

Chapter-5

Conclusion and Recommendations

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5.1 Conclusion

The topography of the State is, for the most part, hilly and major damages had occurred in the upper reaches of the State which have difficult access during rainy season which is often extended. Consequently, the working season in the State is somewhat limited.

2,359 number of works of nine sectors of the State Government were sanctioned under MLTR package; out of which, 1,769 works (75 per cent) were completed as on stipulated dates of completion (31-03-2017 for SPA-R/CSS-R/ADB funded works and 31-12-2017 for World Bank funded works) which improved to 2,066 completed works as on 31 March, 2018 accounting for 87 per cent of total works sanctioned under MLTR.

The Medium and Long Term Reconstruction (MLTR) package granted by the Government of India (GoI) was meant for reconstruction of damaged infrastructure and restoration of livelihoods of the disaster (June 2013) affected populace/areas including improving the disaster preparedness of State, in a time bound manner. However, many departments like- Irrigation, Forest and Public Works (PWD) failed to correctly assess their damaged assets as a result of which several works were not included in the list of works to be funded in MLTR package. On the other hand many other works which had not been damaged in the disaster were also taken up under the package. There was substantial shortfall in executing the planned/sanctioned works because of exhaustion of the MLTR funds due to deficient planning and fund management by the State machinery. There were instances of portions of road works being repaired more than once under different funding sources, diversion of earmarked funds to unplanned works, idling of funds with Project Implementing Units (PIU), expenditure incurred in violation of prescribed norm/specifications and large variations in numerous works.

Several projects could not be executed due to non-issue of administrative/financial sanction by the State Government despite funds being released by the GoI. The State Government did not sanction funds for construction of Ropeway between Gaurikund & Kedarnath, Shelter cum Godowns, Phase-II works of Shri Kedarnath Township, development of other Dhams, setting up of 10 Industrial Training Institutes to train the youth of Uttarakhand in alternative means of livelihood despite receipt of sanctioned fund of ₹ 319.75 crore (SPA-R) from the GoI. Moreover, none of programme implementing agencies of the State Government could complete their assigned works within the stipulated period. Further, 10 works of Roads/Bridges, 02 projects of Tourism Infrastructure, 03 Small Hydro Electric Projects, 17 works of Public Buildings, 05 works of Forest Sector remained (March 2018) un-started even after a lapse of more than five years from the date of disaster.

The State could not fully utilise approved outlay under MLTR due to non-submission of viable projects (₹ 246 crore). In respect of SPA-R and externally funded works, slow progress in execution was attributable to delay in issuing of sanctions/non-releasing of

funds by the State Government and short utilisation of funds by the implementing agencies. Against total approved outlay of ₹ 6,259.84 crore under MLTR, only ₹ 4,617.27 crore (74 per cent) was made available for implementation of projects against which the implementing agencies could utilise ₹ 3,708.27 crore (59 per cent of approved outlay).

The status of the State in terms of its disaster preparedness was also not satisfactory. Against targeted number of 5 Helidromes, 19 Heliports, 34 Helipads and 37 Multi-Purpose Hall (MPH); only 27 Helipads and no MPHs were constructed by the UCADA in the severely affected districts. Most of the activities under the World Bank aided project (Technical Assistance and Capacity Building for Disaster Risk Management) for risk reduction of disasters and enhancing the capabilities of Uttarakhand Disaster Management Authority and other Government entities, are yet to be taken-up.

No separate and centralised mechanism was set-up by the Government of Uttarakhand for supervision, monitoring and quality control of the reconstruction works. The existing supervision and quality control mechanism of various departments/nodal agencies was found to be deficient in view of poor compliance to instructions issued during inspection by the authorities and poor grading granted by the Quality Control Unit-PWD in respect of 61 per cent road works constructed under MLTR.

5.2 Recommendations

As Uttarakhand is a disaster prone State, there is strong likelihood of recurrence of natural disasters in the form of landslides, avalanches, cloudbursts, flash floods and forest fires. Hence, there is urgent need for ensuring disaster preparedness of the State machinery and having in place a well-coordinated mechanism for facing future challenges. Powerful lessons need to be learnt and better ways found for improved policies, institutions and practices relating to implementation of the reconstruction programme. In view of the shortcomings and deficiencies highlighted by Audit, the State Government may consider:

- *Strengthening the State Disaster Management Authority (SDMA) so that it is equipped to fulfil the responsibilities as stipulated in the Disaster Management Act, 2005 and State Disaster Management Plan. The SDMA should lay down stringent timelines for adoption and initiation of measures required to be undertaken by the line departments for prevention and mitigation of disasters. The SDMA may consider entrusting the responsibility for monitoring compliance to these timelines to the State Executive Committee or may consider creating a separate empowered Committee for the purpose;*
- *Augmenting the capabilities of SDMA, DMMC and other government entities for undertaking risk assessment and mainstreaming risk reduction approaches into the design and implementation of reconstruction programmes;*

- *Strengthening the mechanism for properly assessing and identifying damages due to any disaster and submitting viable proposals on time for enabling the State to avail and utilise funds as per approved outlay;*
- *Streamlining the project approval and funding mechanism. GOU may explore the possibility of routing all project proposals and approvals through a computer application in order to avoid multiple sources of funding for same works; and execution of the same work by different agencies and contractors which leave scope for misutilisation and diversion of fund;*
- *Strengthening the financial management for preventing diversion and blockage of funds and ensuring timely release of funds for the various projects/works;*
- *Ensuring award of works in a fair and transparent manner so that the intended objective of getting the best value for money is achieved;*
- *Obtaining ex-post approval of the competent authority for regularising all inadmissible works that were executed under the MLTR package;*
- *Ensuring effective monitoring of contract management to eliminate undue benefits to the contractors and reduce the financial burden on the exchequer; and*
- *Strengthening evaluation and monitoring mechanism for ensuring adherence to timeliness and quality standards in reconstruction activities.*

Dehradun
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