

Chapter 3: Planning

3.1 District Planning Committee

The 74th Constitutional Amendment mandated the establishment of a District Planning Committee (DPC) for consolidating the plans prepared by the panchayats and municipalities in the district into the Draft District Plan. The Eleventh Five year Plan also emphasized the critical need for an inclusive planning process involving the elected local government representation in planning, implementing, supervising the delivery of essential public services.

3.2 Policy and Planning

The Government of Assam constituted (August 2004) District Planning and Monitoring Committee (DPMC) for each district with a cabinet ranked Minister from the District as the Chairman of the Committee. The Committee is to meet as many times as felt necessary during the year and should particularly meet in the month of August for scrutiny, and approval of the district level plans prepared by development departments. In addition, monitoring of the schemes is also the function of the DPMC.

3.3 Perspective and Annual Plans

Audit scrutiny revealed that DPMC had not prepared any Perspective Plan or even a shelf of schemes for overall development of the District. Annual Action Plan (AAP) was prepared by DC for 2006-07 and thereafter by CEO, Zilla Parishad. DPMC had met once every year during 2006-11 to review the progress of implementation of the development schemes.

Planning for urban development mainly includes planning for employment generation in urban areas under the scheme “Swarna Jayanti Sahari Rojgar Yojana” (SJSRY) and also planning for infrastructure development under “Integrated Development of Small and Medium Towns” (IDSMT). Besides these two schemes there are a number of other schemes which are discussed in subsequent paragraphs.

The District Urban Development Authority (DUDA), which implements the SJSRY and IDSMT, did not prepare any action plan for implementation of the schemes. Besides, preparation of shelf of projects and identification of beneficiaries through survey was also not done.

In the implementation of IDSMT, planning process started after receipt of funds and was based on the quantum of funds. Shelf of projects and AAPs were not prepared during 2006-11. DUDA did not furnish any reasons for non preparation of action plan, though called for.

Thus, preparation of AAPs was done on an ad-hoc basis without obtaining inputs from field level and most significantly, survey and identification of beneficiaries was not done.

NREGS, SGRY and IAY were implemented by DRDA through Zilla Parishad (ZP), Anchalik Panchayats (APs) and Gram Panchayats (GPs) during 2006-11. AAP indicating location-wise distribution of works for execution based on proposals made by Village Level Committees/Gram Sabhas, however, were not shown to audit though called for. Under NREGS/SGRY year-wise targets for employment generation were not fixed.

Hence, transparency in planning process as envisaged in the guidelines of the scheme was not ensured.

During exit conference, DC stated (November 2011) that at district level prespective plan was prepared for various programme but it was not done in a comprehensive manner.

Thus, adequate and envisaged planning process was absent in the District. Perspective plans and integrated district plans were not prepared and as a result gaps in various developmental initiatives remained unidentified. Hence, the needs of the weaker sections of the society and the disparities between various regions and communities could not be addressed adequately.

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 developmental requirements of the District.