

# **Chapter 7**

## **Other General Issues**

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### 7.1 District Planning

Government of India envisages an inclusive and participative planning process for the development of districts. The Planning Commission, GoI also accorded (August 2006) utmost importance on 'district plan process' as an integral part of the process of preparation of Eleventh Five Year Plan (2007-2012) and the annual plans.

Comprehensive district level planning is crucial in view of multiplicity of schemes being implemented in several areas of governance to achieve convergence in delivery mechanism. In accordance with the West Bengal District Planning Committee Act, 1994, District Planning Committee (DPC) of Malda was constituted in 1994. Sabhadhipati, Malda ZP is the Chairperson of the DPC, while the MPs, MLAs, Chairpersons of Municipalities, etc. are members, along with 34 elected members. The DM is the Secretary of the DPC. The DPC was mandated with consolidating the Annual Action Plans (AAP) prepared by the three tiers of local administration viz. ZP, Panchayat Samitis (PS) and GPs and Municipalities in the district into an integrated District Plan. As per instruction of Development & Planning Department, District Plan is to be sent to the Department by 15th March for approval by State Planning Board. The works not included in AAP were not to be taken up.

*Out of five years audited, district plans were not prepared for three years.*

- Audit noted that out of five years audited, the district annual plan was prepared only for 2007-08 and 2009-10.
- The Plan for the year 2009-10 was approved by the DPC after a delay of six months, while details of the plan for 2007-08, showing total plan size, schedule date and actual date of preparation of district plan, date of approval by the DPC and its onward transmission to the Department/ State Planning Board were not available.
- Though the annual district plans in respect of Fisheries, Irrigation and Waterways, Energy, Backward Classes, ICDP etc., were sent by the respective district functionaries during 2008-09, no consolidated plan was prepared for that year.
- In absence of records relating to inputs received from different sectors in formulation of annual Plans for the years 2007-08 and 2009-10, the extent of participation of lower tiers of administration could not be ascertained in audit.

During the period 2007-12, the DPC met only three times (May 2009, September 2009 and June 2010). No meeting was held during 2007-09 and 2011-12.

In the absence of plan for the development of the District, the gaps in various developmental schemes/ programmes could not be identified. The planning was thus inadequate and with irregular preparation, delayed preparation of District plan and non-consolidation of individual plans, the purpose of preparation of district plan was largely defeated.

### **Recommendation**

- ***District Plan should be prepared in consonance with the guidelines within the stipulated time, based on a structured process of obtaining inputs from all tiers of local administration to ensure that the locally felt needs are addressed adequately.***

### **7.2** *Monitoring and Supervision*

Most of the Central and State plan schemes specify monitoring requirements. Observations on efficacy of monitoring in respect of schemes subjected to audit scrutiny have been discussed earlier in the Report under respective schemes. DM is responsible for monitoring the overall progress of implementation of various developmental programmes and ensuring that these are executed within the specified timeframe and approved budget. Though review of the execution of various schemes is stated to be undertaken through periodical review meeting of DM, Block Development Officers (BDOs) and other stakeholders, these are not documented. No record was available to suggest that field visits were undertaken by various officers to monitor various projects. In the absence of norms, extent of monitoring was not assessable against standards set. DPC convened only four review meetings during 2006-11, no meeting having been convened during 2007-09, speaks of the gaps in monitoring. Lack of monitoring impacted execution of schemes significantly, as discussed in specific cases.

### **7.3** *Submission of incorrect Utilisation Certificates*

The work (Embankment Protection Work from tagging point of 7th retired embankment with Marginal Embankment upto Ganga Bhavan on left bank of river Ganga at Panchanadapur) was initially taken up under - “Critical Anti-Erosion work in West Bengal State” with central fund during Ninth Plan period (2001-04). However, before the work was taken up, the proposed site including permanent structure of the Ganga Bhavan was engulfed in the river Ganga in September 2003. The said work was carried over to the Tenth Plan period (2004-07). However, utilisation certificate for the entire funds was issued in December 2004. The details of utilisation of fund were not produced to audit (June 2011) and the EE (MID) stated (May 2012) that no records was available in respect of utilisation of fund. In reply, the EE while admitting the fact of erosion of Ganga Bhavan stated (June 2011) that the bank protection work on river Ganga had been transferred to the Farakka Barrage authority since March 2007. Thus, EE diverted funds meant for specific anti-erosion scheme to other areas without obtaining necessary sanction of the appropriate authority and submitted incorrect UC.