been demanded for dumping the non-biodegradable material. He further stated that as soon as the funds are received, immediate action to prepare the dumping site would be taken in hand.

- In Rajgarh NP area about six quintal garbage is generated every day. To collect this garbage, NP has placed 12 open and 20 covered dustbins. NP has no solid waste plant to convert this garbage into compost. The garbage was being transported in open tipper to reserve forest which is about 3 kms away from NP area. The Forest Department impounded (April 2009) the vehicle of the NP for dumping the garbage in reserve forest. A dumping site measuring 1.17 bigha land has been proposed adjacent to the present site where the garbage was being dumped and the process of transferring the land in the name of NP was under process. The people living in nearby villages of the present dumping site objected to the disposal of garbage in the present site and threatened the NP authority to manhandle the staff of the NP and safai karamcharies. With the result the whole garbage was scattered in the NP as can be seen from the photograph-18:

Photograph: 18



Garbage Scattered out of overflowing dustbin at Bus Stand Rajgarh

Secretary NP Rajgarh while admitting the facts stated (July 2009) that requests were being made regularly with the revenue authorities to transfer the land in the name of NP. He further stated that there exists no other plan to dispose off the garbage as no suitable site was available with NP.

To sum up, the Municipal Councils and Nagar panchayats in the district did not have an integrated waste management plan for collection, storage, segregation, transportation, processing and disposal of municipal solid waste thereby exposing the public to the dangers of untreated waste and pollution.

Recommendations

- *Execution of developmental works by the MCs need to be monitored effectively to avoid cost escalation and to ensure completion of works in a time bound manner.*
- *Waste management plans also need to be developed in an integrated manner to ensure proper management of disposal of municipal solid waste.*